



Joseph Roderick Gillis

January 31, 1943 - January 7, 2014

Gillis, Joseph R., January 7, 2014 age 70 of Detroit, formerly of Riverview. Loving father of Roderick and Michael. Brother of John (Wilma), and Patricia (Greg) Frantz, and Carolyn Gillis. Joe was previously married to Pamela Gillis. Joe retired from Ford Motor Company. Visitation Sunday 11 AM - 1:30 PM at Vermeulen Funeral Home, 46401 W. Ann Arbor Road, (Btwn Sheldon and Beck) Plymouth. Funeral Service Sunday 1:30 PM. Interment Holy Sepulchre Cemetery. Memorials may be made to Capuchin Soup Kitchen. To share a memory, please use the View and Send Condolences tab on this web page.

Tribute Wall



“ *Joseph Roderick Gillis*

December 07, 2023 at 05:11 AM



“ *@Was wondering if you are the Gillis family that lived on W. Grand Blvd near Third and went to Holy Rosary school. If you are then maybe you remember me. I was the skinny girl with the red hair. It's been a lot of years .but I think of you when it is a time of reminiscing about old friends. Diane*

Diane Graham Heslip - December 12, 2014 at 10:11 AM



“ *Great memories of a great guy! Joe loved basketball and we played many a pick up game together. Best memory though was his capturing the winnings in the storied "Outhouse Open" in 1973! RIP Joe, you were the best! Deepest sympathy to Pam and family.*

Tom Dolan, SMR 1964 - December 12, 2014 at 10:11 AM



“ *Our prayers are with you all. We have many fond memories, especially when the boys were younger. Family vacations together at the cottages, BBQ's, bonfires, playing in the water and so on. Joe is in a better place, it's still so hard to let go. We love you guys, and will continue to keep Joe in our prayers.*

Rick and Terry Heaman - December 12, 2014 at 10:11 AM

JG

“ My memories of 'Joey' go back more than 60 years. We are cousins. Although I lived in Canada, our families visited with each other many weekends in Detroit or in London Canada. I had no brother but Joe was likely my 'surogate Big Brother' and boy oh boy was he ever a good one! I have a couple of distinct memories from our childhoods involving Joe. In one of my memories our families were all at a park one afternoon and I remember jumping into a swimming pool and immediately realizing the water was too deep for me and I was in trouble. Joe must have been watching out for me because he came over and calmly lifted me out of the water. I still wonder if he saved my life that day. The other distinct memory I have was Joe teaching me to play baseball. Although I must have been a PITA to him I remember his patience as he threw ball after ball teaching me to catch and throw. Our lives went in separate directions as we grew older and went on our separate life journies but my memories were always good and fond when it came to my 'big cousin'. Rest in Peace Joey.

John Gillis - December 12, 2014 at 10:11 AM

“ I was deeply saddened to learn of Joe's death in the Detroit Free Press obituaries. Although it has been over 40 years ago that I last saw Joe, he is a lasting good memory amongst friends I have known. I first met Joe in the Marine Corps Reserves at the Broadhead Naval Armory in Detroit in early 1966. We were in the Communications Platoon together. I have nothing but the best memories of Joe from that difficult time period in our history and would like to share a few of those with you, but first let me say that Joe was truly loved and admired by all of his fellow Marines in our platoon. Joe was both tough, competent, and fun-loving. We were fortunate during this period to not be called to active duty, but did serve together for 5 and 1/2 years attending weekend drills and summer camps. I have three memorable events from those times that speak to Joe's personality and character that I greatly admire about him. One summer camp at Camp Pendleton in California, Joe and I were ordered to take and set-up a 292 antenna on a mountain top on the base. This required us to hike up the mountain (about a 2.5 mile incline as I recall) hand carrying the 40 pound antenna. It was a very hot day and I was soon exhausted wondering if I could make it to the top. But, I remember Joe's toughness and strength as he proceeded to do most of the carrying himself - amazing! I am thankful to this day for Joe's tenacity and the encouragement he provided me in getting the antenna to the top that day. The second memory involved the time he faced up to another taller and bigger Marine that for some reason was getting great enjoyment in harassing Joe, and proceeded to call Joe out for a fight. Joe calmly (and confidently) accepted the challenge and the two disappeared into a gully to have it out. A few moments later, Joe reappeared, dusting off his utilities and climbing out of the gully first to the cheers and applause of his fellow platoon members. Finally, the other guy appeared, stumbling out of the gully with blood on his face and beet red. Joe's reputation was that he never backed down from any challenge! The third memory was of Joe's sense of humor and his innate ability to make others laugh. When I first saw the movie "Stripes" with Bill Murray, I immediately thought of Joe and wondered if the movie writer had known Joe in the Marines. I

always thought Joe could have been a first rate professional entertainer if he had so chosen. Whether it was drilling in formation (often Joe lead us in calling out and singing the cadence using rhythmic and humorous expressions) or acting up during formal inspections, it was impossible to keep a straight face, or to avoid laughing out loud. Joe was tough, strong, funny, and a born leader. I know he was proud of and deeply loved his family and children as he referred to them often during the training drills. At the same time I remember he was working hard in furthering his formal education. I will never forget him. My sincere condolences to his family members and friends.

Fred Hatch - December 12, 2014 at 10:11 AM

MP

“ *I am so sorry to read of Mr. Gillis death. Death of a loved one affects us all. Losing a dear friend or relative is one of the hardest things to deal with. Thankfully, the Bible teaches that most people that have died will be resurrected. Jesus promised that "those in the memorial tombs will hear his voice and come out."(John 5:28, 29)*

Mr and Mrs Phillips - December 12, 2014 at 10:11 AM

BK

“ *Dear John, and to all of Joe's family, our thoughts are with you as you reflect on the life and times of your brother, your father, your one-time mentor and closest confidant. I know that Joe had been ill for some time, so there must be some comfort knowing that the suffering has ended. But I'm sure that the memories and emotions are overwhelming for you all at this time. You are not alone in your grief. We feel for you all and hope that the memories of healthy and happy times gone by will sustain you through the event of this coming weekend and for all of our remaining days on this earth... May God Bless Joe and God Bless you all... Buzz, Nancy, Katie, Athen & Nevaeh*

Buzz Krohn - December 12, 2014 at 10:11 AM

KK

“ You are all in my thoughts & prayers as you mourn the loss of John's big brother, the young athlete, brave soldier, loving husband & father. God delivered Joe from his suffering here on Earth, welcoming him home where there will be no more pain, illness, or agony. I know John looked out for Joe, despite the miles that separated them. That's what loving brothers do. Now that he's with his Lord, and with Cathy & your father, your worries can also end. I hope you & many of Joe's -- & your-- friends can share special memories of growing up together, going to Catholic school together (and, I assume, causing the nuns to have 1 or 2 headaches over the years), devouring Cathy's home cooked meals after football practice, teaching you how to shave, how to drive, & all the other life experiences shared together for the first time, working with relatives & friends at Ford, meeting the love of his life, marrying & starting to raise 2 sons who loved spending time with their Uncle John, & knowing he could count on you & Wilma to watch over you mom & Caroline after they moved close to your family in Wisconsin -- a responsibility Joe no doubt carried for your dad for many years, until you stepped in to do the heavy lifting. No one & nothing can replace the special bond that grew between you over your lifetime; so hold fast to memories of the happiest, funniest & best times you & Joe lived out together & know that he is reunited with your dear father & mother in a new Heavenly home, where I'm sure the Tigers are going to win the World Series every year! Blessings & peace to you & the rest of your family.

Karol Krohn - December 12, 2014 at 10:11 AM

SD

“ *JustHeardFromMurray Deagle About Joe. So Sorry For Your Loss. Jean And I Will Be There Sunday Xoxo*

Sandra Deagle, Vizachero - December 12, 2014 at 10:11 AM