



## Duane Alan Gilbert

November 20, 1939 - August 29, 2023

Duane Alan Gilbert was born November 20, 1939 to Lester William Gilbert and Mable Elizabeth (Geary) Gilbert. He grew up in Lake Benton, MN on a farm. He attended Country School 1st-12th grade in Verdi. The Gilbert family was very active in their little town church 1st Baptist of Lake Benton. He went to Camp Chatek every summer that he could.

He went on to attend Pillsbury Baptist Bible College in Owatonna, MN where he graduated with a Bachelors Degree. While he was there, he kept very busy. Playing sports was not his thing, but he was a cheerleader for the football team. He loved music. He traveled with some of the groups on weekends. He sang, played coronet and piano. Pillsbury was just starting to grow and add more buildings. He helped build what became Clearwaters Hall.

He felt the Lord calling him into the ministry so he then attended Central Baptist Theological Seminary. While he was in seminary, he worked as a surgery orderly at Swedish Hospital in downtown Minneapolis. There he met Barbara Jean Bilsborough, the surgery secretary. They started dating, were engaged 6 months later, but had to wait to get married until Barb finished nursing school (School Rule - not hers). They were married May 1, 1965. The two of them were very active in the youth ministry of Fourth Baptist. Duane and Barb were expecting their first child during Duane's last semester of seminary so he chose to audit classes instead of taking them for credit.

December 1, 1966 Jeanine Louise graced their presence with her arrival. Good planning on his seminary classes because that was the week before finals. Over the years he did take classes here and there, but he ended up a few credits short of actually graduating. A few months later, they packed up their little family and moved to Watertown, Wisconsin where he became the Youth Pastor of Calvary Baptist Church. While he was there he helped with the planning and building of Maranatha Christian College. Eileen Rene' graced their presence with her arrival May 24, 1969. He was the Youth pastor at the church until November of 1969, when they felt it was time to come back home.

When he came back to Fourth, he started working as the volunteer Assistant Youth Pastor under Don Nelson and then Oris Refsell and Paul Fosmark. He took an interest in all of the kids lives. There were many Saturday or Sunday mornings that a college person was sleeping on our living room couch after a youth activity because they needed somewhere to stay. Youth activities kept him busy. He was responsible for buying and selling pop and candy Sunday nights in the Varsity Hall for Singspiration and for all the Camp Clearwaters activities. He collected all the funds and made all the arrangements for camp and youth trips. He was even a counselor for most of them. When the christian school started he was hired on full time as a custodian and the supply buyer. He enjoyed all the kids. He felt it was his job to know every new students name by the end of the first week of school and he usually did. He was always seeking out new faces after the church service to be the unofficial "Welcome to Fourth Baptist" greeter. He would get upset if someone got out before he got to meet them. He spent countless hours giving building tours and explaining all about the church, school, seminary, and radio station. He worked for 40+ years as the church and school janitor.

He had a lot of interests and side jobs that most people didn't know about. His slight interest in politics

got him on the Hawthorne Council in North Minneapolis. He believed the city leaders should be chosen based on their aspirations and caring for the people they represented and not necessarily the political division they chose. He wanted safer neighborhoods and community growth. He was a voting judge. He thought it would be fun to learn how to do taxes and earn some extra money. He took the H&R Block School and they hired him on to do taxes at night for 3 years during tax season. When the family moved to Brooklyn Park, he got another part time job. He started working for LaBelle's that later was bought out by Best. When he applied they felt he would be really responsible, so they put him in the jewelry department. He decided he would be better with customers if he knew more. He took their jewelry classes and in a few months became their head gemstone and diamond expert. He worked there until the store closed. Walking through the Village North Shopping Mall, he asked the owner if they were hiring part time help. The man hired him on the spot. He worked at Johnson Jewelers until Mr Johnson decided to retire and closed the store. He could tell you everything you needed to know about all jewelry. His nephew-in-law walked in one day and said he needed an engagement ring for his niece and he wasn't buying from anyone else. When Charles was looking for an engagement ring for Anna he called grampa to inquire what main stone he should buy. He wanted something other than a diamond. There was an add in the paper for the Brooklyn Park Citizens Police Academy. He graduated at the top of his class. That led him to his last part time job of being a Brooklyn Park Police Reserve officer May 2005- August 2013.

He was the silent, usually unseen energizer bunny behind the scenes. He was the person that made sure everything was getting done in the background. Everyone knew if you needed something ask Duane. When this building was built, he would work all day to get the classroom ready, come home for supper and back at 10pm to wax floors. His legacy of his Godly Servant is known all

over the world. From the waiter at Applebees, ice cream cone stand at the zoo, ferris wheel ride at Disney World, beach in Grand Cayman. Every where we went we heard "Aren't you Mr Gilbert the school janitor!"

He loved singing in choir and Singspiration on Sunday nights was his favorite time. When they were on one of the youth trips the group started writing a song but never got to finish the first verse. About that time, they decided they should record their Singspiration Songs and dad hand typed the very first big orange book of song words. The first time they used the book they found a song they didn't know had been placed in the book. Duane had finished the 1st verse and wrote the 2nd verse. He titled it "When You Are Discouraged" page 7.

Duane is survived by his loving wife of 58 years Barbara. Daughters Jeanine Gilbert and Eileen Law. Grandchildren Charles (Anna) Law, Cara (Ben) Borchardt, Shae Law, Skye Law. Great Grandson Isaac Law. Honorary Granddaughter Nicole Webinger and Honorary Great Grandchildren Emerson and Maya. Siblings Grace Ann Goodman, LeRoy (Darlene) Gilbert, Carolyn (Neil) Miller, sister in-law Pamela (Thomas) McMaster, many nieces and nephews.

Welcomed to Heaven by parents Lester and Mable Gilbert, Sister Joyce Meinders, Brother in-law Evangelist David Goodman SR, Parents in-law Charles and Wilma Bilsborough, sister in-law Rosemary Doggett, Brother in-law Keith Cable, nephew Robert Webinger.

# Cemetery Details

## Glen Haven Memorial Gardens

5125 West Broadway  
Crystal, MN 55429  
(763) 533-8643  
info@washburn-mcreavy.com

# Previous Events

## Visitation

SEP 2. 10:00 AM - 11:00 AM (CT)

Fourth Baptist Church  
900 Forestview Lane North  
Plymouth, MN 55441

## Church Service

SEP 2. 11:00 AM - 12:00 PM (CT)

Fourth Baptist Church  
900 Forestview Lane North  
Plymouth, MN 55441

## Reception

SEP 2. 12:00 PM - 1:00 PM (CT)

Fourth Baptist Church  
900 Forestview Lane North  
Plymouth, MN 55441

## Graveside Service

SEP 2. 1:30 PM - 2:00 PM (CT)

Glen Haven Memorial Gardens  
5125 West Broadway  
Crystal, MN 55429

# Tribute Wall

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“ *in St. Peter, MN purchased the Simply Elegant S pathiphyllum for the family of Duane Alan Gilbert.*



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**in St. Peter, MN** - August 31, 2023 at 11:42 AM