



Thomas Arthur Welter

November 28, 1940 - March 9, 2026

Thomas Arthur Welter, 85, of Rexburg, Idaho, died peacefully at home on March 9, 2026.

Tom was born on November 28, 1940, in Toledo, Ohio to Pius and Frances Welter. The youngest of six children, he grew up in Ohio and attended Catholic Central High School, The University of Toledo, and earned his Bachelors degree from Grand Valley State in Michigan.

He often spent his summers helping his uncle Jack and grandfather John at the Welter family farm in Tiffin, Ohio and he developed a deep love for nature and growing things. If he could fit one more tree into a small suburban back yard, he would. It was even better if he could add to that yard bird feeders, flowers, and strawberries.

Music was another lifelong love, from playing guitar in a three piece folk band with a group of friends from college, to spending precious paycheck money to buy records to entertain his young family. In his later years, he got a lot of enjoyment from following vocal music competition shows. Music performed well was important to him.

Tom served as a sonarman in the U.S. Navy aboard the destroyer USS McNair. His service meant a lot to him and he made it a lifelong habit to fly

the flag on National Holidays.

After his service, he met Kathleen Burkey and they were married on October 3, 1964 in Los Angeles, California. They had a long partnership that lasted for 61 years. For many of those later years, he spent his life caring for Kathy. He put her needs first in so many ways, often at the expense of his own.

From the very beginning of their marriage, Tom and Kathy always had a pet to share their love with, they began with adopting one small toy poodle named Pookie, and over the years shared their home with many more dogs, cats, birds, and even a raccoon. Until the end, Tom cared deeply about the welfare of their last little dog who had been such a loyal buddy and comfort to him and Kathy.

Both he and Kathy had a passion for travel and learning and made it a priority to take their young family to as many historical sites and national parks as their limited budget could afford, even taking the children out of school for a few weeks if necessary. This adventuresome spirit and love for history and the natural world was instilled into both of their children. Tom had a genuine talent for healthcare administration and his long career gave him many opportunities which took him from Ohio to Michigan, then even further west to Wyoming, Utah and Oregon.

A faithful member of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints, Tom served in many capacities in various locations and congregations over his lifetime. One of his favorite callings was serving as the Genealogical specialist in Newport, Oregon. Many of the people in the church and in the community benefited from his talents and efforts in managing a well organized program.

After many happy years in Oregon which included retirement, Tom and Kathy relocated to Rexburg, Idaho to be closer to family.

We will miss his enthusiasm for March Madness Basketball, his love of telling a joke, especially if he got the punchline a bit askew, his efforts to get us interested in his favorite new vocalists/musicians, and the secretly sentimental man that actually loved a good romantic movie, even if he didn't want that to be common knowledge.

He is survived by his wife Kathy, son Jeff Welter, daughter Jackie Gratton, and grand daughter Devyn Fernelius, and their spouses respectively, Tina M.Welter, David Gratton and Ben Fernelius.

He was preceded in death by his parents and older siblings, Dorothy, Jane, Regina, Grace and Don.

The family will be having a private memorial service, we request that in lieu of flowers, please make a donation to charity in Tom's honor.

Cemetery Details

Bateman Chelan Abbey Mausoleum

915 NE Yaquina Heights Drive
Newport, OR 97365