



## Charles Lynn Frost

May 11, 1954 - May 19, 2021

Charles Lynn Frost (May 11, 1954-May 19, 2021) Charles passed away at home during a nap after a valiant battle with colon cancer. The following history is written by Charles himself and redacted by his friend Babs De Lay:

Charles grew up in a loving family to Darrell and Zelphia Frost in Spanish Fork, Utah with four siblings: Colleen, Patsy, Lamar, and Kenneth. His parents were married during the Great Depression and he said, "My father could do anything, fix anything, make anything. My mother was extraordinarily strong in personality and had a hard work ethic. As a child I loved our garden, the trees, the animals and the outdoors, and shadowing both my parents and my oldest brother." He was eight years younger than his oldest sister and twenty years younger than his oldest brother. "I was raised practically as an only child. Needless to say, I did a lot by myself. I always wished for a little brother or sister, which I think should be a rule for parents: if you're gonna have a mistake baby later in life then you damned well better have another!" His niece Debra and nephew John played the role of little sister and brother to him, and their mother and Charles' big sister, Colleen, acted as a second mother to him at times when he was young.

Charles was named after his grandfather who died before Charles was born. His dad built their family home all by himself. It was the only home his parents ever knew, and they both died in the home, and both passed in Charles arms, "A cherished two moments in my life. It was a safe home, a home of love, a simple, yet almost perfect home to grow up in. My favorite room was the kitchen. My mother was a phenomenal cook. Not a chef, nothing so 'fancy as that' (as she would put it). My love for good food I got entirely from her." Sister Dottie S. Dixon, one of the many characters he played in life, was based a lot on Charles' mother.

He remembers when he was 3-years-old he let his sister talk him into putting him in the clothes dryer and turn it on. "Halfway through I forgot to hold on and got kinda banged up. A good idea at the time but both butts were paddled." Charles loved to chase the chickens around the alfalfa. "A 2-year-old kid in diapers chasing decapitated chickens, my God! No wonder I'm warped!" Raised LDS, he went to two meetings on Sundays in his local Ward. "I was a hellion in Church and once during sacrament meeting, I was getting taken out by my mom for my notoriously bad behavior, and I yelled out to the whole congregation 'I'll be

back after my spanking!” Sunday dinners were a ritual – roast beef, mashed potatoes, homemade gravy, Jell-O salad, carrots, beets, and his mom’s famous cream pies (coconut and banana). “My dad raised Bantam chickens. We had one extremely snarky rooster. He chased me as a little kid, pecked my arms and legs, and once sank both claws into my knee and hooked on for a ride. He scared the hell out of me. I would run and scream for my mom or dad and yell at that damned rooster. Sorry to say, I’ve been compared to a feisty rooster at times when I’m aggressive and I guess that bird’s traits transferred over to me.” His first-grade teacher was Mrs. Ivory and they had nuclear drills to see how fast they could run home. “Bell rings, doors fling open, hundreds of kids running their elementary asses off – racing to get home. Cops stopping traffic, parents and teachers with stop watches. My God no wonder the Boomer Generation is so screwed up!”

Charles’ father, Darrell Frost, worked at Ironton, Geneva Steel and was eventually a forest ranger. “He worked very hard as a laborer most of his life – something I’m very proud of and admire tremendously. My dad was the hardest worker I’ve ever known. He was a man’s man. His love of nature is genetically mine. He brought me home many a surprise from the mountains as a child. My favorite was two pet chipmunks which I had for two years. Pets teach responsibility, accountability and safety, not to mention caretaking. My pets once weathered a rainstorm by curling up in a coffee can which I used for their water. They were non-responsive when I found them. I cried and whaled. My dad put them on a warm towel on the clothes dryer and brought them back to life. I thought he was magical!”

Mother Zelphia always worked to make ends meet. “She was a lunch lady and then a seamstress. One of the perks of being in the lunch lady network was me winning the school drawing competition in first grade. The challenge was to draw and color a mint green lunch tray full of food. I won and wondered if the whole judging wasn’t rigged.” His father died of a heart attack when Charles was 17. “I was always a rebel as a teenager – usually with a cause. When my father died, I then became pretty angry. My anger manifested in rebellious behavior. I’m sorry for the turmoil it caused my mother (a 50-something widow raising a creative and rebellious teen).” His oldest brother’s fiancée and later wife spent time reading him bedtime stories and “She spoiled me horribly. I remember going to my first Saturday matinee with her, in the big city of Provo, at the Academy Theater. It was Disney’s Sleeping Beauty. It scared and fascinated me at the same time. I enjoyed my childhood home (I moved away at age 18) tremendously. However, having the home I grew up in located in Spanish Fork, Utah is another story altogether. I really hated Spanish Fork, the schools, the myopia, the predominant religion, the conservative, uneducated, narrow-mindedness.” He was a Cub Scout but “Every time I put my uniform on, I got a nose bleed. I was a life scout with tons of merit badges – no Eagle though.” His mom bought an upright piano and his sister Pat played very well. His mom decided Charles should play too and he hated lessons. “I believe music is the pinnacle of shared emotional human experience. It is the most respected art by me.”

“I recall getting quarters for doing certain jobs as a kid. I may have started getting an allowance at around age 11. It was whatever amount my mom felt I’d earned that particular week. I would get to choose small bag of hand selected penny candy at Dicks (Hawkins Market) for being a good boy. I ate dime fries with fry sauce and drank nickel lime cokes (such excellent food with genetic heart disease – NOT!).” His first job was selling night crawlers. His father helped him bury an old fridge in the ground which they filled with peat moss, some coffee grounds for food and lots of worms. Charles sold them for \$.12 a dozen. He then worked as a stocker/bagger at Franks Market on Main Street for \$2.35 per hour.

His mother called the traveling homeless in their town “hobo’s”. “We lived near fields and the railroad tracks. Often times these men would come to our door and ask for food [in exchange] for work around our place. My mom always fed them and gave them a job to do. Her generosity was always an example to me. One particular man came inside and ate lunch. I was both scared and fascinated. He was ‘a hobo’ after all but he seemed normal, but displaced. I’ve never looked at the homeless quite the same way after having shared my stack of baloney sandwiches with that one that day.”

In his very early years Charles did not know that acting was a profession. “When I was about seven or eight, I saw a transitionally pivotal production of Carousel. After seeing that I knew it had to be the theater for me! My love of the theater only intensified until I met a huge change agent in high school: Mr. B Davis Evans, my high school drama teacher. He had immeasurable impact on not only me, but hundreds of other lives. I wanted to do the same, so I went into theater and education. In hindsight I should have just stuck with theater – I would have been rich!” In high school I won several acting and dramatic competitions and “It’s where the real competitor in me was fully liberated and realized. I was known statewide and winning first-place trophies validated me and gave me solid self-confidence at a crucial time in my life. I loved being the last to perform in a competitive final round, and then bringing home a first-place trophy. This competitiveness unfortunately carried over too much into my more mature adult life. Humility is the mother of all principles, and integrity the father; a tricky balance.”

The family had an RCA black and white TV until Charles was eleven when they upgraded to a Zenith color TV with remote control. “My favorite program was I Love Lucy because of the excellent comic timing of Lucille Ball. I also remember Queen for a Day which my mom watched a lot. We faithfully watched Bonanza on Sunday nights, the Kennecott Family Movie and Nightmare Theater. RV had a HUGE part of making up my adult sense of humor. I also remember Father Knows Best, Leave It To Beaver (Wally!) and My Three Sons.”

He credited the following with individuals who had the greatest impact on his life: “My father – his strong, quiet manner. He taught caution, thinking through any situation and self-reliance. My brother LaMar – he taught me fun, love of nature and how to love

children. My sister Colleen – she taught me patience, kindness and non-judgement. Mormon church leaders were always inaccessible to me; too formal, too structured, too emotionally and social awkward.”

Charles didn't go on an LDS mission “Because it wasn't the right thing for me. Pressure, some guilt, some real tension for a 20-year-old. I was my first foray into being authentic. I should have embraced that authenticity much more thereafter. I didn't. Now it is my second most important value, only behind integrity. Integrity to me is when your values and your actions are aligned. Authenticity to me is being who your soul tells you, you truly are.” His Bishop had asked him if he had feelings for men and he said he did. He was advised not to go on a mission and get married. “Religion and spirituality are not the same thing. Neither is gospel and religion. Jesus Christ is not the only messiah, and the golden rule should be, but rarely is, actually practiced by practitioners of religion. It wasn't a religious or church person who had influence over me. Others did and I wanted a religious leader to inspire me – I truly did. But one never came into my life. There have been many, many spiritual hero's and examples in my life after age 40. It was around that same time that I forsook religion. The universe won't send you something powerful or meaningful until you make a space for it.”

He began college at Southern Utah University on an acting/theater scholarship. “Cedar City being the armpit of Utah made me change quickly. I transferred to BYU after one semester. They re-issued a scholarship to me that I'd previously declined. Out of the frying pan and into the proverbial fire! If I'd never gone to BYU – how different my life might have been. How splendid and yet how void of so many, many things that bring me utter joy in my adult years. Next time around I'll choose Berkeley or Stanford!” Charles graduated with a BA and MFA from “The BYU”.

In 1975 Charles married Kelli Jimison. “It was a very exciting and fun day. I was only sad to know my father wasn't there and that Kelli's father had to spend the wedding in a motor home (not approved to go in the Temple) – something I would sadly experience myself many years later at my son Aaron's wedding at the Salt Lake City LDS Temple. Exclusion, conditions, how sad, how wrong. We ate our wedding day dinner at a restaurant called The Nut Tree between Sacramento and San Francisco. I drank too many large soft drinks at dinner, and I didn't want to wait in a long men's room line to pee. Needless to say, and a long drive later, I peed a 3-piece navy blue wool suit about .5 miles from the Bay Bridge. Utter and complete mortification!” After a few years together Charles and Kelli began having children. They had four: Ryan, twin boys Aaron and Joel, and daughter Rachel. “We talked about it before we were even married. Having kids was always a priority, a dream, and indeed the greatest blessing four times over. Being parents was our greatest collective roles.” Charles met Kelli when he was a college sophomore. “She was very loud and somewhat bossy when I first met her. Later we were in a play Mask Club together at

BYU and it was then that we started dating seriously. I was attracted to her rebellious and spontaneous personality and character. She was very feisty and outspoken, plus she was a Californian. Her intelligence to date is keen, and that's what drew me towards her." He missed the draft for Vietnam by three months. "Thank God for Richard Nixon, the only goddamned Republican I ever voted for!"

Their first apartment was in North Orem. "Birth control pills and mood swings too. Yikes! After the pills went away so did we – having moved to Provo. We lived below Evilene, the fat landlord from the 'she Wiz.'" He knew he was gay and a devout Mormon at the same time. As practicing members of the faith would do, he turned to his Bishop for spiritual advice, and was told that if he married Kelli his gay thoughts would go away, and if they had children, his gayness would disappear faster. He opted to stay married and have children. He graduated from BYU with a master's degree in Fine Arts with an emphasis in Film and Theater Direction, Instructional Design and Adult Learning and taught drama at Payson and Mountain View High Schools. Students under his direction won many statewide drama competitions. He concurrently produced community theater in Utah County by directing shows such as "Big River" and "Annie". His marriage to Kelli was happy but Charles did not feel he was being authentic. After twenty years of marriage hiding his homosexuality, he divorced Kelli so that "I would never live a lie like that again." "Living through 1993 was the hardest and possibly bravest thing I ever did. In one year, I came out of the closet, left Mormonism, changed professions, got ex-communicated, divorced and held my mother as she died." He left teaching, moved to Salt Lake City and was employed by Franklin Covey and then later as a life coach. His choice to live closer to more live theater landed him roles at the Salt Lake Acting Company and regional productions like Greater Tuna, A Tuna Christmas, God's Country, The Foreigner, A Funny Thing Happened on the Way to the Forum, A Midsummer Night's Dream, Semmelweis, The Imaginary Invalid, Ah Wilderness and Prisoner of Second Avenue. He will be remembered for the role of evil Roy Cohn in Angels in America.

Charles was also Founder and Artistic Director of Provo Theater Company and for 10 years he directed such plays as Oleanna, The Boys Next Door, Big River, Peter Pan, Godspell and Lend Me a Tenor. He was President, Vice President and Board Member for the Educational Theater Assn., where he was given the prestigious President's Award, and is in the EDTA Hall of Fame. He was involved as an actor, board and committee member with The Sundance Playwright's Laboratory, The Utah Arts Council, The College Board, The Kennedy Center Educational Arts Advisory Board and the Getty Foundation. He worked well with others who listened. "Listening is most important; people don't care how much you know until they know how much you care. Listening builds trust/ trust worthiness. Candid honesty is also crucial, nothing worse than a passive/aggressive team member. Standing up for one another is essential, too. Not being duplicitous, vision, energy passion, engagement around common purpose must all be discussed and infused

for a good team to become a great team. Taking responsibility for your choices and actions also goes a long way.”

Charles was a celebrated actor, director, and activist who created the famous persona of Sister Dottie S. Dixon, an LDS mother who fiercely loved her gay son. “Sister” appeared on KRCL and KXRK’s “Radio From Hell” for years and sold out theatrical performances at the Salt Lake Acting Company. She would appear at fundraisers for the Utah AIDS Foundation and the PRIDE Center often touting her home grown Utah wisdom and sharing vile recipes of Jell-O salad with carrots and celery, Candy Bar salad and of course, her secret to funeral potatoes.

In 2011 Charles portrayal of Sister Dottie S. Dixon in *The Passion of Sister Dottie S. Dixon, Second Helpings* won him the Mayor’s Artist Award at the Utah Arts Festival. That same year, Salt Lake City’s First Unitarian Church gave him the ‘Fairly Free Thinker Award’ and Sister Dottie was the grand marshal of Moab’s first-ever PRIDE festival. It was a big year for Charles as he married Doug Lott, followed up with a legal marriage in Utah on December 26th, 2013 during the 17-day window when a judge’s ruling in the *Kitchen v Herbert* case made same-sex marriage suddenly legal in Utah. They divorced several years later.

As a leader in the LGBTQ+ community he served as President, Board, Member and Chair of the Mission Values and Leadership Development Team for the Utah Pride Center as well as Board Member for Equality Utah.

In writing notes in his last days, Charles reflected on his favorite memory of his mother.

“My

dear mother is a collection of memories. Many are very real today as I’m dealing with death, loss and disease. I’m writing this literally as my last entry. It is also the hardest for some odd reason. I’m going to select my childhood memories of my mom. For it was in those years she seemed most fulfilled, happy and satisfied in her hard life. My father was her utter center and reason for living. My memories of my mom working for her family – cooking and cleaning, completely sacrificing in every possible way. All five of us children never doubted for one single moment that she would give her life for ours. My parents love was a very strong and powerful influence and example in retrospect. Ultimately a true shaper of who I am as a father, lover, partner, companion and now grandfather.” Adding “My father was a man who believed in justice and fairness, which are certainly anthems of mine as well. He was FOR the working man, and I am more and more socialist each year I grow older.”

Charles has passed and somewhere out in the ether with his beloved mother and siblings. Although he did not believe in organized religion, Charles was a very spiritual man and followed principles of Tao and Native American tribes. Parents: Darryl Jarvis and Zephia Frost (parents, deceased); Siblings: LaMar, Colleen, Patsy (all deceased), Kenneth; Children: Charles Ryan (Alisa) Frost, Aaron Jarvis (Sarai) Frost, Joel Jarvis (Mandi) Frost,

Rachel Frost (Ryan); Grandchildren: Demeree Frost, Naomi Frost, Charles Tobin Frost (deceased), Joceline Frost, Audrey Frost, Ryan Connor Frost, Owen Frost, Jorel Frost, Fynn Frost, Freya Frost, Cormac Frost.

A public Celebration of Life will be held on June 5th, from 4-6 PM at Neil O'Donnell Funerall Home at 372 E 100 S, SLC UT.

# Events

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**JUN** **Celebration of Life** 04:00PM - 06:00PM

**5**

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Neil O'Donnell Funeral Home

372 E 100 S, Salt Lake City, UT, US, 84111

# Comments

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“ An external video has been added.



Neil O'Donnell Funeral Home - June 09 at 07:18 PM

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“ A webcast video has been added.



Neil O'Donnell Funeral Home - May 29 at 05:23 PM

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“ Lynn was an exceptional Theatre Arts coach, as well as an amazing travel guide for three trips to New York. My deepest condolences for the whole Frost family.

Jeff Clements - June 05 at 06:39 PM

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“ Peaceful White Lilies Basket was purchased for the family of Charles Lynn Frost.



June 04 at 06:41 PM

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“ Shawn Bender & Rob Black purchased the Beautiful in Blue for the family of Charles Lynn Frost.



Shawn Bender & Rob Black - June 04 at 05:36 PM

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“ A legend of my heart exits the world's stage and the curtain drops. A heart felt thank you to Charles Lynn for being a bright light to me in darker times. May all those who were fortunate to be close to him be comforted.

X0- Joseph



Joseph - June 04 at 04:23 PM

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“ Simply Elegant Spathiphyllum was purchased for the family of Charles Lynn Frost.



June 04 at 12:44 PM

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“ Matthew J Lyon & Denise Hadley purchased the Sweetest Sunrise Bouquet for the family of Charles Lynn Frost.



Matthew J Lyon & Denise Hadley - June 04 at 10:35 AM

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“ Simply Elegant Spathiphyllum was purchased for the family of Charles Lynn Frost.



June 03 at 09:53 PM

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“ Basket of Memories was purchased for the family of Charles Lynn Frost.



June 02 at 07:24 PM

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“ Lovely One Spathiphyllum Plant was purchased for the family of Charles Lynn Frost.



June 02 at 12:11 AM

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“ Serene Reflections Bouquet was purchased for the family of Charles Lynn Frost.



June 01 at 05:18 PM

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“ 12 files added to the album Memories Album



Joel Frost - June 01 at 01:30 PM

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“ Full Of Love Bouquet was purchased for the family of Charles Lynn Frost.



May 30 at 03:44 PM

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“ Charles was a kind, intelligent bigger than life person. He was always so kind and lovely to me personally. I so enjoyed his acting and his friendship. Fly high Lynn!

Douglas Tollstrup - May 28 at 01:25 PM

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“ Victoria Richmond lit a candle in memory of Charles Lynn Frost



**Victoria Richmond** - May 27 at 04:57 PM

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“ Berry Payne lit a candle in memory of Charles Lynn Frost



**Berry Payne** - May 27 at 10:31 AM

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“ Bill Hubbard lit a candle in memory of Charles Lynn Frost



**Bill Hubbard** - May 26 at 08:22 PM

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“ Anna & Julie lit a candle in memory of Charles Lynn Frost



**Anna & Julie** - May 26 at 03:03 PM

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“ Ron Steckler lit a candle in memory of Charles Lynn Frost



**Ron Steckler** - May 26 at 10:33 AM

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“ 1 file added to the album Memories Album



**Neil O'Donnell Funeral Home** - May 25 at 07:58 PM

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“ 1 file added to the album Memories Album



Neil O'Donnell Funeral Home - May 25 at 07:54 PM



“ My all time fave photo (and his/hers)! But oh, how Dottie hated those shoes! “Them HEELS, Miss Judy! How do ya do it?!” 😊

**Judy Ball** - May 26 at 08:08 PM



“ Charles was quite the persona! He was always very cordial to me and was there with a kind word and Hug. God bless his family and friends. He made me smile!!!

**STEPHEN L FIFE** - May 30 at 03:47 PM