



Joel Richard Gilson

October 10, 1931 - January 6, 2024

Joel Richard Gilson, 92, of Annapolis, MD, passed away peacefully in Annapolis, MD on January 6, 2024. Born on October 10, 1931, in Cambridge Springs, PA, Richard was a kind and gentle soul. He was a man full of gratitude and love, and his generous spirit and overall good cheer endeared him to many. He was a true gentleman and will be remembered for his dance moves, thoughtful listening, and dry wit - he was always ready with a greeting or a joke, right up until his final days.

Lovingly called "Richard" by his friends and family, he is survived by his three children, Susan Gilson (65) of Annapolis, Maryland, Robert Gilson (63) of Morenci, Michigan, and Amy Corbin (61) of Frederick, Maryland. He was loved by numerous nieces and nephews, as well as his three grandchildren, Molly Gilson (22), Dan Corbin (41), and Riley Corbin (27). Richard was preceded in death by his parents, Joel and Josephine (Perkins) Gilson, his sister Jane Rose, and brother Jack Gilson.

Richard attended Cambridge Springs High School in Pennsylvania, and later pursued higher education at Allegheny College in northwest Pennsylvania. He served his country in the U.S. Naval Reserves, where he trained and worked in the National Security Group as a cryptologic technician, retiring from the

reserves in 1975.

Richard was involved in the early days of computing, working for several information management firms before starting his own tax preparation company. Alongside his partner, he expanded the business to include financial management for clients. Richard devoted his career to helping people through Gilson Financial until 2020.

A lifelong Methodist, Richard most recently attended Asbury Methodist Church in Arnold, MD. He loved Asbury because it reminded him of the “homey” (his words) church he grew up attending. While living in California, he was a member of the Glendale First United Methodist Church for over 30 years.

Richard will be fondly remembered for his embrace of life and whole hearted participation in several clubs in California. He had regular breakfast dates with the ROMEOS (Retired Old Men Eating Out) in Glendale for years. He was a long-time member of the Los Angeles Breakfast Club, a group that has been gathering in Griffith Park since 1925 to have fun and celebrate friendship. Richard acted as Master of Ceremonies for the LA Breakfast Club well into his 80s, and friends from the club continued to stay in touch and visit him after he moved to Maryland. As master of ceremonies, he was the first part of the Breakfast Club many longterm members fell in love with. He also served as President of the club, was a member of the board of directors, and worked tirelessly to revive the club from near extinction. Thanks to his wit and charm, he succeeded in spades.

In addition to his regular breakfast outings, Richard was a beloved member of

various swing dance groups, including one that met every Saturday night to dance to big band music at Disneyland's Royal Theatre. Afterwards they would ride The Matterhorn and other attractions. He taught many friends to dance, including one couple before their wedding day, and was a welcome partner to many more.

Richard was also a dedicated member of Al Anon Family Groups, sponsoring and befriending many over the years. His contribution to this community was meaningful and long-lasting, and he became a program icon. In his senior communities in Maryland - Manresa and the Annapolitan, he was known for his colorful suspenders, positive disposition, good appetite, fun costumes (including his tuxedo) and dancing to karaoke. He was kind to all, loved by many and will be deeply missed by his friends and family.

A memorial service will be held at the First United Methodist Church of Glendale in Glendale, CA on Saturday, April 27th at 11 AM.

In lieu of flowers, contributions can be made to Asbury United Methodist Church in Arnold, MD, or the Glendale First United Methodist Church, Glendale, CA.

Tribute Wall

JS

“ It's been almost 2 years now, and we still miss Richard! Jim and I remember him often. Thank you so much for sharing your Dad with his California friends! A highlight of our week was to see him at Disneyland back in the day. At his memorial we selected the votive candle that displayed his warm and insightful wit: "God loves me, and there's not a thing I can do about it." Richard reflected that light of love.

Joanne Stine - December 04, 2025 at 05:44 PM

AN

“ Joel Richard Gilson

Anonymous - April 22, 2024 at 02:42 PM

JS

“ Amy, Bob and Susan, I am so sorry for your loss. I can remember your dad when you lived up the street. Such a kind man. Peace be with you all.

Jean Stack - January 21, 2024 at 11:27 PM

KV

“ So much to say about Richard. He will forever hold a special place in my heart. More than a friend (for 20 years), he was like a second dad to me. I will always treasure his simple and matter-of-fact advice, his quick wit and his dance moves. We had the best time together packing up his belongings in his condo before he moved back to Maryland; listening to music, squeezing in a two-step, going through his past memories, having lunch together and hearing him tell his stories. I'm forever grateful for that time and for our very special bond. May the flame of his spirit live on. Love you, my friend.

Karin Vitatoo - January 17, 2024 at 07:14 PM

MW

“ As a friend of Bob Gilson. “The apple doesn't fall far from the tree” is true! Mr. Joe Gilson leaved full life; he left a beautiful legacy.

Maryann Ward - January 15, 2024 at 08:14 AM

ZH

“ Mr Gilson my gentle giant with suspenders.
Remembering us greeting each other when I unlock the parlor doors in the morning.
Here's the lady with the key!!
RestNPower Sir
Zina Front Desk

Zina Hayes - January 13, 2024 at 06:06 PM

CR

“ Richard was a truly wise soul. It was a blessing to be with him, and hear his humor and joy at life. It took him 2 years of cajoling, but he finally convinced me to try swing dancing, and I loved it immediately and always will. Thanks, Richard, for everything!

Chris Runco - January 11, 2024 at 10:53 PM

AM

“ I've known Richard for 11 years,I never knew that the first day I met him he would become my best friend. Keeping me company on the phone while I worked at UCLA as a Custodian cleaning classrooms at night for 6 years to keeping me company on the dance floor and always greeting me with a smile and a big hug. He gave the best hugs. You can ask all of his Swing family as well as others. I will always miss that smile the sound of his voice when he answered the phone saying well hello there. He was always positive always looking for the best in people never once have I heard him talk bad about anyone. He was a good man.Kind ,loving, generous, and funny he was my best friend. And Uncle Richard to my kids. Love you Richard and look forward to swing Dancing with you in heaven.

Amanda Leeann Molina - January 11, 2024 at 04:51 PM

LE

“ So many memories and all of them wonderful and I will treasure them always. When Richard moved away, it left a huge hole in our dance community. Knowing he is gone forever makes us sadder still. God speed, Richard. Always in our hearts. 💔

Linda Earnhart - January 11, 2024 at 12:26 PM

TH

“ The Tax Dancer ! Great guy and Friend.I used to see him dancing every where during the retro swing era ! He did my Taxes for over 20 yrs..a sharp financial mind.\nWe will miss himRIP...Flattop To

Thomas Hall - January 11, 2024 at 11:23 AM

LY

“ I was trying to think of a memory to share and have to say that there are so many memories of Richard that they’re kind of a blur, then I realized that the best memory of him was how he made me feel. Every single time I was with him. He was always truly invested in the person he was with. He made you feel like you were the most important person in his life, at that moment. But the best part was knowing that you actually were. He always had a smile and a kind word and a quick wit. I feel honored to say that he was my friend and every time I think about him, I smile and in my mind, I can see him smiling back at me. \nHe will be truly missed. RIP my friend.

Lora York - January 10, 2024 at 08:20 PM

CD

“ I always enjoyed Richard’s company. He always had a positive attitude and never took himself too seriously. He wasn’t afraid to dress goofy for an event and considered Disneyland as his “country club “, a perspective we all adopted as well. All the ladies adored him and always accepted his invitation to dance. And as light hearted as he was at the park, I could see his responsible side as well and began using his firm to do my taxes. And amidst all that, his love for the Lord would shine through and it was a privilege to count him as a brother. I expect to see him in the end with no doubt, and free from all infirmities forever!

Chuck Degan - January 10, 2024 at 02:00 PM

DJ

“ Richard was a delight to be around. He always made it a point to say hello and chat with us. We also enjoyed seeing him at the Flag Retreat ceremony. He was such a friendly and personable man and was loved by so many people! ❤️\nDiane Johnson

Diane Johnson - January 10, 2024 at 01:28 PM

BF

“ Susan and family, I'm sorry to hear about Mr. Gilson's passing. He was a sweet man.

Babette Farrell - January 10, 2024 at 09:31 AM

TL

“ Richard and I had been dancing to the band at Disney California Adventure. When the band stopped to take a break, a Cast Member (employee) came by with a cheesecake. She said she enjoyed our dancing so much, she wanted to do something for us. 2 Forks, and so many smiles!

Trixxie Land - January 09, 2024 at 03:34 PM

DB

“ Amy, Our heartfelt condolences with you at this time. Asking for God to comfort you throughout this time and through those who gather around you.

Dan and Erica Baker - January 09, 2024 at 01:26 PM

AG

“ We are deeply sorry for your loss ~ Simplicity Cremation & Funeral Services

A Memorial Tree was planted for Joel Richard Gilson - January 08, 2024 at 03:41 PM