



Gary P. Gillaspy

October 12, 1935 - October 20, 2016

Gary Gillaspy, 81
Kearney resident

Gary Gillaspy, 81, of Kearney, died Thursday, October 20, 2016 at CHI Good Samaritan Hospital in Kearney. A memorial service will be held 11:00 a.m. Saturday, October 29, 2016 at the Kearney First United Methodist Church with Rev. Alan Davis officiating. Interment will take place at the LaPlatte Cemetery in LaPlatte, NE.

Memorials are suggested to the Kearney First United Methodist Church, the Kearney Area Community Foundation or the Kearney Salvation Army. Condolences may be shared online at www.osrfh.com. O'Brien Straatmann Redinger Funeral Home is in charge of arrangements.

Gary was born in Council Bluffs, IA on October 12, 1935 to Paul and Helen (Moon) Gillaspy. He attended several schools in Council Bluffs and two in Kansas City for a short time during WWII. He graduated from Abraham Lincoln High School in 1953. While in High School he worked at several jobs – pinsetter, auction clerk, started a paper route, sold bait and snacks and Big Lake. After graduation, he worked at Joyce Lumber (wholesale) and World Radio for a time in parts assembly and manufacturing.

In 1954, Gary joined the Navy reserve at Fort Omaha and in June volunteered for active duty along with 3 high school buddies. He went to Great Lakes for boot camp, then Airman's school in Norman, Oklahoma, then "A" school training on Link Trainers (flight simulators) in Memphis, TN. Upon completion, he then chose Whidbey Island, WA as his duty station until being discharged as a PO3 in June of 1956.

Gary returned to Council Bluffs and enrolled at Omaha University under the GI Bill. While going to college, Gary had several jobs including be a taxi driver, real estate broker and cost accountant and NW Bell telephone mailroom where he met his wife Elizabeth. They were married in 1958 and moved to Omaha. Gary graduated in 1960 from Omaha U. with a degree in Engineering/Business. He worked the night shift at the main PO in Omaha.

In 1961, Gary became a pharmaceutical salesman for Pfizer Labs and moved to Kearney. He became active in the Kearney Jaycees and was elected President in 1965. While in the Jaycees he was instrumental in Kearney hosting the 1967 State Convention and also in building the stock cars track at the Buffalo County Fairgrounds and building and racing stock cars. Due to his experience in building the Kearney Raceway stock car track, Gary was contracted by the Adams County Fair Board to refurbish the race track in Hastings. Gary operated the Hastings Raceway for about two years then it was sold to local investors.

In about 1967, Gary left the pharmaceutical business and for a brief time owned and operated the trucking portion of the Landmark Truck Stop. He then became a Husky service station operator in Kearney and got involved with repairing Volkswagens initially and then other imports which were relatively rare then.

He came interested in Taco John's and opened his first store in Fremont, NE in 1973. In 1976, he opened a store in Bloomington, IN which he sold in 1980.

In time, Gary was involved with stores in Bellevue, LaVista and Omaha. While a Taco John's franchisee, Gary was instrumental in forming the Omaha Area Advertising Co-op and later National Co-op and served on the national advertising committee.

In 1990, Gary and Rick, a Taco John's manager, joined up to develop Subway stores in the Omaha, Council Bluffs area, and eventually selling their interest in several stores in 2000.

In 2001, Gary suffered a stroke and heart attack from which he had only a few remaining effects. Before his health problems, Gary loved playing racquetball and qualified several times for the National Senior Olympics and did compete at Baton Rouge, LA and Tucson, AZ. He also loved sailing but the after effects of the stroke prevented him from sailing. Gary was a "car guy" and was fortunate to be invited by Carroll Sheldon to go to the Indianapolis for the inaugural "Brickyard 400" race and two other Indianapolis NASCAR races and two or three INDY 500's. Stock car racing was popular in Kearney and the surrounding area, Gary competed at Kearney, Hastings, Ord, Beaver City, Broken Bow, Holdrege, McCook and Norton, KS.

Gary enjoyed hunting and fishing, especially fishing trips to Wisconsin, Canada, Costa Rica and Cabo San Lucas, Mexico. Gary was currently enrolled in several Senior College classes.

Gary is survived by his wife Elizabeth of Kearney; son Jeffrey of Oxford, NE, Keith and wife Becky of Harrisburg, PA, Bradlee and wife Tennisa of Kimberly, ID; grandchildren Brock of Hastings, NE and Kelly of Harrisburg, PA, Lacie and Chelsea both of Kearney; great grandchildren Neveah, Jazmine and Luna; brother Roger Gillaspy of Post Falls, ID.

He was preceded in death by his parents and brother Brian Gillaspy.

Cemetery Details

La Platte Cemetery

La Platte, NE

Previous Events

Memorial Service

OCT **29**. 11:00 AM (CT)

First United Methodist Church
4500 Linden Drive
Kearney, NE 68847

Tribute Wall



“ Gary P. Gillaspay

January 28, 2023 at 08:01 AM