## Family knew it would have to retrieve body in old mine

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Keith Fivas,

brother-in-law of

SALT LAKE CITY (AP) — When Tooele County rescuers called off their search for 18-year-old Jeremiah Etherington, his father looked at his brotherin-law, Keith Fivas, and they knew it was their turn to try.

Daniel Etherington had lost a son 10 years earlier and he couldn't stand the thought of leaving another buried in a mine shaft.

"I felt he might still be alive. He might be down

their waiting .... I couldn't live with him dying in a hole," Dan said of Jeremiah, who had fallen more than 400 feet down an abandoned mine shaft nearly a week before.

"I didn't want some old miner to go down there and find him 10 years later," Fivas said. "I was having dreams. It was driving me crazy."

The pair, along with other family members and friends, mustered \$1,200 for climbing equipment and in cover of darkness Fivas descended into the mine

and recovered the broken body of his nephew early Friday.

At a news conference Saturday, an emotional Fivas, surrounded by his brothers and fellow Salt Lake City firefighters, told of the daring retrieval the 10 relatives and friends made after county rescuers declared it was too dangerous a task.

The teen had fallen off a ledge into the shaft last Saturday while he and several others were spelunking in the Honoreme Mine, a silver mine about 32 miles southwest of Salt Lake City and abandoned in 1928.

The sheriff's searcher, Curtis Allen, had rappelled 350 feet into the mine without spotting Etherington's body and decided it would be folly to continue.

Fivas and Etherington both acknowledged the recovery was dangerous, and they don't fault Tooele County officials for calling it off late Monday.

"I believe they did everything they could without risking another death," Dan Etherington said.

The family and friends involved in the effort, made their first trip to the mine Wednesday night and found they needed additional rope and equipment. They also had to dig their way back in to the horizontal passage that led to the vertical shaft because the opening had been bulldozed closed after the search was called off.

Secured with two ropes that were anchored to a winch and water tank, Fivas descended into the dark shaft with an intercom and backpack full of food and batteries for his lighted miner's helmet.

He maneuvered through large timbers and sections of metal pipe wedged crossways at intervals in the 20-

foot-diameter shaft. His shoulders and arms were bruised as baseball-sized rocks dislodged by the ropes pelted him while he slowly made his way down the shaft.

After more than two hours, Fivas reached a large mass of timbers and water mains about 420 feet down. He made his way through the maze of debris and found Jeremiah — his favorite nephew — suspended face down in the fallen mine supports.

"I sat there and said a few words," Fivas said. "I said,

'Jeremiah, wherever you are, we tried.''' Fivas then folded the broken and battered body at the waist and bound it together with rope.

Exhausted by the effort, the 6-foot-2, 250-pound Fivas napped for an hour and a half in a horizontal shaft of the mine.

It took nine hours to hoist Fivas and the body of Jeremiah to anxious family and friends waiting at the top of the shaft located about three-quarters of a horizontal mile into the side of a mountain.

"I was petrified," Dan Etherington said Friday. "The slightest mistake we made would have sent a shower of rocks down there. It was dangerous. Keith could have been killed at any minute."

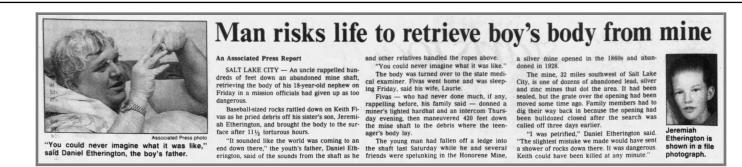
<sup>'</sup> Jeremiah's body was taken to the state medical examiner. He will be buried in Lakepoint on Wednesday — next to a 5-year-old brother who was hit by a truck and killed 10 years ago.

Fivas, whose father, brother and uncle are also firefighters, said he considered going down during the county's attempt and never had second thoughts about carrying out the plan.

## 1996 Jan body of Jerimiah Etherington located

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