

# A LEGACY OF GENERAL CONFERENCE

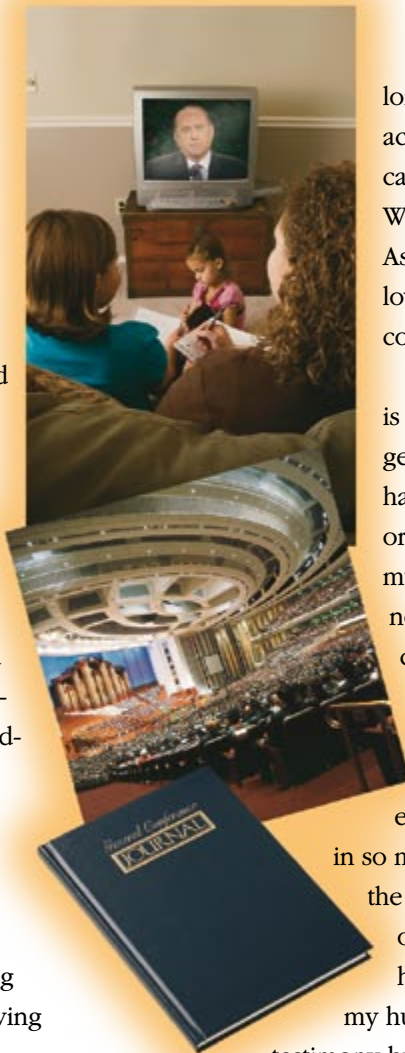
By Jeanie Hutchings

**M**y first recollections of general conference were stories from my father. He was born in 1911 in Salt Lake City, Utah, USA, and although his family was not very active in the Church, his mother faithfully bundled up her children and made going on the trolley to general conference a special, exciting event. Dad had wonderful memories of this, and his sharing them instilled in my mind the importance of conference.

That idea continued to develop during my own upbringing in Virginia and later Missouri. We were never able to attend general conference—it wasn't broadcast via satellite then—but once, when I was a teenager, the Sunday morning session was broadcast on TV. It was a huge event that no one wanted to miss.

A few years later, as a freshman at Brigham Young University, I was able to attend conference in person in April 1972. Going to the Tabernacle that spring morning impressed in my mind a testimony of the living prophet that I've never forgotten.

I married a man who shared my feelings about conference. Together, over 37 years of marriage, we have tried to create memories associated with conference and to involve our children in this important event. For most of their growing-up years, we went to our local meeting-house and participated in conference there. In these years,



long before the Internet and the conference activities many websites post, our children came up with their own conference games. We ate lunch together between sessions. As our children grew older, some of them loved taking notes and have kept their conference journals faithfully.

What we have learned through all of this is that there is just something special about general conference, and we as families have great opportunities to develop memorable traditions around the event. But as much as we love the traditions, they are not what make conference special. That comes from the opportunity to hear and be guided by the prophetic voice.

Gratefully, participating in a conference session is not a one-time experience. Because the messages are available in so many formats online and in print, we have the opportunity to research and use them for our own study, lessons, talks, and family home evenings. Now empty-nesters, my husband and I have shared powerful, testimony-building conversations as we have studied these materials.

Over the years, I have learned that conference answers our prayers, gives us insights about our lives, and allows us to access the inspiration of the Spirit. I am grateful to have experienced its blessings through others and firsthand. ■