



Gilbert K LaLonde

January 25, 2018

LaLonde, Gilbert K. At age 89, our greatly beloved father, grandfather, great grandfather and friend, Gilbert (Gil) LaLonde, passed away on January 25, 2018. He was preceded in death by his father (Edwin), his mother (Bella) and his six siblings (Gordon, Dorothy, Donald, Verna, Kenneth and Shirley). Gil attended Marshall University High School in Minneapolis, where he was an All-American swimmer and diver and won the State High School Diving Championship in 1947. He then attended the University of Minnesota where he received his Bachelor of Arts degree and was Captain of the Swimming and Diving Team in his senior year. He later came back to the U of M and received his Master's Degree in Education. Gil joined the US Army in 1952 and served in the 3rd Armored Division where he was stationed in Fort Knox, Kentucky. There, in the All-Army diving competition, he beat the next Olympic Champion. He also bunked next to, and became friends with, Jack Gilardi, future husband of Annette Funicello and agent for Robert Redford, Merv Griffin, and Paul Anka. Gil returned and worked briefly as a teacher at Marshall University High School, where he also coached wrestling, swimming and sophomore baseball. He joined the St. Paul Pioneer Press in late 1955, working in retail advertising until his retirement in 1990. Gil returned to diving in 1988, when he began competing in Masters tournaments and was sponsored by the Hamline Diving Club. Gil won multiple world championships, including in Canada and Denmark, setting 10 world records along the way. He competed in Lithuania several weeks after 13 revolutionaries were killed, and

participated in a ceremony for them. On that trip, Gil also met the Mayor of Moscow. In 1995, Gil was selected as one of two winners of Minnesota Sport of the Year. And in 2017, on behalf of the University of Minnesota M Club, Wenbo Chen, the Gopher Diving Coach and former Head of USA Diving, presented him an award for being a pioneer in Masters Diving. Gil was an extrovert, and, in addition to diving and Gopher sports, he had three passions: meeting people, investing and most importantly, his family. He enjoyed nothing more than connecting with family, friends and strangers, who were just friends he had not yet met. Gil is survived by his daughter (Michelle Stennes of Fort Collins, Colorado), his son (Timothy LaLonde of New York, New York), eight grandchildren (Aaron, Nicolas, Rachel, Lindsay, Jordan, Alex, Parker, and Ashley), and six great-grandchildren. He also will be missed by his close companion, Dixie Lello. Gil now rests with his heavenly father. A funeral service will be held Wednesday, January 31st, at noon at Nokomis Park Chapel (Washburn-McReavy) at 1838 East Minnehaha Parkway, Minneapolis (612-721-1651). Guests may arrive beginning 11:30, prior to the service.

Tribute Wall

LW

“ *To my Great Uncle Gilbert. I wish I could have met you.
With love, Lisa Westling*

Lisa Westling - January 29, 2019 at 08:37 PM

TB

“ *Gil was a special guy, very friendly and always supportive of young folks that were working hard to learn the sport of diving. He was proud of his accomplishments but was a willing mentor. Gil was proud of the University of Minnesota and championed all efforts, academic as well as athletic. He will be missed, my condolences to his family, cherish your memories.*

Terry Bjorklund

Terry Bjorklund - January 31, 2018 at 09:45 AM