



Gilbert "Gil" Francis Silva

March 11, 1928 - April 3, 2021

Gilbert Francis Silva, 93, of Havana, Illinois passed away on Saturday April 3, 2021. Gilbert was born on March 11th, 1928 to Portuguese immigrants, Gil and Bertha Silva in Plymouth, Massachusetts.

Gilbert was raised with his 5 siblings in Plymouth. It was during his youth that he developed his love for the arts. His first instrument was the harmonica. He started piano lessons after his brother Walter had no interest in them.

Unknown to many, he played oboe as his primary instrument in elementary school. Gilbert graduated from Plymouth High School in June 1946. In high school, he worked at the Cordage Rope factory in Plymouth, Massachusetts where his father had worked for many years.

After high school, he joined the United States Army where started as a paratrooper in WWII then as an acting sergeant and small weapons specialist during the occupation of Japan.

After his honorable discharge from the Army, Gil attended and graduated from Boston University with a bachelor's degree in music as a concert pianist in 1952. During his college years, he was elected into the Honorary Music Society, Fantasia Club. He also participated in summer theater, jobs with a performing music trio, and taught fencing at a summer camp where he shared many of his talents, humor, and overall work ethic.

After the Army, he met his wife and love of his life, Phyllis Schneider of Middleboro, Massachusetts at the seaside of Plymouth, Mass. There was reluctance from Phyllis at first, but soon she saw the diamond of a person underneath. After a deeply devoted courtship, they were married on August 31, 1952.

Here the Silva Family in Illinois adventure began! Gil and Phyllis had their honeymoon on the way to Gil's first teaching job in Golconda, Illinois. In Golconda, Gil and Phyllis welcomed their first son, Daren Francis in 1953. In 1954-55, they moved to Kempton, Illinois and welcomed their second son Timothy Gilbert in September 1955. To help provide for his family not only was he teaching in Kempton, he worked on a farm transporting chicken eggs to a distributor.

In 1956, Gil's family moved to Havana, Illinois, where Gil resided until his death. In Havana, he served as music director of all types of music programs, choral and band at the different school levels. Not only was the music program expanding under his tutelage but his family, too. In 1958, Brian Paul followed by Mark Christian, in 1960, were welcomed into the family. In a final try in 1965, a girl arrived, Crystal Marie.

Gil dedicated 33 years of teaching that involved award winning choral groups, marching band, concert band programs, and jazz/studio bands. He expanded the programs and student participation to include musicals (i.e. Sound of Music, Wizard of Oz, Lil'Abner), madrigals, private lessons, and various small performing groups while getting his Master of Education at the University of Illinois in 1959. As a true lover of music and the importance of music education, he would repair instruments for any students that could not afford it or lose any time for their music development. His love of music was infectious and provided so many souls a way of expressing themselves including all his

children.

After his retirement in 1989, he could not stop his love of music or education and became a board member of the Havana School district, directed the Muddy River Band, and became a piano technician.

Besides the love of music, Gil had many more talents and hobbies that he shared with his family and the community. Gil and Phyllis took an old broken-down home and remodeled it into a comfortable family home. He was a handyman in all areas and had a love of woodworking from his father. He shared his hobbies of hunting, making beer, root beer and wine (from his own grapes), model airplanes, making toodlings during holidays, painting and playing music with his family. Many of the traditions carry on with his children, grandchildren, and great-children! Gil was an active member of St Patrick's Catholic Church and a long-term member of Havana Rotary Club where he served in various roles.

Gil was a loving husband, father, grandfather, great grandfather, uncle, and brother to a large extended family who was blessed by his wisdom, humor, and talents. He will be sorely missed by family, friends, and community.

Gil was preceded in death by his parents Gil and Bertha, his wife Phyllis, his siblings Mary McKenzie, and Walter J Silva.

Gil is survived by his siblings, Lorraine Souza, Diane (Tom) Condon, and Dennis (Terry) Silva, his children, Daren (Becky) Silva of Havana; Tim (Mary) Silva of Fort Madison, Iowa; Brian Silva of Havana; Mark (Gail) Silva of New Berlin, Illinois; and Crystal (Mike) Ellman of Naperville, Illinois, 19 grandchildren, and 10 great grandchildren.

Rosary will be held on Thursday, April 8, 2021 at 4:00 p.m. at Hurley Funeral Home in Havana, with a visitation following until 6:00 p.m. Funeral services will be held on Friday, April 9, 2021 at St. Patrick's Catholic Church in Havana at 11:00 a.m., with an hour of visitation to be held one hour prior to the service from 10:00 a.m. to 11:00 a.m. Fr. David Whiteside will officiate. Burial will follow the service at Laurel Hill Cemetery in Havana.

Memorial donations may be made in Gil's name to St. Patrick's Catholic Church or the Alzheimer's Association. Online condolences can be left for his family at www.hurleyfh.com.

Hurley Funeral Home in Havana is in charge of arrangements.

Previous Events

Rosary

APR 8. 4:00 PM (CT)

Hurley Funeral Home - Havana
217 North Plum Street
P.O. Box #648
Havana, IL 62644
(309) 543-2244
<https://www.hurleyfh.com/>

Visitation

APR 8. 4:30 PM - 6:00 PM (CT)

Hurley Funeral Home - Havana
217 North Plum Street
P.O. Box #648
Havana, IL 62644
(309) 543-2244
<https://www.hurleyfh.com/>

Visitation

APR 9. 10:00 AM - 11:00 AM (CT)

St Patricks Catholic Church
545 S Orange St
Havana, IL 62644

Funeral Mass

APR 9. 11:00 AM (CT)

St Patricks Catholic Church
545 S Orange St
Havana, IL 62644

Tribute Wall



“ Hurley Funeral Home created a Webcast in memory of Gilbert "Gil" Francis Silva



Hurley Funeral Home - April 07, 2021 at 09:39 AM

TC

I have many wonderful memories of Gil. His wit and his words of wisdom will always shine in my memory of our times together. I always looked forward to our visits to Havana and when he and his crew came to Plymouth. I was the "outlaw" who married his sister Diane. I occasionally see Charlie Vandini, Gil's Roommate at Boston University he always loves to recall how Gil managed to make people laugh at his "crazy antics" to relieve the stress of College life.

Thomas Condon - April 07, 2021 at 05:43 PM

DC

Blue Ocean Spray sent with love from Diane & Anthony Cordova, Suzy & Taylor Vigil, and Inez Silva -Dear Uncle Gilbert will be forever in our hearts

Diane Cordova - April 07, 2021 at 05:54 PM

DC

Ocean Breeze Spray sent by Diane & Anthony Cordova, Suzy & Taylor Vigil, and Inez Silva -Dear Uncle Gilbert will be always in our hearts, with our deepest sympathy

Diane Cordova - April 07, 2021 at 05:57 PM

KI

Mr Silva was a lifelong favorite teacher for many of us. His caring yet professional demeanor, his infectious love of music, his amazing knowledge of seemingly all things, his dry sense of humor, and so much more that I didn't even know about him until I read his loving obituary. My best memories of high school were because of being a majorette, and I never would've done that if he had not encouraged me to try. We enjoyed him, we loved him, and we respected him. I was privileged to also be a regular babysitter for him and his wife, and I'm hoping the children remember me a little. Heaven has a new bandleader.

Karen Beiderwieden Icenogle

Karen Beiderwieden Icenogle - April 07, 2021 at 11:13 PM

AC

Uncle Gilbert's phenomenal career in music education inspired me to play a musical instrument and perform in school bands and orchestras.

His incredibly funny sense of humor sometimes fooled me when he'd call and I would hang up on him only to find out 2 minutes later when he called back to tell me it was him! I never laughed so much than when Uncle Gilbert was around.

Mindy, Theresa, and myself send our love, prayers, and blessings to all our cousins and the Silva family out in the Midwest.

Andy, Mindy & Theresa Cook

Andy Cook - April 08, 2021 at 04:54 PM

MA

Rest in peace sweet brother and Uncle Gilbert. Diane and Marylee

Marylee - April 08, 2021 at 05:31 PM

DS

We will miss Gilbert more than I can say. The trips to Illinois, his visits back east were always special events for us. As a kid I recall how I marveled at his skill at the piano. He could rip through Mozart, Beethoven, and Bach pieces with ease. He was special guy and I say that not because his was my brother but because it is simply true. He gave so much of himself to others. In so many ways he was very fortunate. He had a wonderful wife, a great family, many friends and especially former students who loved him. I will sit here evenings and think I should call Gilbert as I often did then realize he's not there. I'll feel sad for a moment then take comfort in knowing heaven now has him.

Dennis Silva - April 08, 2021 at 06:41 PM

JH

I'll always remember wanting to play clarinet when I got to junior high and Gil (Mr. Silva to me) said "You have trumpet lips. You don't want to play clarinet!". So I followed his advice and chose trumpet. That choice led me to a full and interesting path as a trumpet player! Gil was always playing piano at family gatherings, was always quick with his wit, and never hesitated to give his love to those around him. Thank you, Mr. Silva, for the inspiration you have given me and the joy you brought to us all!

Joshua Hodgson - April 09, 2021 at 01:23 PM

SV

Rest in peace Uncle Gilbert .

Suzanne Vigil - April 09, 2021 at 02:11 PM



“ Gilbert "Gil" Francis Silva

October 12, 2022 at 03:07 PM

RB

“ I just heard about this & can't convey enough how saddened I am. I studied piano with Mr. Silva for many years & have continued in music professionally & private teaching. He was a major inspiration to me, both as a player & as a person. He gave me many opportunities growing up to play as a soloist , accompanist & in ensembles. I can't say enough about the impact he made on me through his training & guidance, both as a player & a person. Thank you for all you did for me. Rest in peace Mr. Silva & know you will be sorely missed. Much love to you & your family. Becky Morgan Barbalace

Rebecca Barbalace - April 28, 2021 at 06:37 PM

CW

“ Mr. Silva was a wonderful Band director. My three daughters had him as an instructor!! They really liked him and have lots of great memories. Shelly, Sheri and Stacey! !!!!!! Watkins Rest In Peace Mr. Silva. Until we meet again!! Love and Hugs to all the family!! ❤️❤️
❤️❤️ Praying for all of you!! 🙏🙏🙏🙏

cleone Watkins - April 09, 2021 at 06:49 PM

RY

“ I have been listening to Dan Fogelberg`s tribute to his father, "The Leader of the Band", several times today and thinking about how much it applies to Mr. Silva. I shed some tears of sorrow, but mostly happy ones as I think back upon all the happy times that we shared with him. He made us work hard and was a disciplinarian, and we respected him for it, but he also knew there was a time for having fun, and we had lots of fun!

I too remember the awesome experience of playing the 1812 Overture and firing the shotgun blanks into the metal barrels to sound like canons. We`d never get away with that today in the high school gymnasium! I remember the band carnivals with him dressing up like a clown and the awesome band trips we went on - Washington D.C. and Disneyworld! Unforgettable!

Mr. Silva, I am so glad that we had you as our "Leader of the Band"! Thank you so very much!

Rod Yetter - April 09, 2021 at 06:43 PM

DS

“ Terry and I will miss Gilbert more than I can say. The trips to Illinois, his trips back east were special events to us. I recall as a kid how I marveled at his skill at the piano. He could rip through Mozart, Beethoven and Bach with ease. He was a special guy and I say that not because he was my brother but because it is simply true. He gave so much of himself to others. In so many ways he was very fortunate. He had a wonderful wife, a great family, along with many friends and former students who loved him. I will sit here evenings and think I should call Gilbert as I often did then realize he's not there. I will be sad then take comfort in knowing that heaven now has him.

Dennis Silva - April 08, 2021 at 08:25 PM

ML

“ 7 files added to the album Memories Album



Marylee Lyndon - April 08, 2021 at 05:57 PM

TF

“ *The Harold and MARY Potts Families purchased the Fairest of All for the family of Gilbert "Gil" Francis Silva.*



The Harold and MARY Potts Families - April 08, 2021 at 03:19 PM



“ *To the Silva Family:*

What a great dialogue of tributes to your Father and our Mr Silva. He has to be the most impactful person in the Havana community of the past 65 years. Teaching music. Teaching discipline. Example of work ethic.

Thanks to his family for sharing his time with Havana students for all these years so that he could bring some sophistication and life long love of music to us River Rats in Havana.

I will always think of Mr Silva whenever I hear 1812 Overture. Still brings a smile to my face when I remember how excited and proud we all were to be a part of that band experience.

Dennis Hermann - April 08, 2021 at 03:00 PM

LB

“ *Luanne (Heinie) Bergstrom lit a candle in memory of Gilbert "Gil" Francis Silva*



Luanne (Heinie) Bergstrom - April 08, 2021 at 01:51 PM

DW

“ *Sorry for your loss Our thoughts and prayers are with you and your family*



Dan and Chris Wilson - April 08, 2021 at 01:47 PM

LB

“ *Mr. Silva was the best teacher and friend that anyone could have. If I showed interest in anything, he would encourage and let me do it. I loved our group, the Silvatones, which was made up of 16 girls, 4 Sopranos, 4 2nd Sopranos and 4 Altos. We would drive around Havana and sing the songs since we had members from all three groups and loved the harmony. He worked hard every day to help all of us with special attention for each section of our orchestra/band. He even sang at my first wedding at St. Patricks Church. I also took piano lessons, when in high school from him, but needless to say, I didn't practice enough to keep playing. I was so happy to see him once again in 2014 at our 50th Class Reunion, Class of 1964. I'm sure he will be missed by all his family and friends. Love to all his family. Your Father, Grandfather, Great Grandfather, Brother and Friend was truly an extraordinary Man, with a capital "M".*

Luanne (Heinie) Bergstrom - April 08, 2021 at 01:46 PM



“ *Gracious Lavender Basket was purchased for the family of Gilbert "Gil" Francis Silva.*



April 08, 2021 at 10:40 AM



“ *Full Of Love Bouquet was purchased for the family of Gilbert "Gil" Francis Silva.*



April 08, 2021 at 09:32 AM



“ *Country Basket Blooms was purchased for the family of Gilbert "Gil" Francis Silva.*



April 08, 2021 at 09:02 AM



“ *Steve Blessman lit a candle in memory of Gilbert "Gil" Francis Silva*



Steve Blessman - April 07, 2021 at 07:03 PM



“ *Divine Peace Bouquet was purchased for the family of Gilbert "Gil" Francis Silva.*



April 07, 2021 at 07:01 PM



“ *Ocean Breeze Spray was purchased for the family of Gilbert "Gil" Francis Silva.*



April 07, 2021 at 05:41 PM

WT

“ With love, Dennis and Terry purchased the Sentiments of Serenity Spray for the family of Gilbert "Gil" Francis Silva.



With love, Dennis and Terry - April 07, 2021 at 05:18 PM

DL

“ Diane & Tom Condon, Sean Condon & Amy Shepard, Griffin Condon, Mary Lee & Bill Lyndon, Caroline Lyndon and Sarah Lyndon purchased the Divine Light for the family of Gilbert "Gil" Francis Silva.



Diane & Tom Condon, Sean Condon & Amy Shepard, Griffin Condon, Mary Lee & Bill Lyndon, Caroline Lyndon and Sarah Lyndon - April 07, 2021 at 05:16 PM

ML

“ Melody Lynn lit a candle in memory of Gilbert "Gil" Francis Silva



Melody Lynn - April 07, 2021 at 10:05 AM

PS

“ Wonderful man and an excellent teacher. He knew how to bring out the best music from a bunch of high school kids! How blessed we all were to have him choose our town to settle down in and touch so many lives in such a positive way. Thank you, Mr. Silva. ❤️❤️ 🎵



Paula Roat Silveri - April 06, 2021 at 08:30 PM

CD

“ Cheryl & David Drake purchased the Beautiful Heart Bouquet for the family of Gilbert "Gil" Francis Silva.



Cheryl & David Drake - April 06, 2021 at 07:37 PM

“Mr. Silva was a remarkable man, as evidenced by his lifelong list of accomplishments. There were a handful of teachers I encountered growing up and attending school in Havana (K-12) who left an indelible mark on my life, and Mr. Silva was absolutely at the top of that list. I can recall countless stories of trips and experiences that certainly enriched my youth. Opportunities that almost certainly would not have occurred absent his devotion to the arts and education in general. Probably more important, was the example he set in daily habits and teachings, such as punctuality, striving for perfection, maintaining personal integrity, setting lofty goals and working to achieve them.

I can recall in middle school when he suggested to me that I could learn to play the tuba, and that it could be beneficial to me some day when I went to college. I can honestly tell you; college was a hazy concept for me when i was in middle school. I certainly intended to go to college, but where, for what, and how to pay for it were not even something I had considered yet.

It turned out he was 100% correct. I learned to play the tuba under his tutelage. I also learned to play the bass guitar and continued to study the piano. The lessons he taught both musically, and the ones which taught me how to strive for a goal and achieve success in life were and are invaluable. Playing those instruments significantly reduced the cost of my undergraduate education and created even more formative life experiences for me.

I was fortunate enough to get to tell Mr. Silva in person some years ago during a trip home to see my parents how much I appreciated all he did. It was a pleasant visit. He of course of was too humble to accept any credit, but I know better.

When I heard the news, I felt compelled to leave a note confirming what others already know. Gil Silva touched countless lives in a positive way, and that legacy continues to be passed down/paid forward to future generations.

Gone, but never forgotten and forever in our hearts.

Cory Heath - April 06, 2021 at 05:58 PM

RK

“ *Renee Preston, Lindsay Boten and Danielle K. purchased the Emerald Garden Basket for the family of Gilbert "Gil" Francis Silva.*



Renee Preston, Lindsay Boten and Danielle K. - April 06, 2021 at 05:28 PM

PS

“ *Patti Specketer lit a candle in memory of Gilbert "Gil" Francis Silva*



Patti Specketer - April 06, 2021 at 04:46 PM

IW

“ *So sad to hear of this news. He was and always will be a great man. RIP MR. SILVA*



Illa wilkey - April 06, 2021 at 04:32 PM

MB

“ Sad to learn of Gil's passing. It was a pleasure knowing Gil, singing in the choir with him. It was indeed an honor to sing at his retirement party. He could always make me laugh. He was so knowledgable about so many things. He was always telling me something new! He was the best band director ever!! He will definitely be missed by everyone who had the pleasure of knowing him and by the entire community. God bless you Gil. Get that choir of Angel's going up there until I arrive. RIP music man.

Mary Pat and Steve Bares - April 06, 2021 at 02:57 PM

DA

“ Deepest sympathies Silva family.
Darlene (morris) Miller

darlene - April 06, 2021 at 01:40 PM

KR

“ Kim Russell lit a candle in memory of Gilbert
"Gil" Francis Silva



Kim Russell - April 06, 2021 at 12:11 PM

“ For so many of us, memories of high school are synonymous with happy memories of marching band, playing "The Nutcracker" at Christmas, listening to Mr. Silva's fun stories, hearing his laughter, and being scared to death of his Boston-bred driving habits. :-) Like many of you, I had the honor of studying music under Mr. Silva. He was my piano, concert band, marching band, chorus, musical theater, and even swing choir teacher. Images of swing choir still come to mind every time I hear "Every Breath You Take" and "What a Feeling."

In 1985, Mr. Silva took several of us to see the Tommy Dorsey Orchestra, sparking in many of us a life-long interest in Big Band music. Following his example, I've taken fourth graders to see the Grand Rapids Ballet.

Mr. Silva taught a whole generation (and a half...or two??) of Havana students to read and appreciate music in many forms. In all the hours we spent with him, he discussed much more than music. With him, we were in good hands. I admit I still haven't mastered the concept of "If you're not ten minutes early and waiting when the director arrives, you're late." :-} As a fourth grade teacher, I see myself saying and doing things that are a direct result of Mr. Silva's influence.

Here is my favorite "Mr. Silva" story: In either 5th or 6th grade at New Central, our class sold the most band cleaner. :-) As winners, we were promised a popcorn (or pizza?) party, but as we all know, Mr. Silva was a busy man and that sort of thing didn't always materialize. (We forgive you, Mr. S. We're busy adults ourselves now, and you DID have a few children of your own at home, after all!) Well, every year, someone would remind him (usually Penny Watts Roach, I think! :-)), but the pizza was materialized. Finally, in our senior year with only five or six from our grade still in band, Penny once again reminded him. This time, he delivered...and with interest! Instead of a pizza party, he took us to RED LOBSTER!!! I remember telling my parents that it must have cost him \$100! Ha! :-)

That was in 1986.

So, Mr. Silva, we appreciate that you were a man with a love for the fine arts as well as love for your students...that your Christian faith was central to who you were and was what guided you as you furthered your students' musical, social, and emotional development. We thank God for all you gave us, and we rejoice that you have entered your eternal home and are reunited with your dear Phyllis. Perhaps you're playing a beautiful piano sonata to the glory of God. :-)

Stephanie Gerdes - April 06, 2021 at 10:51 AM

RR

What a wonderful world it would be if everyone gave as much of one's self as he did. Such a neat guy.

Randy Rutledge - April 06, 2021 at 05:48 PM

LT

“ *Very sorry for the loss of a great teacher and legend in our community. Sincere sympathies*
Lisa Ulrich Thompson



Lisa Jill Ulrich Thompson - April 06, 2021 at 10:45 AM

DM

“ *Mr. Silva was a man of great integrity who always encouraged the best in his students. In the band room he was a man of excellence and outside of it he was a warm, wonderful family man. I have great memories of band competitions with him. He blessed us with his wit and caring for our success.*

Debi (Payne) McCarthy

Debi McCarthy - April 06, 2021 at 09:50 AM

LH

“ *Larry And Mary Hundt lit a candle in memory of Gilbert "Gil" Francis Silva*



Larry and Mary Hundt - April 06, 2021 at 08:49 AM

JC

“ *I never met Mr. Silva personally. However, as a student at Balyki in the 60's, I always enjoyed listening to the band when playing basketball at Havana. Later, as a coach at Athens, I had the same honor. I know he built a fantastic program there. His family is in my thoughts and prayers.*

John W. Curry - April 06, 2021 at 08:47 AM

SV

Deepest sympathy to the Silva family.

Sue Velde - April 06, 2021 at 11:00 PM

RM

“ I first met Mr. Silva and his wife Phyllis when I was around 9. They moved in two doors north of us on Broadway. He was hard for us to understand at first, because he had such an east coast accent. Later on he worked with me on voice, and I was in many of his musical groups. He was a perfectionist, but we learned so much. The thing I always loved about him was his ability to tell a story with great expression and humor. So happy that he is with his beloved Phyllis again. She always called him "Gilly". He was always so good to me. God Bless.

Becky Stephens Morgan

rebecca morgan - April 06, 2021 at 08:04 AM

DC

“ Donna Clouse lit a candle in memory of Gilbert "Gil" Francis Silva



Donna Clouse - April 06, 2021 at 03:47 AM

DS

“ In honor of my longtime cardiac rehab friend, I toast him with a glass of Portuguese wine.

Darell Sarff

Darell Sarff - April 05, 2021 at 09:28 PM

AH

“ Gil, Mr. Silva was a spectacular musician and band director and part of our extended family. He only wanted his students to do their absolute best and wouldn't accept anything less! We kinda locked horns occasionally, but he wanted perfection and obedience. Hence his band always did well in competitions. I have fond memories of performing the fantastic William Tell and 1812 Overtures as well as MANY others. He was a wonderful man and family member and will be missed by ALL who knew him. May he rest in eternal blissful peace!
Angie Hodgson

Angela Hodgson - April 05, 2021 at 04:58 PM

DW

“ Sorry for your loss Our thoughts and prayers are with you and your family. What a beautiful Obituary



Dan and Chris Wilson - April 05, 2021 at 04:49 PM

AH

“ Angela Hodgson lit a candle in memory of Gilbert "Gil" Francis Silva



Angela Hodgson - April 05, 2021 at 04:41 PM