



## Mr. Albert Franklin Gedraitis

January 6, 2015

July 30, 1940 - January 6, 2015

Sadly, and still unbelievably, gone from us. Albert Gedraitis, born in Mount Carmel, Pennsylvania, died in Toronto. He is deeply mourned by countless friends and loved ones in Canada and in the United States, whose lives were profoundly changed by his life in the world. Predeceased by his father Albert Alexander Gedraitis, his mother Ruth Balchunas Gedraitis, his brother Sterling R. Gedraitis, and his sister Marion Sue Cortellini. Deeply missed also by his cousin Alane Balchunas and nephew Wesley Brassington, both of Pennsylvania. We will never forget Albert's poetry, his wondrous prose writing, his charismatic personality, his philosophizing, his continuing Christian spiritual commitment, his infectious laughter, his completely original ideas about nearly everything.

We are deeply grateful to Linda Lu of Woodgreen Community Services, to Albert's visiting nurses, to Meals on Wheels, and to Albert's housemates, Carl Develin and Dave Harlick, for taking such good care of our dear friend in his last months and days.

Requiem Mass at the Church of St. Mary Magdalene, 477 Manning Avenue, Toronto, at 2:30 p.m., Saturday, January 24. Wake to follow.

Condolences may be sent:

To Albert's nephew  
Wesley Brassington, III,  
210 S. Chestnut Street, Mt. Carmel, PA 17851,  
USA

And Albert's cousin  
Alane J. Balchunas  
401 Cassell Street, Marysville, PA 17053  
USA

# Previous Events

## Funeral Mass

JAN 24. 2:30 PM (ET)

Church of Mary Magdalene  
477 Manning Avenue  
Toronto, ON (CA)

# Tribute Wall

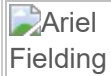
JM

“ I wondered why this Winter held-on darkly here in Philadelphia, then I noted just now noted that this unique glimmer of light had extinguished. You all knew him from the wonderful comments here, so you will think I have the wrong Albert when I say I met him in 1968 when he was working in an auto mechanic shop. Albert came out of the garage to meet me and my ailing Camero as we rolled-up and, as I prepared to suit-on my "regular guy" affect .....well, you know that Albert was not merely a "regular guy", before I could describe the problem he held his hands up firmly letting me know ' I don't work on cars you know'....nonplussed since the sign did say "GARAGE" and what he emerged from looked appropriately greasy and had wrenches and other tools that would make a monkey out of me had I been tasked with using them, and noting a panache and intelligence unexpected, In an Oliver-Twist-asking-for-more voice I asked, "well, what is it that you do.....do?" He laughed that laugh that sounded at the same time soprano and bass, and over the next three years, fascinated and wonderfully surprised at every turn, I found out what Albert did do ! ( at least.....I think I did ! ) He and his equally rare and lovely mother were so kind to me and to the elegant woman who ( I knew deeply and too well ) was much too heavenly to be the wife of the little boy that I then was. Albert had the effect of making me feel more than I thought I was. The garage introduction opened my eyes as would running into a brightly horned unicorn in a hag-pedestrian woods. I don't need to explain to those who knew them why I feel special and in a way, relieved, that I once knew Albert and the smile of his mother Ruth. I know it was forever ago, and brief, but I am sure those who knew him would understand my pretensions here.....he had an indelible-ity about him.

John H. Michel Jenkintown PA

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John H Michel - April 16, 2015 at 08:10 AM



“ *Albert was always part of my universe, even before I was born. I am told that he and his mother hosted a baby shower for me. I remember that when I was a kid, he treated me as a person, without condescension. He was an important remaining link to my late father, although tragically, these two friends had a terrible fight the last time they saw one another on this earth. They had much in common, Ed and Albert, and I wonder now if they raged at each other at their very last meeting because raging against the dying of the light was inconceivable to them. Neither of these outsized personalities wanted to imagine a world without the other. It seems fitting that Albert took his leave of us on Epiphany; surely his passing has already led to reflection and revelation on the part of those of us who mourn his passing. Let light perpetual shine upon you, dear Albert.*

Ariel Fielding - January 18, 2015 at 10:27 AM



“ *J lit a candle in memory of Mr. Albert Franklin Gedraitis*



J - January 18, 2015 at 08:46 AM

“ I had not seen Albert in several years, in fact we had drifted apart. His life, to me being more in the mainstream, was on the margins in many respects: I never knew Albert to have a job that utilized his many skills. He was a philosopher and an artist, a social theorist, a theologian, a teacher. He was eclectic, eccentric, esoteric, and evangelical: impossible to put into any kind of familiar category.

Our paths first crossed when I came to Toronto to study at the Institute for Christian Studies. There were lots of people in the early days of the ICS who were only loosely connected. There was not much of a prescribed program and there were lots of folks who were around the school, sat in on classes and generally participated in discussions. It was all pretty loose; it was 1970-71. Albert was formally on the periphery though he was hardly peripheral.

Albert was the first openly gay man I met. He was not only out, he was (almost) in your face about being both gay and being a Christian. This was a big challenge to my world view at the time. I had nothing in my training or upbringing to this point that helped me process this kind of information. But Albert understood my problem and didn't dismiss me as homophobic or provincial or inconsiderate. In spite of my scepticism he welcomed my friendship.

I was studying political science and what gave the state legitimacy. The prevailing thinking at the time, coming out of 19th century political thought, was that political hegemony and legitimacy was established by military control. Albert was also a pacifist and he identified a deep conflict between military power and political legitimacy. Albert suggested to me and others that the social contract theory of political legitimacy was a better place to look for the basis of civil society and the challenge to do justice. He took it a step further however and made what was for me a critical connection. The words “associate” and “society” are linked: a society cannot exist apart from its members associating, or identifying, with each other. If we identify with each other and accept each other then we can join together into a society that is based on

*mutual acceptance, respect and we can develop political legitimacy that is based not on power, but on respect for human rights.*

*Albert was prophetic in seeing these important social values. He preached and practiced social inclusion long before it became a sociological and urban planning measurement tool. For him it was existential, not abstract. Sadly though, Albert did not experience much social inclusion. He was more a voice crying in the wilderness.*

*I don't know what drove Albert in his later years to become more reclusive. Was his art, always ahead of the curve, too far out to give him any kind of acceptance? Did his not-good-health make him uncomfortable in his own skin? Did his isolation undermine his own ideas of legitimacy? Are we, in spite of our liberal values, still uneasy with those on the outer margins of our culture and too busy to try to understand and include them?*

*By most definitions Albert's Christian faith was not orthodox either. Yet to the end he self-identified as a Christian. For me that was his ultimate lesson: we all carry something of the Divine within us, and this is the ultimate basis for accepting each other, regardless, especially regardless, of our respective foibles, of our differences. The challenge we all face is to look at others, each and every other, and see in them something of ourselves. If we can do this then we will become more accepting of others and associate with them. I attribute this insight to Albert and I will think of him every time I use the word society. Thank you Albert! May the peace that eluded you for so much of your life yet come to be.*

*Jack*

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**Jack de Klerk** - January 17, 2015 at 07:32 PM

BJ

*To Googie's family we the Class of 1957 Girard College morn the passing of our brother Al. 56 years have passed since most have seen Googie. We, the class, spent at lest 4-5 years, maybe longer, during our formative years as school boys and teenagers with Googie. A loyal and independent individual he was respected and loved.*

*"Fifteen hundred looking on, we have run our marathon from child to growing man....."*

*"Hail Girard" Googe*

*BJP*

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**Bruce J** - January 18, 2015 at 11:16 AM

NS

*thank you, Jack*

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**nadia szilvassy** - January 18, 2015 at 01:15 PM

MF

*Thank you Bruce for sharing your memories. I would really like to know more about your time together at Girard College. I first met Albert in Philadelphia in 1966. He seldom talked about his days at Girard, I think that the memories of Girard were linked to the love he had for his brother Sterling and to Sterling's tragic death. Girard classmate, Jay Davis, has sent a poem Albert wrote in in the Girardian in 1957. Other friends have shared a poem he wrote while he was at Shelton College several years later. His more recent poetry was wonderfully graphic and played off both words and images. Was there someone special at Girard who nurtured his talents? What was there at that school that fostered his intellectual growth? And Googie? It's such an endearing nickname. Where did that come from?*

*I hope that my many questions are not too painful. I ask as someone who loved Albert.*

*Marjory Fielding*

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**Marjory Fielding** - January 20, 2015 at 07:12 PM

MF

*Thank you Bruce for sharing your memories.*

*I would really like to know more about your time together at Girard College. I first met Albert in Philadelphia in 1966. He seldom talked about his days at Girard, I think that the memories of Girard were linked to the love he had for his brother Sterling and to Sterling's tragic death.*

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*What was there at that school that fostered his intellectual growth?*

*And Googie? It's such an endearing nickname. Where did that come from?*

*I hope that my many questions are not too painful. I ask as someone who loved Albert.*

*Marjory Fielding*

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**Marjory Fielding** - January 20, 2015 at 08:03 PM