



## Gilbert Dwight Unruh

July 5, 1945 - July 25, 2025

Gilbert Dwight Unruh passed away July 25, 2025 in Kingsburg, California at the age of 80. He was born July 5, 1945 in Reedley, California to Theodore Benjamin and Clara (nee Friesen) Unruh, the second of four siblings, and grew up west of Dinuba on the family farm where his parents and grandparents had lived since the early 1900s. He attended Dinuba elementary schools and graduated from Dinuba High School. He was very active in FFA, earning numerous awards and serving as chapter President.

Gil attended California Polytechnic State University (Cal Poly) in San Luis Obispo, and graduated with a degree in Ag Business. He was recruited by Pacific Fruit and Produce Co., and worked for them for the next 25 years as a produce buyer and, later, as a manager. He served two years as a conscientious objector to the Vietnam War in a non-combatant role at L.A. County General Hospital, while working nights loading produce trucks for Pacific Fruit. There he met Carolyn Lawson, a pretty physical therapist from Pasadena, whom he quickly fell in love with and convinced to marry him and move back to the Central Valley after he completed his service.

They were married in August, 1970 and settled in Kingsburg, where they created and nurtured a loving home for their family over the next 55 years. He was immensely proud of his children - Mark (Rebecca), Becky, and Cory (Nate) - watching them grow too quickly from busy toddlers to independent

and accomplished adults. "G" was delighted by his five grandchildren - Caitlin, Ethan, Roxanne, Murdoch and Erica. They will miss him and the extra pieces of pie and scoops of Rocky Road ice cream he doled out, as well as the fresh-squeezed orange juice they helped him make for breakfast.

During the years he worked for Pacific Fruit, Gilbert grew grapes and made raisins in his "spare time" on land he acquired east of town. He and Carolyn joined the Sun-Maid co-op in 1988. Farming later became his full-time occupation, with the addition of new grape varieties, fruit and nut trees, and a cold storage facility. When he wasn't farming, he relaxed by watching (often with his eyes closed) cooking shows on PBS and Squawk Box with Jim Cramer. A true athletics fan, he enjoyed all sports, cheering on the Dodgers, but also rooting for the underdog in almost any contest.

Gil never met a stranger, loved talking and laughing with people, and could spend hours discussing farming or current events and telling old stories. He loved farming and working outside with the Sierra Nevada to the east, watching the sun rise over the mountains as he drove tractor or changed the water. He and Carolyn had adventures across the United States and around the world, visiting well-known attractions and obscure local venues. They gathered lasting memories of people and places they hadn't encountered before, but the best part of every trip was returning home.

Gilbert was preceded in death by his parents Ted and Clara, brother Alfred Unruh, and nephew Morgan Unruh. He is survived by his wife, children, grandchildren, brother Clarence (Mary-Jo) Unruh, sister Jean Unruh, sister-in-law Peggy Unruh, and numerous nieces, nephews, and cousins.

A Celebration of Gilbert's life will be held Sunday, October 19, 2025, AT 12:00pm at the Kingsburg Historical Park.

In lieu of flowers, please consider donating to your local animal shelter or the Central California SPCA. Or do something Gil would have liked better: buy a baseball mitt for a kid who can't afford it, take your family and friends out for dinner, adopt that stray that showed up at your door, lend a hand to someone who could use a little help.

Services have been entrusted to Salser & Dillard Creighton Chapel. Memorial Tributes and condolences may be offered by logging onto [www.salseranddillard.com](http://www.salseranddillard.com).

# Previous Events

## Celebration

OCT **19**. 12:00 PM (PT)

Kingsburg Historical Park  
2321 Sierra St  
Kingsburg, CA 93631

# Tribute Wall



“ *Vince V. planted a grove of 3 [Memorial Trees](/store/Product.aspx?ProductId=4518) in honor of Gilbert Dwight Unruh.*

---

**Vince V.** - October 06, 2025 at 03:11 AM