



## Ralph F Gildehaus Jr.

October 27, 2020

Ralph F. Gildehaus, Jr. died on Oct. 27, 2020, at his home in Moorestown at the age of 91. Resident of Moorestown since 1973, Ralph almost made it to his 92nd birthday on November 5. Born into a large extended German American family in South Saint Louis, Ralph graduated from the John Burroughs School in 1947, where he was involved in theatre, a literary publication, and the tennis team. He held an interesting array of part-time and summer jobs--working at a drugstore soda fountain, driving range, and movie theatre, among others--which contributed to his engaging personality and sales skills that he would use in his later life and career.

Ralph and several of his Burroughs classmates, including his best friend Ferg Fowler, attended Amherst College--sight unseen--from which Ralph graduated with a B.A. in Chemistry in 1951. He served for two years with the U.S. Army Chemical Corps, stationed for his final six months protecting an airbase outside of London, England during the time of the Korean Conflict and Cold War tensions. After a period in the Army Reserve, he was honorably discharged as a Captain.

In 1953, Ralph started in sales with Union Carbide for which he would work for nearly 40 years. His training program took him to New York City, Charlotte, and then Philadelphia, where he met Betty Jane Davis--who would become the love of his life and spouse for 60 years--at a young adult group sponsored by the Bryn Mawr Presbyterian Church. They married in that same church in 1960, moved to Tulsa, and began a family with two children, Ralph and Charles.

Ralph's work took the family to Chicago, St. Louis, and finally Moorestown, where Ralph and Betsy have lived in the same house since 1973. They are long-time members of the First Presbyterian Church of Moorestown, where Ralph has served as an Elder, Deacon, and Trustee. Ralph was a member of the Moorestown Field Club and the New Jersey Society of Pennsylvania (serving a term as its president). For several years, he raised funds for the United Way of Burlington County.

Ralph lived with a great sense of humor and relentless optimism. He was a character. One of his Army Reserve buddies said that Ralph was the funniest person he had ever met. Ralph loved entertaining people in his very decorated basement. He would play his "boomba" instrument for anyone who would dare to listen and particularly liked animated

covers of a variety of songs.

He was incredibly handy--creating and repairing bird houses for his and other yards and making lamps out of what other people might consider junk, including one out of an old Christmas tree trunk. He was a talented gardener--indoors and out (talking with the plants was his secret). His next-door neighbor said a few years ago that Ralph had slowed down somewhat, but still did twice as much yard work at twice the age.

After retiring from Union Carbide more than 25 years ago, Ralph and Betsy have enjoyed traveling all over the world, staying in Siesta Key FL for a few weeks most years, and visiting with their children, daughter-in-law, and grandchildren. Two years ago, they took their last cruise to celebrate his 90th birthday. Last year, they attended the graduations of their grandson from UNC and granddaughter from high school, which turned out to be their last trips together. He enjoyed being a husband, father, and grandfather. As his granddaughter said, "Papa clearly loved us and supported us. I will always take that with me."

Ralph loved his family, neighbors, friends, church, alma maters, and Moorestown community, for which the entire family is grateful for love and support over many years. He is survived by his wife of 60 years, Betsy (nee Davis); his children Ralph F. Gildehaus III, and his wife Jan, and Charles Gildehaus; and his grandchildren George Gildehaus and Diane Gildehaus.

Interment and memorial services will be private. In lieu of flowers, memorial contributions may be made to the First Presbyterian Church of Moorestown, September 12th Fund, 101 Bridgeboro Road, Moorestown NJ 08057. Please consider participating in the memorial service at 11 am on Tuesday, November 3, virtually through one of the following links:

<https://www.fpcmoorestown.org/worship/live-stream/>

# Previous Events

## Virtual

NOV 3. 11:00 AM.

<https://www.fpcmoorestown.org/worship/live-stream/>

# Tribute Wall



“ *Lewis Funeral Home created a <https://www.fpcmoorestown.org/worship/live-stream/> in memory of Ralph F Gildehaus Jr.*



**Lewis Funeral Home** - October 30, 2020 at 09:21 AM

RH

*What a beautiful service! Thank you so much for broadcasting it. It was a wonderful tribute. May God Bless Ralph and the entire Gildehaus family.*

**Russ Horner** - November 03, 2020 at 12:18 PM



“ *Ralph F Gildehaus Jr.*

October 09, 2023 at 03:30 AM



“ *Ralph F Gildehaus Jr.*

November 08, 2022 at 08:26 PM

ND

“ *Betsy- we are so sorry to hear about Ralph's passing. We loved seeing the two of you on walks in the neighborhood, and our memories of the holiday gatherings make us smile. We're thinking of you and your family and when visiting returns we will look for you to take a walk. The Drurys*

**Nancy Drury** - November 14, 2020 at 12:35 PM

JM

“ *I know Ralph through his son Ralph, with whom I work at MDC. As long as I've known Ralph-the-son, I've heard wonderful stories about his parents and the beautiful life that they created. To have lost such a wonderful parent, husband, grandparent, and friend is such a very hard thing. I can only imagine, however, the joy that Ralph brought to all of you. What a remarkable life of love, friendship, spirit, and community. Sending deepest condolences from NC.*  
*Julie Mooney*

**Julie and Rich Mooney** - November 05, 2020 at 09:41 PM

UC

“ EVERETT AND I ARE DEEPLY SADDENED TO LEARN OF RALPH'S DEATH WE SO ENJOYED THE TIMES WE CAUGHT UP WITH YOU BOTH AT SIESTA KEY IN FL. I AM SURE WE ALL ATTENDED MANY AN AMHERST COLLEGE CLASS REUNION AS WELL. KINDLY ACCEPT OUR HEARTFELT SYMPATHY TO YOU AND YOUR FAMILY.  
FONDLY, SU CLARK

URSULA CLARK - November 04, 2020 at 01:08 PM



“ 1 file added to the album Graveside Service



Lewis Funeral Home - November 03, 2020 at 04:57 PM



“ 20 files added to the album Memories Album



Lewis Funeral Home - November 02, 2020 at 03:42 PM

SR

“ We remember the wonderful thanksgivings we used to have with your Little and Rathemacher relatives. Walks on the beach, too much turkey, stories from the “spies” Lud and Helen, the young children and more. Many years of family parties at LBI.

*Our condolences to Betsy, Charlie and Ralph jr. We will miss seeing Ralph but he had a wonderful life. A totally charming man.*

*Shirley, Dick, Andrée Rathemacher*

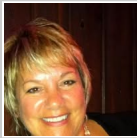
Shirley Rathemacher - November 02, 2020 at 03:36 PM

MA

“ Dearest Betsy and "The Boys", et. al;  
Bill and I send our gentle sympathy in this time of transition. For we know where Ralph is, and he shall always be in our hearts. Our "Boys" (now 39 and 40) remember him fondly as the man at church who gave them special pens and showed them the magical basement trains (maybe when they were 4 and 5 yrs. old.) He truly was God's "good and faithful Servant", and we shall remember him fondly.  
Please know you are surrounded by love; ours, your church community and God's.  
Blessings and Peace, Jan and Bill Amos

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Mr. and Mrs. Wm. Amos - November 01, 2020 at 02:03 AM



“ Thinking of you Betsy and your family. Ralph was always such a friendly man when you met him in town and I remember your beautiful home and the wonderful hosts you both are. May your many fun memories carry you into the future.

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Gina Zegel - October 31, 2020 at 10:40 AM

NS

“ Dear Betsy, Please accept our condolences at this difficult time. We have so many fond memories of Ralph as our neighbor and friend - puttering in his beautiful yard, sharing the train set in the basement at Christmas, and generally being a positive and welcoming presence in our lives. He was a wonderful role model for our young son growing up here, and we will all miss him. Love, The Smith Family



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Nick Smith - October 30, 2020 at 05:23 PM

PL

“ Ralph and I were on the same usher team at FPC for probably more than 15 years. I did not know much about his background as I only saw him on Sundays and occasionally at other church functions. What I did know about him was that he was a perfect gentleman and outstanding character and that he adored his lovely wife Betsy. One Sunday I mentioned to him that my wife Ginny and I were heading to the Phillies game after church. Wow, I then learned something else about Ralph, he was an avid Phillies fan and attended many games. Ever since then not a Sunday went by when he did not strike up a conversation about the Phils, who was traded and who hit a home run, etc. He envied me when I told him I was at the game when Roy Halladay pitched a perfect game against the Florida Marlins in May 2010. He probably mentioned that a half dozen times since then and how lucky I was to see it. I will always remember him as a man I highly respected.



*Paul Lewis*

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**PAUL LEWIS** - October 30, 2020 at 04:39 PM

BL

“ Dear Betsy, you are in my prayers and will be for a while. You and Ralph were so welcoming to us when we arrived at MPC. Thank you. Ralph and Allen got more acquainted when they were sending out the newsletters at church. Please accept my sympathy to you and your family. May you be close to one another in memories galore. Love you, Barbara (Lewis)

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**Barbara Lewis** - October 30, 2020 at 02:22 PM

 John Miller

“ John Miller lit a candle in memory of Ralph F Gildehaus Jr.



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**John Miller** - October 30, 2020 at 02:18 PM

TD

“ We remember Ralph as the "host with the most" when we went to his home. He had a beautiful garden and a wonderful train setup. Ralph was always a fun and gracious gentleman.

*Bob and Nancy Denmark*

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**The Denmarks** - October 30, 2020 at 11:13 AM