

## My life with Jean . . .

Jean was a loving wife whose life was devoted to serving God and her fellow men and women with a devotion that is unexcelled in my 80 years of experience. As one example, she insisted that we submit our papers for a couple mission *immediately*



after my release as stake president, and it was a good thing she did. For after 20 months of rewarding service while teaching the gospel in Bavaria, Germany—and after climbing the approximately 82,000 steps to reach our contacts—her legs gave out on her, then her memory, and it was downhill from there. Our couple mission was the capstone of our time on earth together, and had not Jean's health failed shortly after our return home, we would have served missions together time after time.

Jean has passed quietly into the arms of her Heavenly Father. And now, even more than ever, I thank God for the plan of happiness, for after 13 years of struggle she is now free from the physical and mental restrictions that held her bound. She is free again. Free to love, and share and care, just as she once did on earth. I will miss her beautiful smile and hearty laugh until we join hands together in the eternities.

There are so many things that are worse than death; while I miss her greatly I would not wish for her to return to the pain and limitations that she experienced in later years. Knowing that we will be together again gives me hope; without which I fear that my life would be most miserable.

When we were first married I told Jean that we would share in the decision making. She would make all the little decisions and I would make all the big ones; and as it turned out, all the decisions were little ones; she decided to love us thoroughly, serve us faithfully, and bless us devotedly in all the little ways that make life worthwhile. All this with no thought of personal reward. As she did so, our home became a refuge from the world as each of us, eager to return her goodness, sought to make her happy. The result was—at least for me—62 years of bliss! I can never repay her for her devotion.

When her affliction began I felt the need to restructure my priorities—something I should have done much sooner. For it became quickly apparent that my life with Jean and the children was, by far, the most important facet of

my life; more important than selfish desires, more important than daily work, more important, even, than serving others in the community and Church. By way of repentant counsel, may I urge each one of you to be more considerate of those you love, more thoughtful and tender, quicker to offer your heart and hand, more spontaneous with your praise, less apt to criticize, sooner to recognize burdens that you might lighten by your thoughtfulness. Lovingly provide the little things that assure the happiness of your loved one. If your hugs are heartfelt, your encouragements more frequent, and your compliments more sincere, your homes will become bastions of love that will shelter you from everything the world can throw your way. Whenever we demonstrate the love we feel in the little ways that mean so much, happiness follows. When you look back on your marriage, as I have, May your home, too, be such a heavenly place!