

David Read Gilgen
Eulogy by His Father Read Gilgen

David Read Gilgen was born on October 30, 1967 in Provo, Utah to Read Grant Gilgen and Susan Carol McBride Gilgen. From 1968 to 1973 he lived in Southern California where he attended kindergarten at Turtle Rock Elementary School. Two sisters, Brenda Sue and Cynthia Lynn joined the family during that time. From 1973 to 1978 he lived in Chapel Hill, NC, where he attended Sewell Elementary School, and welcomed another sister to the family, Rebecca Joy. In 1978 the family moved to Madison, WI, where another sister joined him, Elizabeth Laura. David spent most of the next 27 years of his life in Wisconsin. He attended Orchard Ridge Middle School, Madison Memorial High School, and Wales School. He pursued a bachelor's degree at the University of Wisconsin, Eau Claire. In 2005 he moved to Utah where he lived in the Utah Valley Area until December 2008. Since then he has lived in St George, UT.

Dave has worked at many things, including newspaper delivery boy for several years, slaughter house worker, security guard, sales representative for a plumbing contractor and for a major building supply chain. He also tried his hand at various entrepreneurial efforts, including starting an advertising newspaper, promoting investments in a national telephone company, dee-jaying, and promoting his barbershop quartets. He also fell in love with cooking and worked his way into the business with a series of sous-chef jobs. He finally landed his dream job, that of an executive chef at the Beehive Cottages here in St George.

Dave was a man of many talents, including art, sports, and drama, but particularly music. He performed in several plays, including Saturday's Warrior, Promised Valley, and The Little Shop of Horrors. His musical groups included band (he played the trombone), school choirs, high school show choir, and barbershop quartet singing choruses and quartets. Two of his quartets have achieved some acclaim, the Fifth Amendment of Appleton, WI, and the Rocky Mountain Revue of St George.

During the middle part of his life, Dave struggled personally. He had difficulty staying with anything, including work, for more than a few months at a time. His relationships were rocky, and he experienced two unsuccessful marriages. He is the father of one daughter, Justine Reynolds Brownlee, and a granddaughter, Kira Kay Brownlee. The death of his daughter in 2005 apparently triggered a response from deep in his soul, and with the encouragement of his family, particularly his sisters, he began his journey back to his family and to the Church. He was

rebaptized in December 2005, went to the temple here in St George in December 2006, and after nearly three years of courtship, married the love of his life, Sherri Limb on May 17, 2008.

Those are the facts... a sketch of the biographical framework that defined his life. But anyone who knows David also knows his was a unique spirit, special to our Heavenly Father. I remember the day that David, following me home on his bike, crossed the highway and was struck by a car. I had the distinct impression, and I told him so, that the Lord had preserved him for an important purpose. Little did we realize what that purpose would be. Now, in retrospect, we as his parents know it was to help us to become better. We have learned so much from him, where we thought he was supposed to learn from us.

A couple of incidents show how we should not have been surprised at the way David would live his life. At age two, I taught David how to tackle me. The next day he was out in the courtyard tackling all his other two-year old friends, most of whom were half his size! I also taught him how to ride a bike, but failed to teach him how to stop. I soon got reports that he was terrorizing the sidewalks with his fast riding, and using the bushes to stop! His confidence was unbounded, and we often thought perhaps a bit divorced from reality. When he played Superman, he really thought he *was* Superman, and jumped off the landing of the stairs. He convinced his friend to try it also, but his friend broke his arm! Throughout his life, David was not afraid to experiment, moving forward with energy and confidence, but rarely taking time to consider the consequences. He wanted to find out for himself!

Dave's sense of self-assured confidence always seemed to border on bragging about himself. We often thought he needed a dose of reality, but he bulled ahead and tried many things, often failing but sometimes succeeding magnificently. As a peewee football player (he was *never* peewee!), in one game the kickoff came to him, a lineman, so he got to run with the football. The next morning he was in the driveway, practicing his running moves! Four of us family members were in the play, Saturday's Warrior. I asked if he didn't need to practice his lines and he said "I've already read them." I tried to tell him that wasn't enough, but at the next rehearsal, he indeed had his lines memorized, from just one reading!

Dave was always a reliable, hard worker. Even getting up in the dark to deliver papers in the snow, he just did what he was supposed to. He once worked for an arts center that catered to weddings and other events. One evening Dave suddenly joined the small band that was playing for a reception, and began talking to the

guests. The owner was first baffled and worried as he heard Dave dedicate a song to the new couple. He then performed magnificently, accompanied by the band, like it was part of his job. The current residents of the Beehive Cottages can attest to the unique and engaging personality that their chef exhibits. When asked how they could replace David, Miriam Steurer said simply that she could find another cook, but David was the entire *event* that they might never be able to replace.

I have mentioned but not really elaborated on the importance of music in Dave's life. He became a member of the Barbershop Harmony Society, or the Society for the Preservation and Encouragement of Barbershop Quartet singing and experienced some great success with his quartets, including, among many things, singing the national anthem for the Milwaukee Brewers baseball team. After his life changing experiences, he began to realize how important it was to use his God-given talents in the service of others. As he began to work with the struggling Alpine Chorus, he volunteered to become its director, and worked hard to learn all about directing. He attended Director's College in Kansas City twice. He used his boundless energy to promote the group, and to help them reach far beyond what they had been used to. In their first area competition they scored extremely poorly, but made marked improvement by the next contest. After joining the St George Color Country Chorus, he started the Youth in Harmony, a program of the society to encourage youth to learn to sing in four part harmony.

I feel like I need to say something about Dave's "lost years." For quite some time he was estranged from us. We often didn't even know how to get hold of him. We'll probably never know the depths to which he had sunk. We sometimes despaired of ever having a normal relationship with him again. But like with most things, we he came to a realization that he needed to turn back to his Heavenly Father, he did so dramatically. It has truly been a blessing to all of us to have him back in our lives and we so looked forward to being part of his normal adult life.

Yes, Dave has touched many lives. We feel blessed to have known him. From his we learned so much about appreciating people who are different than we are, and learning to accept their efforts, even if we don't completely understand them. In short, he taught us to be more like Christ in our relationships with each other. We, along with you, will miss him dearly. Farewell beloved son. Until we meet again.