



## Galen Oric Gilbert

August 16, 1921 - November 8, 2024

Galen Oric Gilbert passed away peacefully at home in Siloam Springs, Arkansas on November 8, 2024 at the age of 103. He was born on August 16, 1921, in Pea Ridge, Arkansas, to Galen Gilbert Sr. and Pearl (Neff) Gilbert, the second of 8 children.

Faith, Family, Aspiration and Resilience were the threads that wove together the fabric and legacy of Galen's life. Throughout his life he wore many hats, fulfilled many roles, took risks and contributed positively to every aspect and chapter of his life. Galen was a devout Christian, husband for 76 years, father, grandfather, great grandfather, radio man, businessman, educator, and minister.

Galen's remarkable life took shape during his childhood where, even before graduating high school at age 15, he won a national essay contest and as a 14 year-old which he presented live on NBC Radio in New York City, sparking an 8-decade career in broadcasting marked by a consistent drive for achievement and excellence spurred on by a deep seated belief in the possible.

After high school Galen attended John Brown University. His time at JBU was transformational for him. While working at the university radio station, KUOA he met his wife, Elnora Eunice Kincaid. To win her over he would have coke floats delivered nightly to her dorm room. His efforts were successful and on August 24, 1940 they were married in the home of Dr. Earl Smith. Their marriage spanned 76 years and was full of adventure, ambition and most

importantly faith in and reliance on the Lord. Together they felt and lived as if they were invincible, taking on every challenge and opportunity that came their way. They were blessed with two sons; Galen Everett in 1942 and Jesse Ray in 1946 (both born in Siloam Springs).

When Galen graduated from JBU with his BA he pursued the ministry and took an appointment as an interim pastor at Rhodes United Methodist Church in Rhodes, Iowa as he prepared to attend seminary. Though he loved his time as a pastor he ultimately decided to take a different path.

Like so many of his generation, Galen did his part to support the war effort. During World War II he taught navigation, Morse code, and aircraft recognition to British pilots in the Royal Air Force, as part of a collaboration with the US Army Air Force, at The British Flying Training School in Terrell, Texas. It is now a museum and when he was 96 he went back to visit and they took him on an honor flight.

After the war, Galen continued his association with John Brown University, traveling with John Brown Sr. to expand his broadcasting efforts in California at KGER (Now KLTX). While in California Galen was active with the Southern California Broadcasting Association and the Long Beach Chamber of Commerce.

Galen eventually began buying radio and television stations of his own throughout Arkansas, Missouri, Oklahoma and Texas, at one point owning stations in 14 different markets, the FCC maximum at the time. During his career, Galen broadcast Billy Graham, interviewed Eleanore Roosevelt, and put a young Elvis Presley on the air before he was famous.

In addition to owning radio stations of his own he worked to advance the interests and accessibility of broadcasting and broadcasting careers more broadly. Galen traveled to Washington on multiple occasions to address the Federal Communication Commission on legislative and regulatory matters and conditions. He ran one of the first cable television stations in the country and served as the president of the Mid America Cable Telecommunications Association. During his time with the Elkins Institute of Broadcasting he built

campuses around the country. He joined the John Brown University Board of Trustees and continued to participate as a Trustee Emeritus on into his 90s. Tragically, Galen and Elnora's first son, Galen Everett died in 1966 at the age of 23, in a test flight for the US Navy. Through adversity and grace, they dedicated the rest of their lives to enriching the relationship with their second born son, Jesse, and his family (who lovingly renamed him Papaw and her Nory). He traveled the country regularly and maintained an impeccable reputation among an ever enlarging professional community. In 2005, at the age of 84, he and Elnora returned to Siloam Springs to purchase KUOA, the radio station where they first met.

He is preceded in death by his wife, Elnora "Nory" Gilbert and his son Galen Everett Gilbert. As well as his sisters and brothers: Roberta Lacoste, Wilma Peterson, Wilbur Gilbert, Juanita Bell, Gerald Gilbert and Martel Gilbert.

He is survived by his sister, Doris Officer, his son and daughter in-law, Jesse and Susi Gilbert, his grandchildren and their spouses, Holly and Pete Romero, Galen H. and Natisha Gilbert, David and Cate Gilbert, and Emily and Mike Fialkowski, and his great grandchildren Lorraine, Galen, Nicholas, Theo, Virginia, Everett, Nolan, John David, and Heidi.

A memorial service will be held January 3, 2025 at 2:00pm at First Church Siloam Springs. To sign the online guestbook, please visit [www.wassonfuneralhome.com](http://www.wassonfuneralhome.com).

# Previous Events

## Memorial Service

JAN 3. 2:00 PM (CT)

First Methodist Church  
325 E Twin Springs St  
Siloam Springs, AR 72761-3241  
(479) 524-6111

# Tribute Wall

HF

“ *Very good friends in Tahlequah. I remember scrubbing floors at KTLQ, carrying broadcast equipment to high school and college football games.*

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**Harry Farnsworth** - January 04, 2025 at 11:23 AM

JS

“ *Sandra, Lynette and I loved Galen & Nory as we loved parents and grandparents. They were truly second family to us. (Joe Short, Murphy, TX)*

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**Joe Short** - January 04, 2025 at 10:46 AM

LA

“ *Love Nancy and Gayle Ann purchased the Peace, Prayers, & Blessings- Lavender and White for the family of Galen Oric Gilbert.*



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**Love Nancy and Gayle Ann** - December 31, 2024 at 01:20 PM

WF

“ *With Love, Andrea and Family purchased the Healing Tears - Blue and White for the family of Galen Oric Gilbert.*



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**With Love, Andrea and Family** - December 19, 2024 at 09:34 AM

AC

“ *Andrea C. planted a [Memorial Tree](/store/Product.aspx?ProductId=4518) in honor of Galen Oric Gilbert.*

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**Andrea C.** - December 19, 2024 at 09:26 AM