



# PRESIDENT JAMES E. FAUST: A SPECIAL WITNESS

**P**resident James Esdras Faust, Second Counselor in the First Presidency, passed away on Friday, August 10, 2007, after serving as a member of the First Presidency for 12 years. He had served as a member of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles since September 1978 and as an Assistant to the Twelve and a member of the Presidency of the Quorum of the Seventy previous to that.

His life of service was crowned by his strong testimony of the Savior. When he was called to be an Apostle he said, "I understand that the chief requirement for the holy apostleship is to be a personal witness of Jesus Christ as the Divine Redeemer. Perhaps on that basis alone, I can qualify. This truth has been made known to me by the unspeakable peace and power of the Spirit of God."<sup>1</sup>

His testimony, he said, was always there. "I didn't always understand everything," he said, "but in the early years of my life, my testimony was strengthened as I prayed and my prayers were answered."<sup>2</sup>

President Faust spent his early years in Delta, Utah, where he was born on July 31, 1920, to George A. and Amy Finlison Faust. He learned to love the gospel from

the teachings of his parents. Later, his family moved to Salt Lake City, Utah, where he attended Granite High School. While there, President Faust won medals in track and lettered in football.

Sometimes when President Faust would play football, he wouldn't button the chin strap on his helmet, so it didn't always stay on his head. "One time when my helmet came off," he said, "I got hit so hard that I was knocked unconscious. I was terribly embarrassed when



I came to and saw my teammates looking down at me. From that I learned that we always need to keep our physical and spiritual protectors in place. Our spiritual protectors include our obedience to the commandments of God and to the counsel and direction of our parents."<sup>3</sup>

Although he gave up football, President Faust continued to run track when he was at the University of Utah, where he earned his law degree. He later went on to be a successful Utah lawyer.

President Faust had to leave his studies at the

University of Utah twice. He first left in 1939 to serve as a missionary in Brazil, where he learned to love the people and



strengthened his testimony. It was a hard mission with few baptisms. Speaking of himself and one of his companions he said, "We didn't accomplish much except for the changes in ourselves. I feel it was one of the most productive and valuable times in my life."<sup>4</sup>

He left the university a second time to serve in the U.S. Army Air Force during World War II.

At war, President Faust was sometimes lonely. He had left behind his beloved Ruth, whom he had met in high school.



They were married in the Salt Lake Temple on April 21, 1943, while he was on 10 days of military leave.

As the only Church member assigned to his ship in the South Pacific during the war, he would often go to the front of the ship—one of the only places he could find privacy. There

he would sing hymns, study the scriptures, and pray.

He also wrote to his wife every day. Sometimes the letters would not be delivered to her regularly. One day she received



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90 letters, and her boss gave her the afternoon off to read them.

President and Sister Faust have two daughters and three sons. President Faust always put a high priority on caring for his wife and family. "This is the kind of person he has been all his life," Sister Faust said. "Family and loved ones have come first!"<sup>5</sup>

"We . . . bear our testimonies by our lives," President Faust once said.<sup>6</sup> Truly, James Esdras Faust bore his testimony of the Savior not only with his words but through his exemplary life. **NE**

#### NOTES

1. "Response to the Call," *Ensign*, Nov. 1978, 20.
2. "Friend to Friend," *Friend*, Apr. 1998, 6.
3. "Friend to Friend," *Friend*, Apr. 1998, 6.
4. Wm. Grant Bangerter, "Elder James E. Faust: Sharing His Love for the Lord," *Ensign*, Oct. 1986, 8.
5. Neal A. Maxwell, "President James E. Faust: Pure Gold," *Ensign*, Aug. 1995, 12.
6. James E. Faust, "The Importance of Bearing Testimony," *Ensign*, Mar. 1997, 2.

**P**resident James E. Faust lived a life of Christlike service and devotion to others. (Clockwise from left) President Faust as a member of the First Presidency; with a companion on his mission in Brazil; with his beloved wife, Ruth; with his family; with Ruth as his bride; and running track as a student.