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ERNEST L. WILKINSON, PRESIDENT

29 February 1968

DEPARTMENT OF LANGUAGES

Dear Phyllis

Ever since your father's funeral I have intended to write you and express my love and appreciation for him. Perhaps a non-family recital of the events prior to and during the funeral will also give you some comfort.

As you perhaps know, I was High Priest Group Leader for our Ward and thus had opportunity to work very closely with your father these past two years. He is missed more than words can say by our group because he was our teacher. Your father was a modest man and often wished aloud that he had more education and more teaching ability. It often seemed that he may have even had just a bit of an inferiority complex about his abilities in this area. As a consequence, when I became H.P. Group Leader, he immediately informed me that he was willing to step aside as teacher of the group for one more well trained. This was no resignation but only a characteristically diplomatic way of leaving me freedom of action should I wish to make a change. I felt that no one could do as well as he had done and told him so. He was pleased that we wanted him and willing to continue. Actually, there was no need for him to feel inadequate because he made up in enthusiasm and preparation what he felt he lacked in other areas. Each of his lessons was carefully planned out and presented with good humor and enthusiasm. It was always a source of surprise to me that he could fit the lessons to any time that was available from 5 minutes to an hour and do it without excuse or complaint as if that was exactly how he had planned it. Aside from the excellent job done in teaching us, it was always a source of comfort to know that one would always have his complete support in any worthy undertaking...and such support was never given grudgingly.

One of the most impressive things I have ever seen in my life was your family's activities the Sunday before the funeral. It was no premeditated show but all came about quite naturally but turned out to be the greatest tribute I have ever seen a family make to their parents. It began by

Packard carrying on with his responsibilities...and they included conducting all of the meetings. Jack then confirmed his daughter, Lee blessed their child and all of the family (male) took part in these two ordinances. Both Lee and Packard bore their testimonies. How proud your dad would have been. These people were all performing some of the most meaningful acts of our lives and doing it with dignity and conviction which reflected that two marvelous parents had transferred to their children the most precious gift of all...a testimony of God and his Son, Jesus Christ.

So, Phyllis, it was not a sad occasion...not in the usual sense...not sad because your father's life and work had been frustrated...not sad because there were fears for his future or regrets for his past. No, all was in harmony and this was only another stage in God's plan. All of your family understood this and conducted themselves accordingly. Your mother, especially, is lonely but I know of no one who can approach such a parting with more equanimity. She is a wonderful woman, full of faith and love and compassion...a worthy mate for a fine man. She will fill her life with kind deeds for others, with concern for her family, friends and neighbors and will be buoyed up by the knowledge that your father will also be engaged in a profitable work in God's kingdom. That faith and assurance will make it possible for her to extract much from life, even though alone. All of the other members of the family are carrying on in a way that would make you proud. Rulon (I forgot to mention that he was active in some of the activity of our Sacrament meeting, too) was in our Belle Soirée and did a beautiful job...along with Mary Lou.

I have had much to do with Packard of late and must tell you that my admiration, respect and love grow with each further contact. He is a man of God and will make many contributions to God's work and to the world during his lifetime. We had had many discussions about our upbringing before your father fell ill and Packard had an unbounded appreciation for the ideals which had been transmitted to him and for the wisdom and love of your parents.

I hope this will, in some small way, compensate you for your loss and for not being able to be present with the family for this occasion.

Sincerely,
David M. [unclear]

An instructor of Russian at
BU.