



Dr. Terence Michael "Mike" Gilley

February 27, 1957 - September 2, 2025

Dr. Terence Michael "Mike" Gilley, 68, passed away on Tuesday, September 2, 2025, at Deer Meadows Rehabilitation and Nursing Home in Abingdon, Virginia.

He was preceded in death by his parents, William Kenneth "Ken" Gilley and Thelma (Sorah) Gilley of Powell Valley; and one sister, Deborah Ann Gilley.

Dr. Gilley was a 1974 graduate of Powell Valley High School, Big Stone Gap, VA. After high school he went on to earn the following degrees: BA, Appalachian Studies, Clinch Valley College, Wise, VA 1978; MA Folklore-Ethnomusicology, Indiana University, 1981; MS, Library and Information Science, University of Kentucky, 1986; PhD, Community College Leadership, Old Dominion University, 2015. His professional experience includes Reference Librarian, Tazewell County Public Library, Tazewell, VA; Director of Library Services, Russell County Public Library, Lebanon, VA; Regional Library Director, Wythe-Grayson Regional Library, Independence, VA; Director of Library Services, Mountain Empire Community College, Big Stone Gap, VA. Publications include: Introduction to Traditional Music in the Classroom: A Teacher's Guide; The Crooked Road: Virginia's Heritage Music Trail. He was also very active in the Mountain Music School and The Home Craft's Days at Mountain Empire Community College, Big Stone Gap, VA.

Dr. Gilley is survived by a special aunt, Shirley Walborn, Xenia, OH; adopted brother, Dexter Ramey (James Potter), Abingdon, VA; special cousins, Bob Jones (Kelley), Baton Rouge, LA, and Karen Moerlein (Bob), Punta Gorda, FL; and numerous friends and his family of “Old Time” musicians.

Thank you to Ballad Health Hospice in Johnson City, TN and the staff at Deer Meadows Rehabilitation and Nursing Home in Abingdon, VA for their care and support of Dr. Gilley “Mike”.

A memorial service to celebrate Mikes life will be held on Saturday, September 27, 2025 from 1:00 to 3:00 p.m. for a service to honor Dr. Mike Gilley, all those that would be willing to come and play a song or share a memory is invited to do so.

His burial will take place following in Riverview Cemetery, where he will be laid to rest by his parents.

An online register is available for the family at www.holdingfuneralhome.com
Holding Funeral Home is in charge of the arrangements.

Previous Events

Celebration of Life

SEP **27**. 1:00 PM - 3:00 PM (ET)

Holding Funeral Home, Inc.

17 E. 3rd St., N.

P. O. Drawer H

Big Stone Gap, VA 24219

1-276-523-1470

holdingfuneralhome@comcast.net

<http://www.holdingfuneralhome.com>

Tribute Wall

LJ

“ I grew up with Micheal when he & his mom dad were my neighbors on 6th ave east in big stone gap.

I remember playing together at their house & walking or riding the bus to school.

I lost touch with Micheal when he went to school & found employment in other places.

Micheal's parents would get togethers at their house in the valley for the neighbors who all had birthdays in May.& I was fortunately to see Micheal again at one of the get togethers. I remember playing horseshoes with him. And it was good seeing Micheal again. I will miss Micheal but he is enjoying a family reunion with his mom & dad & his sister & other family & friends.



leisa johnson - October 01, 2025 at 12:12 AM

SD

“ *Susie Dougherty lit a candle in memory of Dr. Terence Michael "Mike" Gilley*



susie dougherty - September 27, 2025 at 03:27 PM

DS

“ I met Mike back at Clinch Valley College in the 70s. He is the one who introduced me to Appalachian music. Something that has stuck with me all my life. He was also a very kind person, I remember when John Denver came to Roanoke, he knew that I absolutely adored John Denver and he gathered a group of us together to take a road trip to Roanoke. All of us jamming into his tiny little sports car. Something I will always remember fondly.

Deb Sarvela - September 20, 2025 at 06:58 PM

JM

“ Mike was a good friend of mine growing up . I am sorrowed to see that he is gone, but glad to know he is up in heaven with his parents.

James McKenzie - September 19, 2025 at 12:34 PM

LK

“ Lana Kennedy lit a candle in memory of Dr. Terence Michael "Mike" Gilley



Lana Kennedy - September 13, 2025 at 08:38 PM

KQ

“ Michael was one of my best friends in high school. So many memories and he was such a vivid part of that time in my life. In my mind I see him walking down the hall in those coveralls with that thick red and wavy hair. So smart and with an easy laugh, although high school years were hard. We lost touch after high school but I will never forget. Sending you love and peace, Michael.

Katherine Quesenberry - September 13, 2025 at 09:31 AM

MQ

“ Knew him for many years. Such a talented, kind and smart person. Always smiling. Always compassionate. A real loss.

Marcia Quesenberry - September 12, 2025 at 12:38 PM

CS

“ The Carver side of the family from Indiana always enjoyed our trips to Big Stone to visit our Gilley cousins. So many memories and good times staying with Aunt Thelma & Uncle Kenny & Michael. It was so interesting when Mike would sit down and show us all the genealogy work he had done on his family. We visited soon after our daddy died and I remember Michael sitting on their front porch comforting my sister and I while we cried our eyes out. He was a kind & caring soul! Fly high cuz and rejoice with our Big Stone family in Heaven!❤️❤️
Cyndy Carver Smith & family

Cynthia Smith - September 09, 2025 at 09:57 PM

KM

It was great visiting Mike in late July. So thankful he is no longer in pain and with our Lord and Savior. A special thanks to Dexter and James for being there for Mike! Karen and Bob Moerlein.

Karen Moerlein - September 10, 2025 at 03:12 PM

JP

I knew his mom and dad very well. So sorry for the loss.

Joyce M Page - September 25, 2025 at 10:23 AM



“ So saddened to hear about his passing! I have always said he was the best library director that I worked under at the Wythe - Grayson Regional Library!



Rebecca Bennett - September 09, 2025 at 04:11 PM

SW

“ I have known Michael all of his life, as I was ten years old when he entered this world. Little did I know he was observing the decisions I made regarding the pursuit of a college degree. So of course he began at Clinch Valley College just as I had. We always stayed in touch, though I settled in Ohio. I was very glad when he moved in with his parents as he pursued jobs in Southwest VA. My life has been wonderfully blessed because each time I visited my sister Thelma (& Ken), I could also visit with Michael. I have many good memories so often woven around music. Michael was gifted with the ability to tackle a new challenge after successfully pursuing other ideas. I will always miss him, but I believe he is now chatting with his Grandma, who is among those who welcomed him Home.

Aunt Shirley
Xenia, OH

Shirley Walborn - September 06, 2025 at 01:55 PM

CH

“ Claudia Howard lit a candle in memory of Dr. Terence Michael "Mike" Gilley



Claudia Howard - September 05, 2025 at 07:19 PM

DD

“ Dana DeFoor lit a candle in memory of Dr. Terence Michael "Mike" Gilley



Dana DeFoor - September 05, 2025 at 08:11 AM

KD

“ Michael was our director in Wytheville. I worked with him 7 years. I'm sorry for your loss.

Katie Danner - September 04, 2025 at 06:24 PM

TO

“ Mike was always a true friend and I will miss him.



Tommy - September 04, 2025 at 06:02 PM

MD

“ Mike Gilley and "brother" Dexter Ramey were members of my first choir at CVC. Mike played guitar and Dexter played hammered dulcimer. I still remember those days n 1976 and later. I last had the opportunity to see both of them at Mike's mother's memorial in BSG.

Rest in peace Mike.

D. Michael Donathan, Emeritus Professor of Music UVA Wise

Mike Donathan, alias Dr. D - September 04, 2025 at 03:53 PM

SR

“ *Sandra Allen Rich lit a candle in memory of Dr. Terence Michael "Mike" Gilley*



Sandra Allen Rich - September 04, 2025 at 02:20 PM



“ *Crystal Stidham lit a candle in memory of Dr. Terence Michael "Mike" Gilley*



Crystal Stidham - September 04, 2025 at 02:19 PM

RI

“ *Sorry to hear that Michael has passed on. He made a lot of wonderful contributions in his work and in his music and in his love of music.*

Richard - September 04, 2025 at 11:12 AM

JU

“ *Sitting on a cloud, playing wonderful music with his friends, surrounded by his beloved critters.*

Judy - September 04, 2025 at 10:35 AM