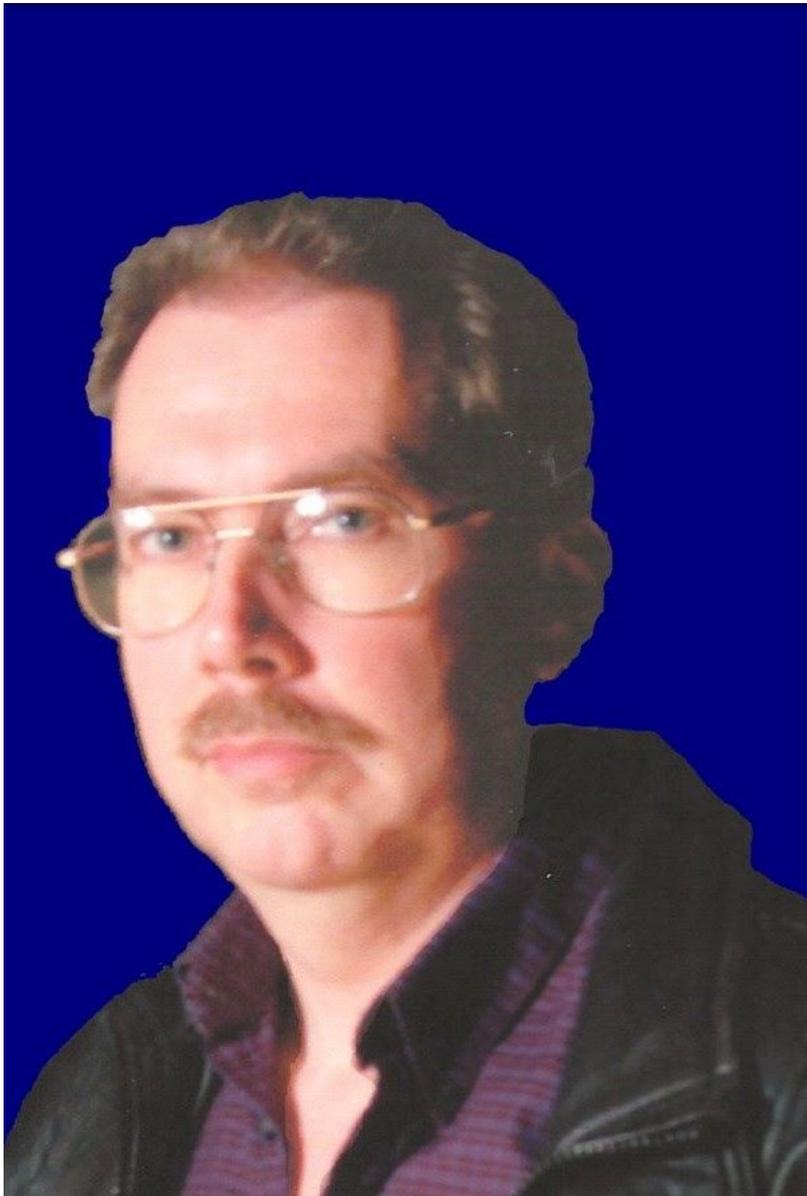


## **Alan Scott Robinson biography**



Alan was born on May 31, 1950 in Salt Lake City, Utah, one of seven children of Dorothy Ada Cromar Robinson and Charles Mardee Robinson. He was early known as a scholarly and studious child, often -- to the distress of the large family -- locking himself in the single family bathroom to read from the family's set of The Encyclopaedia Britannica. This early fascination with knowledge served Alan well, as in later years he was the only person known to his many friends who could read every issue of Scientific American magazine, and fully grasp the complexities of all the articles ranging from theoretical physics to tectonic geology, DNA discoveries, applied mathematics, and current biomedical developments.

Alan studied astrophysics at the University of Utah, then spent two years on a mission for the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints (Mormon) in Melbourne, Australia. Upon returning to North America he and another university student, Rebecca Louise Boes, married in the Salt Lake LDS Temple while Alan was employed at the Hansen Planetarium in Salt Lake City.

When their son, Christian Alan, was about a year old, Alan moved to the Westchester County Planetarium in a northern New York City suburb, and Becky and Alan lived in Chappaqua, New York. They, briefly, returned to Salt Lake City, but because of Alan's vast knowledge of optical effects and his exuberant curiosity, he was hired by the Walt Disney Corporation to become an "Imagineer" at WED (named for founder Walter Elias Disney) in Glendale California. The Imagineers at WED did research and development for special effects, both for Disney films and the newly developing theme parks in Anaheim, CA and Lake Buena Vista (Orlando adjacent), Florida.

Alan was greatly responsible for some of both Disneyland's and Disney World's (EPCOT) most memorable visuals -- notably the Leap-Frog Fountains at both, which later became a hall-mark of the two companies in which Alan was a principal.

Following the completion of Disney's EPCOT Center in Florida, Alan survived a cut in the Special Effects department staff from 125 to scarcely a dozen. He and two other Imagineers now had ample time to 'play in the water' and to moon-light with special commissions to recreate their earlier exemplary water features outside the Disney realm. It was during this time in California that Alan and Becky's 3 youngest children were born: James Rowlandson, Daniel Timothy, and Amy Elizabeth.

Two of this team's early and most notable projects were for an enormous, several-acre Fountain Place 'water garden' at the base of the striking I.M. Pei-designed Allied Bank Tower building in downtown Dallas, and the famed quadrant, courtyard fountain in the Los Angeles Music Center (think: Lincoln Center in NYC or Kennedy Center in D.C). This large installation of water jets coming up from the paving blocks at the base of a huge Jacques Lipchitz sculpt, sits in front of the Dorothy Chandler Pavilion, where the annual Academy Awards were presented for many decades.

Both the above projects were created by WET Design (Water Entertainment Technology) co-founded by Alan Robinson, and later based on part of the Universal Film Studios campus in the Los Angeles community of Studio City. Among Alan's most notable WET Design projects were many in Los Angeles (the Gas Company Tower lobby, Universal City's City Walk, and The WaterCourt at California Plaza. Away from L.A. Alan restored Rockefeller Center's Prometheus Fountain and the Museum of Modern Art's (MOMA) courtyard fountain where Alan worked with architect Phillip Johnson, who had designed MOMA's signature building, decades before.

Alan's creative genius was seen in the restoration of the large fountain at the base of the Space Needle in Seattle, the Gavidae Commons fountains between Saks Fifth Ave. and Neiman-Marcus in Minneapolis, the State Capital grounds in Harrisburg, PA, at convention centers in San Diego and Chicago, the Galleria in Houston, the Capital Promenade in Sacramento, CA, countless casino water features in Las Vegas, Lake Tahoe, Reno and Macao, China. He created the fountain at the base of Navy Pier in Chicago and the waterwalls of the Hearst Building lobby just off Columbus Circle in New York City. During those years Alan was a principal in major water projects from Edmonton, Alberta to Birmingham, Alabama.

In addition to working on projects with I.M. Pei and Phillip Johnson/John Burgee, Alan also collaborated with water features for projects by famed architects Michael Graves, Robert A.M. Stern, Sir Norman Foster (now Lord Foster), Kevin Roche and John Dinkeloo (direct successors to Eero Saarinen), and Skidmore Owens Merrill architects. He created water features at the Vancouver World's Fair, and for the Atlanta Olympics. His former firm later did signature projects at two subsequent Olympics, and renovated/redesigned the Revson Fountain in front of NYC's Metropolitan Opera House in Lincoln Center.

Alan's many overseas water features include the King Faud Airport in Saudi Arabia, the massive water feature atop Victoria Peak in Hong Kong, a children's museum in Mexico City, Tokyo Dome, a hospital in Tel Aviv, the Gold Market in Bangkok and many other projects in Jakarta, Korea, the United Arab Emirates, Japan and Singapore. His first firm, WET Design later did the legendary 8-acre swaying waves water feature at the Bellagio Hotel in Las Vegas and the world's largest performing water feature in Dubai.

After leaving WET Design Alan co-founded another water feature design-build

company, Watermark which became the fountain consultants for the famed horticultural display gardens at Longwood, between Philadelphia and Wilmington, DE, where Alan helped design a new children's garden, and worked to maintain the century old fountains at Longwood Gardens built by Pierre Samuel duPont. During this time the Smithsonian had an exhibition called "Fountains: Splash and Spectacle" which was a history of water features, and published a massive 'coffee-table' publication of the same name with the cover photo of one of Alan's projects and many references to his works within. Websites of same are at 'www. Fountains by Alan Robinson,'

In the course of his career, during which he was arguably the foremost fountain and water feature designer/engineer, Alan created projects featuring not only water, but fire, smoke, steam, ice and remarkable lighting. He pioneered the use of compressed air, rather than water pressure, to send jets of water as high as 240 feet. He held patents for innovative techniques to create laminar flow streams, for water to come out of the paving blocks beneath the feet of enthralled observers, rather than from pools or visible reservoirs. These were the world's first 'user-friendly' fountains, now copied with abandon and without attribution, including in his adoptive home town, Asheville's Pack Square Park's "Splashville."

In addition to being an accomplished designer, engineer and 'imagineer', Alan was also a skilled pilot, who over the years kept small planes, the most recent of which was a Cessna Cardinal RG that provided countless hours of recreational flying and opportunity to fly from Southern California's San Gabriel Valley (ELM) to Western North Carolina (AVL) which became a common ritual. The small plane got family and friends as well as 'stuff' from ironing boards to computers and printers from coast to coast.

Alan was introduced to the Society of Friends (Quakers) by Jim Cavener, at Claremont monthly meeting, in California's San Gabriel Valley. This was a better fit for Alan at the time. Becky and Alan, their three youngest children and Jim moved to Asheville, NC in a blended and extended family, and Alan transferred his involvement with Friends/Quakers to Asheville monthly meeting. Early on, Alan had called for a Quaker Clearness Committee to help him sort out the path he would take in his unusual family and professional tasks. Later he attended Pacific Yearly Meeting of The Society of Friends, and then became very involved with Southern Appalachian Yearly Meeting, becoming Treasurer of this regional association of Quakers.

Alan was nominated to Asheville Friends Meeting's Ministry and Council for some years, then became co-clerk of Asheville Friends Meeting. Although Becky and Alan remained married for many years, eventually they divorced after Becky and their 3 youngest children had moved back to Salt Lake City. Alan and Jim remained partnered for two decades, then Alan met -- and ultimately married, David Russell Spicer, under care of Asheville Friends Meeting -- with Alan's youngest son, Daniel Robinson, and former partner, Jim Cavener, both present.

Health issues plagued Alan for much of his later life. He was exposed to HIV in the first decade of that plague, about thirty years before his death, outliving by several times the survival expectancy for such. In later years he suffered from severe Celiac disease, finally diagnosed after many years of an unrestricted diet. He was later diagnosed with bipolar disorder along with peripheral neuropathy, hand and arm tremors and sleep apnea, though maintaining a productive and rewarding life through it all.

In the summer of 2017 Alan was discovered to have a rare and pre-leukemic blood cancer, myelodysplastic syndrome, a major set-back on the health front. After months attempting heroic efforts to forestall or reverse this condition, his oncologists and hematologists concluded there was nothing more they could do to treat this affliction. In early February Alan decided it was time to let go and he quit eating and drinking, and was moved to Asheville's superb Hospice facility (Solace) where he died on February 7th. Alan had lived a good life, and died a good and well-prepared-for death. On this latter matter of preparing for his own death, Alan Scott Robinson was a noble example for us all.