



Gus Gaynor

November 20, 1921 - March 9, 2026

Still vital at age 104, Gerard (Gus) Henry Gaynor passed away at home in Minneapolis on March 9, 2026.

Gus lived on his own terms, creating a life full of purpose and accomplishment. Generous, disciplined, practical, and ready with an easy laugh, he was known for his willingness to question, his analytical thinking, and his courage to tell it like it is.

Born in Toledo, Ohio, on November 20, 1921, his earliest memories were of music and family. And of engineering! (At age 3: the family's crystal radio set. At 5: a copy of Popular Mechanics.) These three memories reflect the passions that shaped his life—as did the lessons he gleaned during the Depression, watching his arts-loving parents Walter and Valentina Giczewski adapt from city to farm life and learn new skills to survive. While the family's new life required hard work from all, it also provided this curious youngster an early education in how to fix what was broken and build what was needed.

Gus served in the US Army Signal Corps during WW II (Europe). Shortly after earning a degree in Electrical Engineering at the University of Michigan, he met and married the love of his life, Shirley Margaret Karrels. While raising their family of 7 children, they were active in two Great Books clubs, ran the youth religion program at St. Patrick's Church in Edina, and designed and built

three homes.

Gus's early-career experiences in systems control eventually led to a 25-year career at 3M. Highlights there include establishing the 3M Innovation Department. In 1972, 3M offered him the position of Chief Engineer, Ferrania Photographic Operations. The resulting family move to Italy proved life-changing: Gus and Shirley immersed themselves in their shared passion for history, art, and culture. They whole-heartedly embraced *la dolce vita*. They returned to Minnesota 7 years later, but their close bond with Italy and its people remained strong the rest of their lives.

Although Gus retired in 1987 as 3M Director of Engineering, he continued to learn and contribute to his field for another 38 years. He consulted internationally, taught at university level (including 2 Fulbright Scholar appointments in Bulgaria), and published 6 books on managing technology. A Life Fellow of IEEE (Institute of Electrical and Electronics Engineers), he was inducted into their Technical Activities Board Hall of Honor in 2014.

Gus was unstoppable. At 94 he traveled to Dubai for a conference, at 97 he tenderly nursed Shirley through terminal cancer, at 98 he served as VP of Publications (IEEE TEMS), and at 102 he finished his memoir. At 103, you could still find him working out with his Loring Green neighbors. His love of music had him still attending the opera at 104.

Gus was an inspiration to many. He will live on in the hearts of his 7 children-Mary Gaynor (Steve), Ann Gaynor McNichols (Richard), Virginia Gaynor (Wayne), John Gaynor (Sarah), Margaret Tillery, Katy Gaynor (Gerard), and Rosie Gaynor (Toby); son-in-law Gary Tillery; 7 grandchildren-Charles Marini (Kim), Frances McNichols Conrad (Bruce), RJ McNichols (Charlene), Alex Gaynor (Ryan), Ethan Gaynor, Grant Tillery (Megan), and Jeffrey Tillery (Lydia); 2 great grandchildren-William and Josie Conrad; and nieces and

nephews.

Gus is preceded in death by his brothers Edwin and Sylvin, and by his ever-beloved wife Shirley.

A private memorial will be held in Minneapolis on April 19.

The family asks that any charitable donations be made to Sharing & Caring Hands, Minnesota Opera, or University of Michigan College of Engineering ECE Scholars Fund.

Tribute Wall

DJ

“ My sincere condolences for Gus’ children and family for your loss of a remarkable father. I met and interviewed with Gus the first time in 1968 and was later hired by him in Italy in 1972. When he sent me to St Paul on a rather short notice and promised, I would return to Italy in one or two years. After he had become our Graphics sector Engineering Director, he indeed did so 10 years later on a 5-day verbal notice at the coffee machine, and we connected again more frequently in Italy during his quarterly visits. Gus was a real engineer and was very knowledgeable about the photographic business. He challenged people on technical issues which sometimes resulted in continuing the discussion several days in a row because Gus wanted to know more. In Italy I discovered we both were Amanti dell' opera and interested in Italian history. I also got to know Shirley then. Gus understood European culture very well. After retirement I would occasionally bump into Gus and Shirley at the Sunday Opera matinees at the Ordway. When we met, he would grin and tease me by asking if I was doing anything useful in retirement. Gus certainly had a very long impressive career. I always enjoyed our encounters. You can be proud of your father.

Daniel de Jongh - March 22 at 02:00 PM

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Daniel de Jongh

Daniel deJongh - March 22 at 02:03 PM



“ *A sympathy card was purchased for the family of Gus Gaynor.*



March 19 at 01:48 PM



“ *To the Gaynor family, please accept my condolences for your loss. I didn't know Gus that well during our working years at 3M, I did get to know him better thru the RE group and the lunches. Gus, thank you for your service to our country, may you RIP. Thoughts and prayers to your family. Fred Banholzer, 3M Retiree, Vietnam Veteran, USN*

Fred Banholzer - March 19 at 12:15 PM