

Appreciating Gaylord!



The

*"Oldest Old" doing the 2011 Dallas Turkey Trot!
5K in 59 minutes at 86 years of age!*

*Our favorite memories
of a Generous Life still
being Well-Lived!*

*Husband, Father, Father-in-Law,
and Grand-Dad Extraordinaire!*

“In the end, let’s remember
what is good about one another
~ for this is our only lasting treasure as a family.”

Dhyan

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Dhyan

Oh so many good memories! What to share..... ☺

- I have been told that after working all day at MRI, Dad let Mom sleep and was the one who got up and fed me at night when I was a baby. (Janet too, when she came along.) Back in those days, you had to sterilize the glass baby bottles, cap and nipples, sterilize the water, mix the formula, heat the baby bottle standing up in a saucepan of water on the stove. He always said I gulped my milk down but he had to keep jiggling Janet because she would fall asleep before she had finished her bottle. He put up with interrupted sleep all though our infancies.
- Dad held my hands while I learned to walk. He was a big one for taking walks around the block before bedtime. He loved walking in the snow and we went around the block in the darkness as the snow fell through the cone of light from the streetlamps so many times!
- Dad read to Janet and me at bedtime a lot. (Mom specialized in chapter books later like Heidi, Little Women, Charlotte's Web and Black Beauty.) But I remember sitting on one of Dad's knees as Janet sat on the other, watching his lips move as he read – with feeling! – **WHERE** was fuzzy duck? - Davy's Day – and (my favorite) Wynken, Blynken and Nod.
- Dad was the one who ran along-side my bicycle as I tottered over uneven ground trying to learn how to ride. I would have given up after the first skinned knee but he wouldn't let me! I've had years of good bicycle riding because of that.
- Dad also taught me how to drive stick shift. Ever the practical person, he started me with the car pointing up hill. I wept because letting out the clutch and getting to the gas before the car stalled was so hard! But as he said, "That's the hardest part. You might as well learn that first."
- Dad never cut the lower branches on the elm tree in the backyard so Janet and I could climb the tree. One time he and I were sitting on the back porch on a windy day and I asked him "What is it like at the top of a tree in a wind storm?" "Go find out," he told me, so up I went. I have to say, I foolishly went up just as high as I could go and vividly remember clinging desperately to the thinnest branches at the top as I swayed back and forth as if attached to a metronome. Mom came out through the porch and said "Where's Kathy?" Dad pointed up into the tree where I was grimly holding on, unable to come down until the wind stopped rocking the branches. "Gaylord!" I can remember her shocked voice saying, "Why did you let her go up there?" "She wanted to know what it was like at the top of a tree in a windstorm. Now she knows!" ☺
- He built us a sand box. He helped Janet learn how to tight rope walk across the top of the swing set using a long pole for balance. He made us stilts out of 2x4s! He bought us a bow and arrows. We never killed or wounded anyone, which is a miracle!

- **Dad loves the night sky.**
 - He passed that love on to Janet and me. I remember him waking me up in the middle of the night and carrying me through the darkened house to the living room where the picture window drapes and blinds were pulled up (which NEVER happened otherwise) so I could see the beautiful curtain of snowflakes falling through the cone of light of the streetlamp at the foot of our driveway. Beautiful! And so magical to be wakened up in the middle of the night to see it.

- **He loves and treasures the stars!**
 - He will stay up late in Telluride just to see the Milky Way.
 - When he and I went camping in Colorado we lay on the cold and frosty ground waiting for the stars to come out and meteors to start falling.
 - I also remember him waking us up to see comets passing, meteor showers, lunar eclipses and his beloved Echo I and Echo II satellites passing through the same sky. He had the “obituary” for Echo I in the drawer of his bedside table for years as if he had lost a dear friend.
 - Dad doesn’t believe in “God” but he believes in the beauty and magnificence of nature and the universe and he passed that love on to Janet and me.

- **There were times Dad “made us” watch things on TV for our education.**
 - I remember Janet and I were busy doing something (that we would never have remembered to this day) and we didn’t want to stop to go watch something called “The Beatles” on Ed Sullivan. “Oh, you need to watch this,” he told us. “You are going to be crazy about them in just a little while.” He was right! Then when I was in Junior High School, he even took me to the Beatles concert in Kansas City and let me have the binoculars for most of the time. He did warn me that he would take me home “Pronto!” if I screamed even once! So we sat, the only non-screaming people in the audience, watching that historic concert. ☺
 - He also made sure we saw the coverage of John Glenn, the first American to go up in a rocket, leaving the earth’s atmosphere. We saw the first footsteps being taken on the moon.
 - We literally saw Lee Harvey Oswald being shot on live television, John-John saluting his father’s casket, and the horse with the empty saddle passing by at President Kennedy’s funeral.
 - He scared me to death a few years later by waking me up one morning to announce in his most dire voice: “Robert Kennedy has just been shot and killed.”
 - He made sure we went to cultural events. He took me to my first opera when I was about 11: I remember it was *Il Trovatore* and I was totally enchanted for life! He also took us to the Nelson Art Gallery, the Philharmonic, the Missouri Repertory Theater and many museums throughout our childhoods. Shall we throw the zoo in there too?

- I also remember huddling on his lap in the darkness in front of the black-and-white TV screen watching the witches in MacBeth for the first time and Lady MacBeth wringing her blood shadowed hands.
 - I also remember (from the safety of his lap) my first inkling that all was not as well in the world as in our small neighborhood when we watched "On The Beach" – a movie set in Australia after a nuclear holocaust has wiped out the rest of the world the people of Australia wait for the radioactive cloud to arrive on their shores.
 - But there was also Mary Martin's Peter Pan every year --- and what year did we ever miss The Wizard of Oz?
 - And we often watched the 1960s equivalent of the Discovery Channel. Mutual of Omaha's wild kingdom, Christmas and New Year's music programs, events from the Kennedy Center.
 - These things were marks of a cultured life for Dad and he just did them like he breathes.
- **Dad loves classical music.**
 - I remember seeing a letter he wrote to Mom before they were married in which he described sitting in the kitchen of their house in Pawnee City with his sister, Wilma, doing the dishes, and classical music records playing.
 - He had KXTR, the Kansas City classical music station, on all the time. It was a wonder to me that my friends never knew as much about classical music as I did and that their houses were not filled with classical music all the time.
- **Dad taught me a lot about social justice.**
 - When an African American family tried to move into our neighborhood (Janet also comments about this below) he was the only one who was ready to welcome them in. The rest of the neighborhood tried to buy the house together to keep the Black family out. In the end, Dad was sorry to say, the neighborhood, including my parents, bought them out.
 - I remember when I asked him about prejudice, he took me downstairs to the basement and put on this South Pacific song to answer me: *"You've got to be taught, before it's too late, before you are six, or seven or eight, to hate all the people your relatives hate. You've got to be carefully taught! You've got to be carefully taught."*
 - He loaned me his car one Christmas so I could drive to Potosi State Prison to visit one of my prison penpals. It meant more to David than I can even put into words to have me come visit. In all the years David had been in prison, no one had ever come to visit him.
- **There were lots of projects he did for "his girls' education."**
 - We boiled maple syrup to turn it into maple sugar. Unfortunately, although we left the stove on low, the syrup boiled over and dripped through the stove for months! Mom was furious!

- One “steak” Sunday, he looked at the fat we had left on our plates and decided we would dip candles after rendering the fat. That was fun! However, the candles were soft at room temperature and had to be stored on the frozen back porch until we burned them.
- He made me Aladdin’s lamps out of glass lab piping that were the envy of all my friends. You filled them with vegetable oil and burned a thread stuck in the oil and out the spout. I wish I still had one!
- We made and flew our own kites.
- He would make pancake batter, pack up the camping stove, and we would go have breakfast in Antioch Park. If he and Mom only knew that Janet and I were jumping from the roof of the miniature town buildings as they fixed breakfast! It is a wonder we never broke anything as we dared each other to jump from higher and higher platforms.
- He slaughtered the chickens himself (once farm boy that he was) – although that backfired a bit. He tried to do that privately but Janet saw him and went running to the front yard to tell the whole neighborhood Dad was killing the chickens and to come watch! Unfortunately, one of the chickens got loose after having its head cut off and a whole flock of kids went running out of the yard in all directions pursued by a headless hen! I was designated to watch as he eviscerated the chickens in the kitchen sink, carefully showing me the contents of their stomachs with the little rocks for digestion. And here’s the liver. And here’s the heart! Here’s the intestines. I can still remember the smell of warm blood and chicken insides!
- Dad took us out to Independence to pick apples and peaches. Oh, those sun-warmed peaches right from the tree! We drove to the fruit and vegetable stands to get fresh corn, watermelons soaking in big watering troughs of ice and water, and, of course, baskets and baskets of fresh garden tomatoes! Chris and Megan have probably never had such good tomatoes in their lives as used to be sold for pennies at roadside stands!
- We walked the railroad tracks in Pawnee City with the Los Angeles cousins and Uncle Dan, looking for “bittersweet” to decorate the house at Christmas.
- Dad showed us how to make a super-saturated solution of sugar and water to grow beautiful crystals. I was the only child I ever knew who had a “pet organism” – something magenta growing in sugar water.
- He made a mobile out of glass rods, finely strung glass chain he made himself, and crystals he grew in his lab: cobalt blue, brilliant orange-red, pale frosty green. It was a lovely thing!
- He could sew as well as Mom, in fact he accidentally insulted her once by finishing drapes for the living room when she had been struggling with them, gave up, and went to bed.
- He made angel wings for Janet and me out of cardboard, aluminum foil and Christmas tinsel.
- He was a champion Jack-o-Lantern pumpkin carver.

- He helped me make and calibrate a real thermometer. I believe he still has it in his garage.
 - One night he brought home a hot plate, a tall tube of clear glass, and a chunk of dry ice from the lab and made a tornado in the kitchen!
 - I remember when I made a topographical map of Hawaii for school, he insisted on making it to scale and showed me (and did most of it himself, actually) how to measure and cut birch rods from the lab to scale and then fill in the Plaster of Paris so that we had an accurate, 3D, map of Hawaii and its volcano. I'm sure Janet has just as many stories like this as I do!
 - He helped us catch tadpoles so we could watch them turn into frogs. There are first grade pictures of Janet and Cindy Hyde and their "frog project" poster.
 - We looked for fresh-water muscles in the Swope Park creek and pond. He showed us raccoon tracks.
 - One day he took us down to a darkened basement. He had the slide projector on its side on the floor with a piece of paper over the lens restricting the beam of light to a thread. In front of the projector was a clear glass lab dish about 6 inches in diameter and 3 inches tall full of water. As the beam of light entered the side of the dish he showed us how it bounced off the far wall, bent and came out the other side of the "raindrop" broken into colors. He made us a rainbow!
 - He also made us a haunted house one Halloween downstairs complete with a curtain of wet noodles to pass through and bowls of eye-balls and who knows what in the black-light lit darkness. Another Halloween he took the vacuum cleaner apart and tucked one end of the hose through the window next to the front door and into the back of a Jack-o-Lantern with a scary face. He sprinkled the sidewalk with something from his lab that popped and cracked when it was walked on. I know some kids never made it to the front door and others ran screaming when the Jack-o-Lantern started talking to them.
- **Dad has been very private about his life for a long time**, keeping his home life and work life separate for many years, of necessity, but also not talking much about his life growing up. It is only in the past few years that he has begun to write things down. He is currently working on his memoirs of WWII which made more of an impression on him that you might believe from how little he talked about it when we were growing up. I can hardly wait for him to really work on and finish his personal history.
 - **Dad was *and is* a very inventive cook.** There were some things he was famous for and others he was infamous for.
 - He was famous during our childhood for his pancakes. My friends and Janet's loved to spend the night at our house on Friday nights because he would make us pancakes-in-shapes the next morning: trees, Mickey Mouse, cat faces, giraffes, dogs, umbrellas, etc. There were also likely to be chocolate pancakes, apple cinnamon pancakes, chocolate

chip pancakes and we would have homemade peach, apple, or strawberry sauce for the top, as well as syrup. Some mornings we had a choice of 4 different batters to choose from!

- He was famous AND infamous for his fudge. Making fudge, you should know, is an exact science! It has to look just right when you put a drop into cold water. After you take it off the stove it has to sit, without being touched or stirred in a sink of cold water, until it cools down to a particular temperature. Then it has to be stirred by hand, like mad, to keep the sugar crystals from becoming too big thus ruining the texture. One day he was at this critical stage when we were out camping in Yellowstone with the Rices and the Oldbergs and he refused to leave the camp stove even though every one else had taken shelter because a bear was strolling through the campground. I don't know what he would have done if the bear had followed the tempting smell of home-made fudge to our campsite but I suspect he would have defended his fudge to the death! Cindy Oldberg remembered and told this story at his and Mom's 50th wedding party.
- He is a master peanut brittle maker and many was the Sunday afternoon we pulled home-made taffy for fun just like his family did back on the farm.
- Ditto with candy popcorn and popcorn balls. He made us our own Cracker Jacks. I haven't had a good popcorn ball in years!
- He is the family turkey maker at Thanksgiving and Christmas and better pass on his recipe pretty soon!
- Dad experimented with making his own pickles in enormous vats in the basement. Dill, Sweet, and (oh the best) Mustard Pickles! I still remember the smell and the foam as the dill pickles fermented.
- He made his own beer and made root beer for us kids. I think he, Chris, and Megan made a batch of root beer one year complete with their own label!
- He's always believed in buying things in bulk or quantity and Janet and I were the envy of our friends one year because he brought home a gunny sack of M&Ms. (MRI helped to develop the famous candy coating.) Another year he bought a box of about 9000 ice cream cones. Janet and I were allowed to eat as many (sans ice cream) as we wanted.
- He used to listen to National Public Radio on his way to work and thus became one of the first enthusiasts for the national public radio cranberry sauce recipe: frozen chopped raw cranberries, sour cream, sugar, and, of all things, horseradish!
- We ate a few idiosyncratic things that no one in my acquaintance ever ate but were standard in our family, for example popcorn and milk. This was a depression food he brought to our family from his childhood. You put a big bowl of hot buttered and salted popcorn in the middle of the table, everyone has a cereal bowl of cold milk, and you put a handful of popcorn at a time into the milk and ate it like cereal. In my whole lifetime I have only found one other person who ate popcorn and milk together and she was also from a farm family background.
- He and some of his MRI friends used to make their own wine.

- He mastered his bread maker. The best was his cheddar onion bread! Pity home-made bread is no longer in his “diet.”
 - On Sunday mornings after church and Sunday school he would often fix “Gaylord scrambled eggs” which had bits of carrot, celery and onion sautéed in butter and then scrambled with eggs and grated cheddar cheese. Yum!
 - He used to make what Janet and I called “Gaylord Goulash” which was pretty awful until he learned to drain the fat from the hamburger. Hamburger, onions, cabbage and seasonings!
 - Then on Sunday evenings (Mom fixed the big Sunday dinner at noon) we often had fried egg sandwiches on buttered toast with yellow mustard. I have had friends reluctantly admit that yellow mustard is good on fried eggs but they would never have eaten it unless I gave it to them the first time. I got it from Dad!
 - Let’s not forget his famous oatmeal – chocolate chip cookie recipe which he perfected in Dallas!
- **Dad can build anything.**
 - He and one of his grad students built the screened in back porch at 2804 W. 47th Terrace, our first little house. We spent so many hot summer nights on the cool, mosquito-less, porch. Not having any air conditioning, we slept out there in the summer, sometimes, or camped out in the backyard.
 - I remember one time, Lucy and I were sleeping in the old army sleeping bags way back behind the bushes in the back yard when it started to rain. We picked up some sticks and used the sleeping bag wrapping and sticks to make little porches over our pillows and heads and went back to sleep with the unusual but very pleasant feel of the rain falling on our sleeping bags. We were content and secure in the water-proofness of the bags (which was not the case, actually) and were shocked when Dad came running out in the rain in his pajamas to inquire if we were too stupid to come in out of the rain?
 - He also built the back patio where we had so many picnics with the neighbors, made home-made peppermint ice cream and set off fireworks on the 4th of July. His “Old Uncle Gaylord’s Ice Cream Social” 4th of July picnics were famous right up to the year 2000 when he and Mom moved to Dallas. He also built a campfire on the patio at 4411 West 54th Terrace in the fall around which everyone gathered from MRI to roast hot dogs and marshmallows before looking through a telescope at the moon.
 - He built up the unfinished basement at 2804. It had a big storage room flanked on either side by a cedar closet (oh my gosh that smelled good!) and his office. I remember going in there by myself and shutting the door just to see “pitch black.” I’d stand wrapped in Mom’s fur coat until I couldn’t stand being without light and ran back out. It was so pitch dark he used it to unroll photographic film before processing it and printing his own black and white pictures. I remember the magic of being the printer’s assistant whose job it was to gently tap the corners of the paper in the solution and watch as the picture slowly came into view.) On the other side he built an office for

himself complete with an alcove holding a couch that pulled out into a trundle bed. Many a night Janet or I slept overnight down there with a friend.

- **As Janet wrote, he was head of the pet department in our house.**
 - Not only rescuing Alfie from sure death but building rabbit hutches for first Sam the White Rabbit and then Thumper the Black Rabbit and the guinea pigs.
 - I remember he once dug up half the brick patio at 4411 because the turtle had disappeared in the Fall, presumable it had dug itself into the ground to hibernate, and didn't come out in the spring. Afraid it had gotten itself trapped under the patio, Dad dug half of it up looking for him.
 - We briefly had chickens purchased one Easter as chicks with their feathers dyed pink or blue.
 - We got to buy chameleons at the circus one year. Neither the chickens nor the chameleons lasted very long. We had and bred guinea pigs.
 - One of the best pets we had was Rachel the Rat - who he rescued from a lab at MRI and brought home. Dad took a wooden circle (probably the top from a round of cheese) that was about 3 feet in diameter, cut it in half and attached one half to the wall. Rachel lived up on this shelf and never jumped down. He made her a little wooden house up on stilts which we filled with strips of fresh newspaper that she tunneled through.
 - When Janet had her mouse, Alfie, he made a little traveling cage for so she could take him to school. Wooden top and bottom. Bars made of pieces of wire coat hanger wrapped in window screen. A door with bars that pulled up and down and a little handle on the top. It was still in KC when they moved in 2000.
 - He taught our dog Casey to open the door to the porch by putting a scrap of rubber tubing on the bottom of the door. Casey learned to hook his claws in the rubber and let himself in!
 - In fact, he has patiently put up with and enjoyed any number of eccentric dogs from Casey through Georgie and Betsy!
- **Dad was king of the trip planners.** Although we didn't have a lot of money when Janet and I were growing up, we always went on vacation every summer.
 - We drove to Los Angeles to visit the cousins and go to Disneyland.
 - We drove the other direction and visited Washington DC, taking in all the sights and monuments and visiting the places my mother loved when she lived there during WWII.
 - He planned itineraries to the minute! I remember feeling that I was getting out one too many times to look yet again at the Grand Canyon from another angle. Janet and I got immersed in comic books and refused to look at the big hole in the ground yet again. We also saw the petrified forest that trip.
 - We took several vacations with the Rices and Oldbergs. Once to float in canoes down the Current River in southern Missouri (where Janet nearly became history when she

and Nancy got their canoe trapped nose first under a log. “Paddle right! Paddle right!” I can still hear my Dad shouting as they headed straight for the log.)

- Another time we went to Yellowstone National Park and the Grand Tetons. The night at Grand Teton National Park there was such a storm that Dad parked the car in front of the camper trailer and put Diane Oldberg and I inside while he and mom shared one side of the camper trailer and the Oldbergs shared the other, while Nancy and Janet, Sharon and Cindy, weighted down the floor. Diane and I sat well into the night watching by lightning flashes as one tent after another collapsed and blew away around us.
- One summer we went to Los Angeles, his brother, Dan and he took my cousin Owen and I to see the Bristlecone Pines – the oldest living things on the earth!
- So many Thanksgivings or Christmases he came home from work, packed up the car, and drove us to Nebraska to be with our grandparents, aunts, uncles and cousins. He must have been tired, but he made the whole drive even with all of us, including mother, sleeping in the car around him. I remember loving it when he would stop to shake himself, walk around and wake himself up on some back road next to a rustling corn field. I would wake me up and walk with him to look at the Milky Way – bright and glistening above us.
- **He was a good rescuer.** I remember being so homesick when I left for college and how much worse it was when I got the flu on top of it. Dad called to check on me one Saturday morning, found out I was sick, and told me “I’ll be there in half an hour.” And he was. How lovely it was to be tucked into my own bed at home again!

There are lots of things I admire about my Dad.

- **He loves to build things.** He got that from his Depression childhood and his clever father. When he got to Dallas one of the first things he did, since the house didn’t have a basement to tinker in, was to build himself a room out in the garage for his workroom, plant room, and pottery studio.
- **He has so much persistence.**
 - He is self-taught on pottery. He always says he is “not an artist” but he is a wonderful technician, inventing ways to do things he wants to do with clay and doing things over and over until they look like he wants them to look.
 - That fruit bowl he made for the Telluride house was “Telluride 10” -- meaning there were 10 prototypes before he got one he felt was perfect enough to give.
 - Same with the KU Jayhawk plate he made for Derek. That also went through a number of iterations until he deemed it good enough for a present!

- This Christmas he is giving everyone personalized coasters and he could probably tile his backyard with the rejects!
- **He is determined to stay as healthy as he can for as long as he is alive.** He watches what he eats, exercises, walks the dogs, and reads a zillion medical newsletters to stay current on health news. He researches his own medications and educates his doctors on them! He has a blow-by-blow medical history to be taken to every medical appointment.
- **Dad LOVED his career, and he was a brilliant scientist with a well-deserved reputation in his field.**
 - Just today I was talking to Janet Gilliland, who was one of his lab assistants once upon a time, and she commented that he used to arrive at the lab at 4:30 in the morning a lot of times. Janet is another example of his kindness. She has bi-polar disorder, although thankfully it has been in remission for many years because of medication, she once had a huge outbreak which turned into a Dr. Jekyll / Mr. Hyde – like episode. She was eventually hospitalized but Dad and Mom took her into their house so she could be released but not have to live on her own for awhile.
 - Because he worked on a secure project, Janet and I never really knew WHAT our father did for a living except that he was a chemist. His career was award-winning and his book about his time at MRI is an eye-opener and no mistake!
 - I remember one story I loved. He was so quick to identify samples that the people in Washington used to have a pool about how quickly Gaylord would figure out the next one. He would drive out to the airport, pick up the sample, and take it back to his lab. One time he looked at the sample and thought about it in the car on the way back to the lab. One quick test in his lab and he knew what it was. When he called to report, the group in Washington hadn't even completed their pool yet! Ha!
- **Dad could fix anything in the house.**
 - He did the plumbing, electricity, tiling, carpentry. He fixed the dish washer, the car, the washing machine and dryer.
 - He made his own, perfectly balanced, 200 pound, cement pottery kick wheel!
 - He painted the house by himself, one side a year!
 - A few Christmases ago, I brought the pieces of a baby quilt I was making for Peter Ward, thinking I could finish it on Mom's old singer sewing machine. He spent all Christmas keeping that poor machine running! We actually had a great time together. I looked up and found the original manual for the sewing machine on the internet. We laughed a lot as the sewing machine broke down again and again.. but I got the quilt done! And now the Wards call Peter "Linus" because he still hauls his "Blue Ayah" with him everywhere!

- **Dad loves games!**
 - When he was little and living on a farm during the Great Depression his companions were his brother and sisters. They played all kinds of games and he loves playing games to this day.
 - He looks forward to the next McClain game of Oh Hell!
 - He is mastering backgammon since the first Christmas in Telluride.
 - He plays bridge at the senior center and on Sundays with friends.
 - At 86 years of age, he can still beat the pants off everyone at croquet!

- **Dad helps his neighbors. People always come to him first in an emergency!**
 - This is a category that could take up a book by itself. What didn't his neighbors come to him for in need?
 - He picked up "the sisters" newspaper for them every morning when he picked up his own and delivered it to their front door.
 - He ran an electric cord across the street to the Lawdies in Dallas when their power went out and I'm not sure that is even legal!
 - Our friends the Kohlers lived on the low place between two hills on 54th Terrace and during many a summer storm, when the street and their yard turned into a river, Dad was down there in their basement helping to bail water rising up through the drain. I remember being up to our knees once with Mrs. Kohler on the stairs too afraid of being electrocuted to come help us, but DAD was in the water bailing for her!

- **He LOVES his grandkids!**
 - Over Mom's objections, he picked up and uprooted his life of 35 years in Kansas City just to be near them in Dallas while they were still kids.
 - He attended, as far as I know, every basketball game Chris ever played in Dallas. He adored watching Megan play lacrosse. I think he and Mom went to every program at Hockaday or St. Marks. Even after mother was too sick to go, he went to their schools on Grandparents Day by himself.
 - He was known to make batches of his famous oatmeal-chocolate chip cookies for their sports teams.
 - He loves it when Chris and Markie come to do pottery with him.
 - He is so proud of Chris and Megan and their achievements!
 - He is too shy to put himself forward, but it is still a highlight of his life when he gets an e-mail from them or they come to visit when they are in Dallas.

- **He loves plants**
 - Every one of the plants in his house has a story and a memory attached. From the (now stolen) grapefruit tree which Janet planted from the seed of a breakfast grapefruit in her 1 grade year) to the plant Mom got for Secretary's Dad in the 1980s,

to the Norfolk island pine that Cindy Hyde gave them as a little tree one Christmas, to the ficus tree that once belonged to my housemate and his “rent-a-daughter” Cathy Schmidt, to the mother-in-law tongue plant that belonged to his mother back in the 1930s (and also got stolen in Dallas)... the list goes on.

- **And what won't he do to grow a good tomato?**
- He also once brought home and golden rain tree seedlings from MRI and filled his yard with those beautiful trees. Golden flowers in the Spring, dancing with pale green paper lanterns in the Summer, rattling with brown paper lanterns in the Fall and winter.
- **He waited on Mom hand and foot during the last bitter years of her life.** He took care of her beyond all reasonable limits.
 - I can't believe he had so much patience with her because she could certainly be bossy, demanding, irritating, angry and unreasonable at times. He always gave her the benefit of the doubt, telling me over and over “We don't know what she is suffering. She cries because she is in so much physical pain. And we don't know what has happened to her brain with all those little strokes. We need to be patient with her.”
 - Although he is the kind of person who doesn't like interruptions when he is focused and busy, he would drop anything he was doing to come get her a glass of ice water.
 - She was jealous of every one of his beloved projects and tried to interrupt them as often as she could, but he was always patient. “Farmer Brown!” she called him when he was out working in his beloved garden. *(This was a great insult of hers because she grew up in a tiny town and always looked down on farmers.)*
 - He took care of Mom until Janet and I were both afraid caring for her was going to kill him. He took care of her until he simply couldn't do it alone anymore.
 - And still when she went to the nursing home, the staff used to marvel because he was there EVERY evening to keep her company. And she woke him up night after night on the phone – he always answered. It's no wonder he still has trouble sleeping.
 - Although she had boyfriends before she met him, Erma was the one and only love of his life.

Dad has been so creative and such a builder and doer all his life. He has so many interests and he has educated himself in so many areas; he is a “polymath” in his own right!

He was an absolutely brilliant chemist!

And I agree with what Janet wrote in her section below: Dad has been well loved by so many people and I think he is largely oblivious of this fact. He has been kind, generous, and helpful to so many. He has been a “good neighbor” all his life. And he has enriched so many lives with his wide and varied interests.

We are so lucky to still have you around!

Merry Christmas, Dad!

**May you be our wonderful and healthy
“Oldest Old”
for many more years to come!**

Dhyan

Janet

These are really good stories and remembrances.... old stories, but I'll tell them again!

- 1) Alfie, my pet mouse had been played with under the tree that afternoon. Being seven years old, or whatever, I had skipped away for the next adventure leaving Alfie in his plastic cage with the steel top containing air holes. Middle of the night, a clap of thunder and the downpour that followed woke me up. Oh, no! Alfie would be swimming/ drowning! I ran to my dad pleading with him to get up and save Alfie. Gaylord, dutifully got up, put on his "red, smoking jacket"... I always thought that was the coolest robe.... and went out into the pouring rain, thus saving Alfie's life. Yea!! *I think Alfie ultimately starved to death in the garage! ☹
- 2) Of course, there's the story of Sherlock-Gaylord which will live in infamy. Trying to catch the "toilet paper tree roller's" in action one night he, unfortunately, wore a black turtleneck while plastering himself against a white house. Too funny!
- 3) But the real Gaylord story is how he is always there to help anyone! Patricia tears up every time she talks about him. He is the father that she never had. They have coffee together, pray together, she makes sure his house is decorated for Christmas and loves being with him.
- 4) He helps his neighbors/family with their cars, papers, plumbing, fountains, pets, and kids.... whatever needs to be done. He has always been like that.

I remember being in the car with him when I was little and he picked up a poor kid that was hitchhiking and had a desperate story. He drove him to the destination, not just close. So dangerous now, but he didn't think twice about it.

Then you have the black neighbors story. (A black family started to move into the house right next door to ours on 47th terrace. The "all white" neighborhood went up in arms because the property values would go down. Lots of secret knocking on doors in the night and fervent voices after the kids were put to bed.) Gaylord was the only one to even speak to the couple back in the 60's.

I can honestly say, that people love Gaylord. He's a smart guy who had a big life, yet is so unassuming and just enjoys being out there. All my friends adore him.

And you can't not mention the amazing way that he took care of Mom all those years. I really don't know how he did it, day after day.

You're finishing strong Dad!
I love you!

Janet

Derek

How lucky am I to have married into a father-in-law like Gaylord?! I have so many memories over so many years with him, and you know what I've realized as I've thought about this – they are ALL positive. How many people are there who have been in your life for decades that you can say that about?! Here are just a few macro and micro snapshots:

- Gaylord LIVES life – he's an inspiration to me. He's always pursuing something he's passionate about: pottery, plants/gardening, family history, etc. – the man with so many projects. Always busy and always doing something to stimulate his mind or his body – hence his keeping of every statistic, charting everything, love for games, bowling, walks with the dogs, etc.
- Not surprisingly, many of my memories are overlapping with Janet's. I can't write this without noting, as she did, his unwavering dedication to Erma – years and years as a constant companion and caregiver. Inspirational love and commitment.
- An outlier: I think only once in my life have I seen Gaylord really furious, so, of course, it stands out. Janet and I were in college, we were all home from KU, and some strange guy had come to the door at the Atkinson residence. Janet had answered the door, and the next thing Gaylord knew, she was not around. The guy at the door had been nothing and had left, but Janet had gone out, alone, without saying goodbye, and (decades before cell phones) Gaylord had worried about her for hour after hour, fearing even that she might have been abducted by the stranger who came to the door. Later that night, she and I met up at some point, and I came back to the house with her and got to see Gaylord "greet" her (in his red robe) as we entered the house. Beneath Gaylord's calm, easy-going exterior lie all those parental emotions and fears, and they were on full display.
- Fondest memories: probably the times at Pomme de Terre. Life at its simplest (and best): horseshoes, the pontoon boat, the best sliced tomatoes ever, the 9-hole golf course, the starry sky, etc. The definition of "quality time."
- The best cheeseburger ever: In the late 80's, I made a trip from Texas up to Kansas City to take in a KU tournament hoops game. It was just Gaylord and I at the house (I think Erma may have been down in Texas visiting us). As I've noted many times, Gaylord made me the best cheeseburger ever out on the grill before the game that evening. Everything about it was perfect: the beef, the cheese, the tomatoes, the great big slab of raw onion. Every time I throw a burger on the grill I'm hoping to recreate that moment.
- Gaylord worked decades in the lab out of our view, working on the neatest things. How great it was for all of us that he took the time to write up many of his memories of his career.
- Mr. Fix-It: He's shown us all that paper clips and duct tape have infinite uses.
- As Janet observed, you can't think of Gaylord without noting that he'll do anything for anybody.

- Gaylord, as grandfather – the director of Camp Grandpa, which Megan and Chris always loved to attend.

Gaylord, you go, Man! Keep it up!
Love you! Derek

Megan

How lucky Chris and I are to have a grandpa like you?! Not only do we get to have a grandfather who's still around to spend time with, but he's the most active, giving, and helpful one out there, I'm sure!

So many experiences we've had together include you encouraging science and problem solving in different situations. I'd like to think much of my engineering-bent comes from things you showed us! I'll start off with one of my favorite stories to tell friends that I feel really highlights the science man that you are. Even if it was a really easy problem, it was miraculous in the eyes of young Megan. 😊

- Once when Chris and I were both little kids, the McClain family went on a road trip to Disney World in Mom's brand new, bright red Suburban. Chris and I were set up in the back-back for the long road trip with all sorts of games and entertainment strewn about the gray cloth interior. When we arrived, the crayons didn't make it off the back seat, and when the sun melted the wax and baked them into the upholstery the next day, Chris and I were dead meat. I don't remember much about how it went down, but I know Mom and Dad were the *opposite* of happy with us...

Flash forward to our road trip in the same car up to Kansas City to see Grandma and Grandpa. At some point Mom took Grandpa out to the car to survey the damage. Within minutes (in my mind at least) he emerged from the basement with a life-saving concoction. He applied a few drops to the multi-colored spots on the back seat and "Poof!" Magic! The colored spots disappeared, Chris and I were saved!

Thanks, Grandpa, for coming through in the clutch! What would we have done without our own personal chemist!?

I love that story. I feel it shows how much your work as a scientist really permeated your entire life. Clearly you worked at something you love, and it is always inspiring to see people who are able to find that in life!

And now some other snapshots of good times with Grandpa...

- When there is any home improvement project at hand, Grandpa is the first on the scene figuring out what needs to be done. And one huge project that Grandpa and I completed together was the patio we installed at our house on Avalon in Lakewood. I love the picture of Grandpa and me hard at work in the backyard. He's playing supervisor, and I'm pushing this huge compactor, which is about as large as me. I remember us both wearing jean shorts and mine were coupled with a hilarious one-piece swimsuit. That patio turned out fantastic thanks to Grandpa!
- His loving, caring nature is showcased not only with his family, friends, and dogs but also with his plants. I've so often witnessed his plant-revival powers at work when

Mom returns to him some plant she's had for a while that is barely clinging to life. But after a few weeks with Grandpa, it will look as healthy as ever!

- I also remember my early Christmases in Lakewood when Nintendo was *the* gaming system to have, and we were all enthralled with Tetris. Endless competitions frequently lasted late into the night.
- He also loves his ceramics, and our family has been fortunate to often be recipients of his creations. From the plates he made when Chris and I were born to the VW coasters that are currently being used on the table in my apartment, they are all wonderful. And I'll always remember the time we spent together making things in the basement of 4411 and in his garage in Dallas.

**Thanks Grandpa for all the good memories!
Let's keep making them!**

Xoxo,
Megan



Chris

There are so many great memories that I have that are not specific instances or one-time events. Making pottery with grandpa in both Kansas City and Dallas are memories I will never forget. From shopping for the supplies, to learning new techniques, to sharing our work with each other; ceramics is something we both love to do. It's fun to look back at the 'art' that I made as a small child and what we now make of that amazing hand-made kick-wheel. There are memories from the old house of playing the baseball game and Gameboy Tetris in the basement for hours. There are memories of the lake house and horseshoes and the can-crusher that we loved as kids. So many things that will stay with me forever despite them not being a single particular story.

The memory I would like to share is something that probably went unnoticed by the majority of people involved, but it is something I will always remember: My senior year in college grandpa made it out to Richmond to see where I went to school. I loved showing off the campus and bragging about all of the things that make that school so great. One night while he and my parents were visiting we went to dinner at The Tobacco Company in Downtown Richmond. Markie joined us for the meal, and she spent both the car ride and the dinner absorbing every story Grandpa would share about the war and his career. It was amazing to hear him talk so passionately about his life. I remember thinking that I hope when I am his age, I have as much pride and love for the life I've lived.

The part that I love the most, however, came after dinner as we made our way out to retrieve the car from the valet. The five of us stood by the valet stand and waited for whoever was working the line to reappear and take both our keys, and the keys of the couple in front of us. Suddenly a little man emerged and asked for the keys. He smiled and told us that he would return with the first couple's car and after doing so would go get ours. I saw the grin creep over Grandpa's face as he heard this seemingly elementary statement. Smirk grew until he could no longer repress his laughter and blurted out "No, bring back both of the cars at the same time."

With Janet as my mother, and as his daughter, I have taken countless pictures with Grandpa that end with her telling him to 'smile!' Well on that night, I witnessed the biggest smile I've ever seen wash slowly over his face, and end in uncontrollable laughter. It may have been lost on my parents, and hopefully on the valet attendant, but Markie and I could not help but revel in his happiness and join him in a side-stitching laugh.

It is a simple memory, but I will never forget that smile.

I love you, Grandpa. I can't wait to laugh until I cry with you again soon.

- Chris