



Judge Joseph Franklin Gilliland

November 25, 1940 - March 23, 2014

Judge Joseph Franklin Gilliland of Russellville, Alabama, died on Sunday, March 23, 2014.

He was born on November 25, 1940, in Sylacauga, Alabama. After high school, he received a bachelors degree from Jacksonville State University, where he was known to everyone as Coosa Joe". He taught high school for five years and then went back to school, first to Louisiana State University where he earned a Masters in Constitutional Law and then on to Alabama Law School where he earned a Juris Doctorate. After receiving his law degree, he clerked at the Court of Criminal Appeals in Montgomery before moving to Franklin County in 1972 to become an attorney. He then served as District Court Judge for Franklin County. Following that, he taught as an adjunct professor at Northwest Community College. He later served as a judge for the Social Security Administration in Montgomery before transferring to the Florence, Alabama, office. His final position was Hearing Office Chief Law Judge for the Social Security Office of Disability Adjudication and Review in Florence, Alabama.

Some of the great loves of his life were those of beauty, compassion, flowers, art and music. His many club memberships and years of volunteer service reflected those loves. He was integral to the formation of the Art Council of Franklin County and to the existence of Project Help. He used his musical

talents frequently over the years as the organist and choir director of First United Methodist Church, Russellville, and also as organist at the Good Shepherd Catholic Church. He took great delight in playing the piano each week for the Earnest Workers Sunday school class and was instrumental to the acquisition of the beautiful organ at First United Methodist church, Russellville. He was very active in the Master Gardeners Club and was known far and wide for his gorgeous roses. He also loved a good game of bridge, sunsets, fall leaves, traveling, befriending strangers, Snickers candy bars, showing kindness, shocking folks with hilarious comments, finding the upside of every situation, and eating cheese biscuits on Saturday mornings. He delighted in people--having old friends and making new ones all the time.

In the last decade of his life he struggled through many health crises. In spite of all of these challenges, the love for his family and work gave him the strength to battle the setbacks with ferocity and a valiant determination.

He is survived by his beloved wife of 46 years, Sue Smith Gilliland, and daughters, Ann Gilliland Barlow (Jon) of Starkville, Mississippi, and Deana Gilliland Heath (Ezra) of Vestavia Hills, Alabama. He had 6 grandsons: James, Nathan, Charlie, and Eli Barlow, and Harrison Joseph and Michael Gilley Heath. He was preceded in death by his sister Elizabeth McGrady and brother Buddy Gilliland. His remaining siblings are Virginia Hughes, Donald Gilliland (Marie), Robert Gilliland (Gail), and Jimmy Gilliland (Mildred). He leaves many nieces and nephews. His friends are legion.

His family would like to express sincere gratitude to the outstanding nurses in the ICU ward of ECM Hospital, Florence, and to Drs. Paul, Holden, and Lango.

In lieu of flowers, the family requests that donations be made to the Building Fund of First United Methodist Church, Russellville, or to the Russellville

Public Library.

On Tuesday, March 25th, visitation will be held from 12 until 2 at First United Methodist Church, Russellville, with the funeral following at 2 p.m. He will be buried in a private service at 5 p.m. in Holly Pond, Alabama.

To everyone who ever asked how he was, he always replied, "I'm beautiful, of course!"

He was right.

Cemetery Details

Holly Pond Cemetery

Holly Pond, AL

Previous Events

Visitation

MAR 25. 12:00 PM - 2:00 PM (CT)

First United Methodist Church-Russellville
311 Jackson Avenue North
Russellville, AL

Funeral Service

MAR 25. 2:00 PM (CT)

First United Methodist Church-Russellville
311 Jackson Avenue North
Russellville, AL

Tribute Wall



“ Joe was one of the most beautiful people in the world. I don't just say this because he was one of the best cousins a girl could have. He always had a gentle way that could make you feel good about yourself and always make you happy. I remember once he was talking to my mother about his continuing education and he said “Aunt Etta Mae, I guess I am just going to become an educated fool”. My mother laughed and informed Joe there was no way he would ever be anyone's fool. Enjoy walking with the angels on the streets of Heaven, Joe. Love and miss you, Barbara Ann Gilliland Sides.

Barbara Sides - March 26, 2014 at 07:26 AM



“ Dear Sue,
You do not know me but I am one of Joe's first cousins. My brother Kenneth David and Sister Barbara Ann grew up about 3 miles from Joe's home. I was sorry and stunned to hear about Joe's passing, he was one of the good guys. Joe always had a good sense of humor and could make us laugh. He loved our mother, his aunt Etta, and spent time at our house when he could. There is so much more I could tell you but I want bother you at this time.
May God Bless and keep you.

Wayne Gilliland

Wayne Gilliland - March 25, 2014 at 01:23 PM

RJ

“ Sue, I am shocked and saddened to learn of Joe's death. I left town Monday morning and won't be able to attend the Memorial Service. Joe was a Special Friend to me! My thoughts and prayers are with you and the children during this time of sadness.

Ralph Jones

Ralph Jones - March 25, 2014 at 09:08 AM

NU

“ Sue, our thoughts and prayers are with you and your family at this difficult time.

Nancy & Wilbur Underwood

Nancy & Wilbur Underwood - March 24, 2014 at 09:23 PM

FF

“ Dear Sue, Ann, Deana and family... I'm so sorry for your loss. Sue and Joe were a wonderful influence on me when I was growing up--encouraging me to study hard, go to college and pursue my dreams of becoming a professional musician. You are all in my thoughts and prayers in your time of loss. God bless you and keep you.

Felicia Askew Ferguson - March 24, 2014 at 08:19 PM

JC

“ Very sorry to hear of the loss of Judge Gilland. I worked with him, as a clerk, for many years and I always enjoyed sitting on the bench with him during court. He was always pleasant to work with. Jean Cassel

Jean Cassel - March 24, 2014 at 06:30 PM

ML

“ I was deeply sadden by the news that Joe had passed away. He was truly a renaissance man . I will never forget one time when someone called me "sweet", he said in that voice of his, "Margaret I can think a lot of words to describe you, but sweet is not one of them". All of those around got a great laugh out of it including me, because as usual, he was right. My thoughts and prayers are with you Sue and girls. Margaret Lovett

Margaret Lovett - March 24, 2014 at 09:57 AM