



- Latest
- Feature Stories
- Magazine
- From the Church
- Podcasts
- Videos
- Book C

FEATURE STORIES

Matchmaking by a fellow Apostle, an unexpected job resignation, and a baseball cap: The story behind President and Sister Oaks’s first date

By [Richard E. Turley Jr.](#) February 07, 2022 09:32 AM MST



This excerpt is adapted from [In the Hands of the Lord: The Life of Dallin H.](#)

We use cookies for analytics, advertising and to improve our site. To find out more, see our [Privacy Policy](#).

✓ Accept Cookies

One thing that took place that prepared President Dallin H. Oaks for remarriage was when all four of their daughters came to him “individually and told me they were ready for me to remarry,” he wrote. June had prepared them to do that. “During her yearlong battle with cancer,” he recalled, “she came to realize that she would die before me.” In that time, “she frequently told our four daughters that she knew I would need to remarry and that when that time came, they should help me find a companion who would fit well into our family and welcome her.”¹

Nearly two years after June’s death, he felt “strong pressure from my daughters, confirmed by my own feeling, that it was time to look for a companion.”² With that encouragement, he decided to become proactive, to exercise faith by doing.

“I went forward to find a wife,” he wrote with determination in his journal on July 6, 2000, nearly two years after June’s death. He picked up the phone and called three General Authorities to request that they “watch for eligible and qualified women I could consider.” One of those General Authorities, then-Elder M. Russell Ballard of the Quorum of the Twelve, “immediately suggested Kristen M. McMain.”

Kristen McMain was a fifty-two-year-old educational consultant for a large publisher of K-12 books. She lived in Salt Lake City but traveled all over the world in her professional assignments. She had two degrees from the University of Utah (bachelor’s in English and master’s in special education) and a doctoral degree from BYU (in curriculum and instruction). She had served a

We use cookies for analytics, advertising and to improve our site. To find out more, see our [Privacy Policy](#).

✓ Accept Cookies

she spent quality time with her family in Utah and enjoyed her Church calling as a Gospel Doctrine teacher, she still felt her life lacked balance.³

“Most of my life, energy, and time were going to my employment,” she realized. “Concerned and feeling unable to change my life, I asked my bishop for a blessing.” Her bishop’s unexpected counsel surprised her. “If you do not quit your job,” he pronounced in the blessing, “you will have your blessings in the eternities but not in this life.”

“When I heard his words,” she later wrote, “I felt the truth of them. I had to stop traveling and find employment at home. For a single sister, giving up financial security is no easy thing. I had no new job to go to. I had to go on faith to resign from my job.”

► You may also like: [Sister Oaks shares what it was like being single in the Church for 60 years](#)

Over the next few months, she wrote letter after letter of resignation, only to toss them in the trash. “Finally,” she said, “I wrote a letter clear enough that no one could doubt my intention to resign. I gave notice and planned to leave on July 1, 2000.” Family members, friends, and people at church questioned her judgment, but she had the faith to do what she felt was right.⁴

When her elderly aunts learned she was soon to be unemployed, they arranged an appointment for her to see their nephew Elder M. Russell Ballard because he had connections with Deseret Book and other publishing interests. They thought he might be able to help their niece find employment closer to home

We use cookies for analytics, advertising and to improve our site. To find out more, see our [Privacy Policy](#).

✓ Accept Cookies

For Kristen, meeting with a General Authority about her personal needs seemed rather awkward. “My exposure to General Authorities had been minimal,” she wrote, “and I liked it that way. I had the utmost respect for them. I revered them, but I also understood the line of priesthood jurisdiction and felt confident that my home teachers and my bishop were sufficient to bless my life.” Yet she went forward in meeting Elder Ballard anyway. That was just before Elder Oaks called his fellow Apostle to seek guidance in finding a new wife.⁵

Elder Ballard “arranged for me to meet her on her walk Friday in Liberty Park,” Elder Oaks noted. He wanted to be properly dressed for the July 7 occasion, and his daughter Sharmon, who happened to be in town, and her husband, Jack, “immediately took me shopping for clothes,” he wrote in his journal.

Elder Oaks also followed up Elder Ballard’s arrangement with his own personal phone call to Kristen, a call that left her facing “a few daunting circumstances,” she later said. “He wanted to bring . . . Sharmon to meet me before she left town the next day. I did not tell him I had just had a permanent and needed to cover my head. We decided on a walk in Liberty Park,” a popular walking location in southeast Salt Lake. “When I met my future husband and his daughter, I was wearing Levi’s and a baseball cap (to hide my curls) for our walk”—not exactly what she would have chosen for a first meeting with a member of the Twelve.⁶ When Kristen saw Elder Oaks with Sharmon, her first words to him were, “Do you always double-date like this?”

“Looking back,” Kristen reminisced, “I would never have planned to meet an Apostle of the Lord and his daughter dressed so casually. But that baseball cap

We use cookies for analytics, advertising and to improve our site. To find out more, see our [Privacy Policy](#).

✓ Accept Cookies

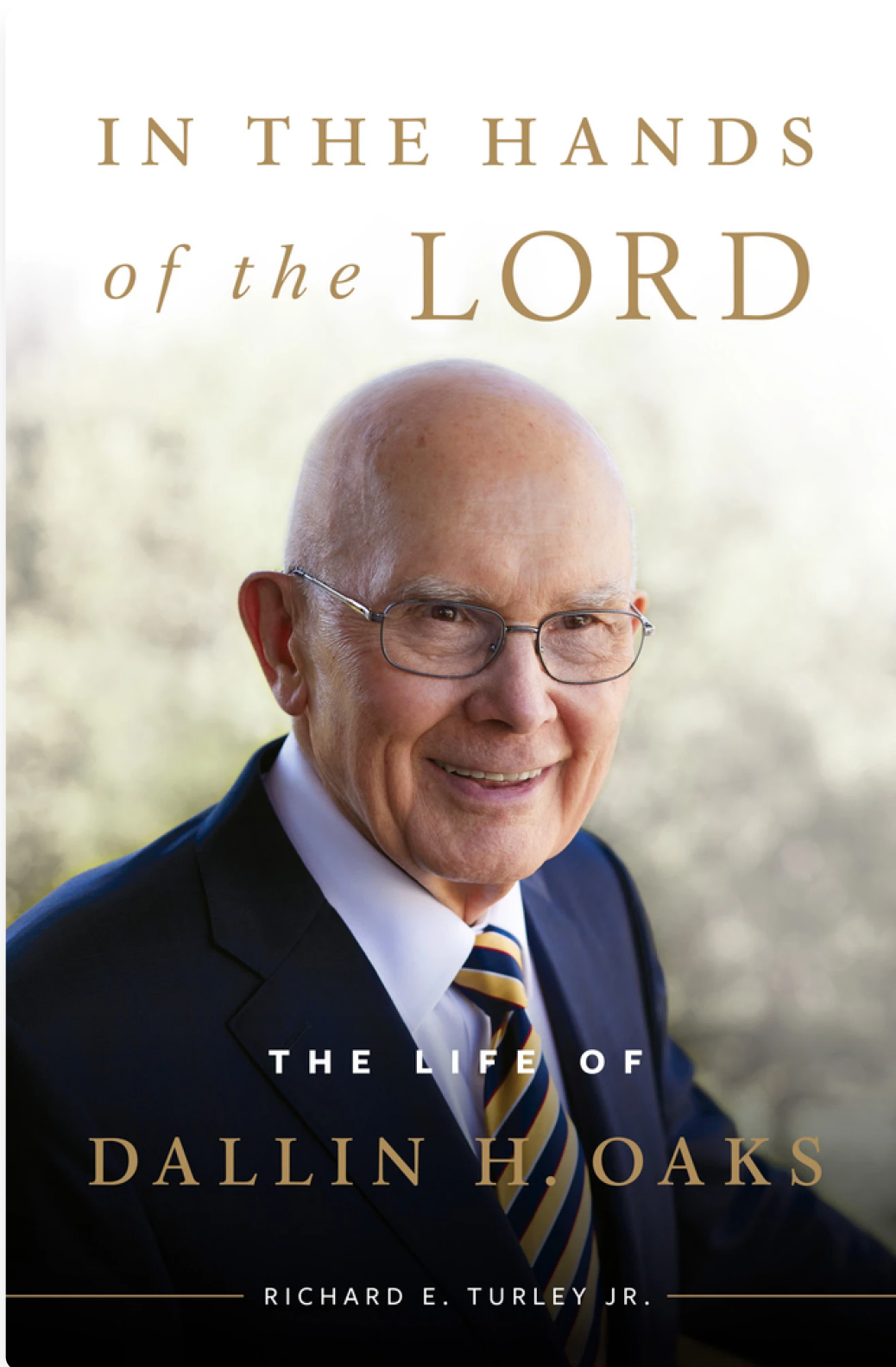
ensued,” she wrote of her visit with them, “seemed like that of three longtime friends. Elder Oaks told me that he had often taken walks with his wife, June, who had died two years earlier. I asked him to tell me about her. From the beginning we felt calm and relaxed with each other. Sharmon shared much about their family and her mother. We laughed and talked, and our courtship began.”⁷

Elder Oaks recorded in his journal the positive reaction to her he felt on this first meeting. “Sharmon and I met and walked with Kristen McMain, who proved to be attractive, intelligent, faithful, and fun,” he wrote. “I was intrigued, and Sharmon was impressed.” The next day, Elder Oaks spent four hours hiking and having a “deep visit with Kristen M. on the foothills above This Is the Place Park,” he recorded in his journal. “I asked her many penetrating questions, and from her answers and questions to me, I continue intrigued.”

Lead image: Jason Swensen, *Church News*

We use cookies for analytics, advertising and to improve our site. To find out more, see our [Privacy Policy](#).

✓ Accept Cookies



In the Hands of the Lord

Dallin H. Oaks may not have seemed the likeliest choice to become an Apostle. His life path had been anything but conventional. He was only seven when his mother became a widow. His young adulthood

We use cookies for analytics, advertising and to improve our site. To find out more, see our [Privacy Policy](#).

✓ Accept Cookies

military experiences, and his distinguished academic and law career. Order it now at DeseretBook.com.

More

Editor's note: This article was originally published on LDSLiving.com in February 2021.

1. Dallin H. Oaks, *Life's Lessons Learned* (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 2011), 144.
2. Oaks, *Life's Lessons Learned*, 145.
3. Kristen M. Oaks, *A Single Voice: The Unexpected Life Is No Less a Life* (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 2008), 14–16; Oaks, *Life's Lessons Learned*, 143–48; Genelle Pugmire, “Provo native, Dallin H. Oaks now serves as first counselor in the First Presidency,” *Daily Herald*, Mar. 28, 2018.
4. Kristen Oaks, *A Single Voice*, 16–17.
5. Kristen Oaks, *A Single Voice*, 18.
6. Kristen Oaks, *A Single Voice*, 18–19.
7. Kristen Oaks, *A Single Voice*, 19.

Tags

Kristen M. Oaks

Dallin H. Oaks

Share



We use cookies for analytics, advertising and to improve our site. To find out more, see our [Privacy Policy](#).

✓ Accept Cookies



FEATURE STORIES

Why a Pentecostal says attending a Latter-day Saint church service was ‘the best decision I’ve ever made’

We use cookies for analytics, advertising and to improve our site. To find out more, see our [Privacy Policy](#).

✓ Accept Cookies

We use cookies for analytics, advertising and to improve our site. To find out more, see our [Privacy Policy](#).

✓ Accept Cookies



LATTER-DAY SAINT LIFE

15 powerful books and talks by our prophet and apostles

We use cookies for analytics, advertising and to improve our site. To find out more, see our [Privacy Policy](#).

✓ Accept Cookies



FEATURE STORIES

‘One step at a time’: What 1 woman’s escape from the 99th floor of the South Tower on 9/11 can teach the next generation

We use cookies for analytics, advertising and to improve our site. To find out more, see our [Privacy Policy](#).

✓ Accept Cookies

Stay in the loop!

Enter your email to receive updates on our LDS Living content



Podcasts

Feature Stories

Videos

From the Church

Book Club

Letter-day Saint Life

We use cookies for analytics, advertising and to improve our site. To find out more, see our [Privacy Policy](#).

✓ Accept Cookies

Helpful Links

Deseret Book
Deseret Bookshelf
Deseret Video
Time Out for Women
Modest Clothing

About Us
Contact Us
Submit a Story
Advertise
Terms of Use
Privacy Policy
Do Not Sell My Information

©2022 LDS Living • A Division of Deseret Book Company

We use cookies for analytics, advertising and to improve our site. To find out more, see our [Privacy Policy](#).

✓ Accept Cookies