

Stephen **Marriott**

Eagle Scout exemplified courage, became an advocate for people with disabilities.

In a ceremony at the 2017 National Jamboree, a bronze commemorating Stephen G. Marriott was unveiled at the Summit Bechtel Reserve. The memorial to the Eagle Scout, business leader and advocate for the disabled stands in front of the future site of a facility that will be dedicated to disability awareness.

The forthcoming center will give Scouts the opportunity to experience some of the disabilities that people with physical challenges must live with every day. Scouts will take training and complete exercises to help them get a feel for what it would be like to have these kinds of challenges.

"I think it's really impactful for Scouts to learn what it's like to be disabled, if only for a few minutes, and to have a better appreciation for those who are less fortunate," says J.W. "Bill" Marriott Jr., Stephen's father.

"I think everybody needs to be more accommodating, and everybody needs to have a better understanding of what it's like to be disabled," Bill Marriott adds. "But if we're strong and healthy, we take it for granted. We don't have the ability to understand what it's

like to be disabled."

Stephen Marriott died in 2013 from complications of mitochondrial disease. The rare muscle disorder gradually cost him his eyesight, hearing and strength before taking his life at age 54.

Because of the effects of the disease, Stephen began having difficulty seeing and hearing as a boy. He wore hearing aids in high school. As a graduate school student, he struggled to read the blackboard in his business classes. Eventually, he lost all his sight. Muscle disorders caused by the ailment, meanwhile, prevented him from using Braille.

But Stephen accepted his difficulties and never shrank from life's challenges. After earning his Eagle rank, he completed a two-year church mission. Returning to school, he earned a bachelor's degree from Brigham Young University. Later he received a master's of business administration from Arizona State University.

Stephen was active in his community, including as an adult Scouter who served at the unit and council levels. He also was a board member or otherwise involved with a number of organizations dedicated to helping people

with disabilities. They include the American Foundation for the Blind, the American Speech–Language–Hearing Association, and the National Institute on Deafness and Other Communication Disorders.

Along with these activities, Stephen had a successful career in the family business, Marriott International, started by his grandfather. Stephen began working at Marriott while still in his teens, helping out during summer vacation as a cook at a Roy Rogers restaurant.

From this humble beginning, Stephen rose through the ranks into management. He filled a variety of increasingly responsible roles in many company departments, from housekeeping and sales to customer service and accounting. By 1991, he was working as general manager of a Marriott in Bethesda, Md.

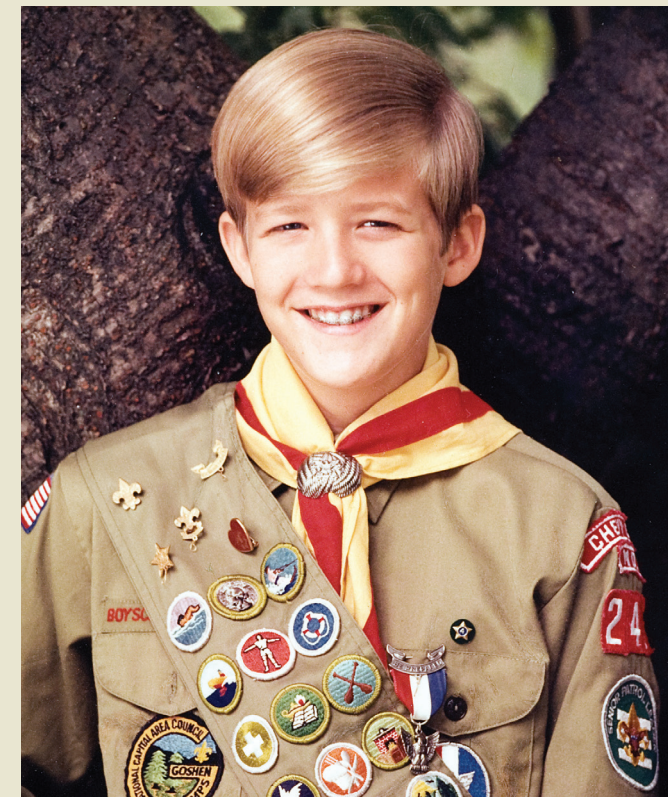
In the last years of his life, Stephen held the title of executive vice president for culture

at Marriott International. In that position, he helped disseminate and maintain Marriott International's corporate culture and values. By the time of his death, he was a well-regarded and effective business leader.

As his illness made it increasingly difficult for him to see, Stephen began using a voice-activated computer. He used a wheelchair to get around and had a guide to assist him when he visited Marriott's properties. Even as his struggles with the illness increased, Stephen endeavored to go to work every day, his father says.

Stephen was not shy about putting himself in the public eye. He was an energetic advocate for the disabled, as well as a longtime sales trainer. He gave many speeches, which in later years he memorized.

"He had slides and knew at each point in the speech when



to move the slides," his father recalls. "It was very impressive to people. They would give him standing ovations."

Throughout his struggles with the condition that ultimately claimed his life, Stephen never sought praise

Marriott earned his Eagle Scout Award in January 1974 as part of Troop 241 in Chevy Chase, Md.

or sympathy, his father says. "He never bragged about himself. He never ever complained about his situation."

WHY WE GIVE

Because we want to make Scouting available to all.

THE MARRIOTT FAMILY has long been a significant supporter of Scouting. Nine members of Stephen Marriott's family, including his father and son, are Eagle Scouts. "Scouting is a very important factor in the lives of young men," Bill Marriott says. And he's given generously in order to make Scouting available to more young people.

Among the symbols of Marriott appreciation of Scouting is the J.W. Marriott, Jr. Leadership Center. Currently in the design

phase, it is part of the Thomas S. Monson Leadership Excellence Complex at the Summit Bechtel Family National Scout Reserve in West Virginia, and it's where young people will learn to lead others.

Stephen's own mark on the Scouting movement will be stamped with his trademark determination to succeed and live a full life despite significant challenges. To that end, the future accessibility center at the Summit Bechtel Reserve is dedicated to helping Stephen's

message resonate with disabled as well as able-bodied Scouts.

"I'm sure there are many Scouts around the world who have this kind of challenge in their lives," Bill Marriott says. "We want to encourage them to participate fully in Scouting, camping and other activities that boys who are less afflicted can do."

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Stephen G. Marriott, son of Bill Marriott, was an advocate for Scouting and organizations dedicated to helping people with disabilities.