



Dr. Albert R. Gilgen

September 19, 1930 - January 4, 2021

Dr. Albert R. Gilgen (1930-2021)

Dr. Gilgen's parents emigrated from Switzerland in the mid-1920s, and he was born in Akron, Ohio September 19th, 1930. His parents moved back to Switzerland in 1932, returning to the States in 1936. He attended kindergarten in Bern while in Switzerland. His first language was "Swiss German." Interestingly, although his mother's father, Rudolph Rufer, was Swiss, her mother, Jeanne Pauline Augustine Bunel, was French. Dr. Gilgen's mother was born in England because both of her parents were living in Windsor at the time.

He grew up in Akron and graduated from Garfield High School in 1948 as President of his class and Salutatorian. He also won the Busch & Lomb Science Award and Manhood Cup. He was awarded a Naval Reserve Officer Training Corps (NROTC) Scholarship, which paid for most of his expenses at Princeton University, from which he graduated in 1952 with a B.A. in chemistry and a commission in the Navy as an Ensign.

He served on the Destroyer USS James C. Owen (DD 776), stationed in Norfolk, Virginia. In 1953, his ship went to Korea as the conflict between North and South Korea was ending. During his time in the Navy (1952-1955), his ship circumnavigated the globe. He also crossed the Equator changing his

status from “Polliwog” to “Shellback.”

In 1954, a year before his time in the Navy was over, he married Carol Elizabeth Keyes, a Junior at Bryn Mawr College, located near Philadelphia, whom he had met on a blind date during his time at Princeton. They had three children, nicknamed Jim, Beth, and Bert all of whom now live in Cedar Falls (Bert Returned from Texas in 2011). In the early to mid-1960s, both he and Carol earned master’s degrees from Kent State University, he in psychology and she in political science. He then went on to earn his doctorate at Michigan State in 1965. They had a long and happy marriage, until she passed away on her birthday: December 14th, 2011.

During his career as a psychologist he taught at Beloit College and the University of Northern Iowa, where he served as the head of the Psychology Department for nearly 20 years, retiring in 2001. He authored many scholarly papers, and with the help of Carol, wrote and co-edited five books, ranging from contemporary American Psychology to International Psychology and the relevance of chaos theory for psychology. The family spent almost a year in Galway, Ireland (1970-1971) as Dr. Gilgen taught at University of Galway, supported by a Fulbright Scholarship. He presented invited papers in Russia, Austria, Mexico, and Ecuador.

When he retired, Al spent a lot of his time in the recliner watching the birds at the feeder and following the news on TV. He could also be heard around the house singing Good Ole Mountain Dew or playing some lively boogie-woogie on his keyboard.

The family got together to celebrate Al's 90th birthday last fall and everyone was glad to have spoken with him on Christmas via telephone. Al often commented on how grateful he was to have all three of his children visiting regularly (when permitted).

The Gilgen & Gerken families would like to send a special THANK YOU to the healthcare workers and staff at Rosewood Estate and Cedar Valley Hospice. Their level of care was exemplary. Al passed away peacefully and comfortably after completing an incredible journey.

Graveside memorial service to be held this spring. Richardson Funeral Service of Cedar Falls is assisting the family. At this time, memorials in honor of Dr. Gilgen can be directed to the PBS Foundation in his name. Online guestbook at www.richardsonfuneralservice.com.

Tribute Wall

GH

“ *A kind-hearted and intelligent man, who raised a like-minded family.*

Greg Hanson - October 07, 2021 at 05:37 PM

TH

“ *Thank you Al for your service to our country in the US NAVY.*

*Cedar Falls American Legion
Post #237*

Tom Hagarty - January 12, 2021 at 09:55 AM

HH

“ *Al was no longer department head, but was still teaching at UNI when I arrived in 1997. We had lots of good conversations about dynamic systems and international approaches to psychology. He was always really helpful and supportive and had a great sense of humor and a laugh that would make you laugh with him. Since he retired, I saw him occasionally as I live in the same neighborhood, and we'd still share a smile and laugh. I'm sorry for your loss, but know that he had a positive effect on many, many people while he was here.*

Helen Harton - January 11, 2021 at 02:20 PM

DD

“ *Albert was a very accomplished gentleman. Beth and I offer prayers of comfort and condolences David Delagardelle*

David Delagardelle - January 10, 2021 at 11:54 AM