

Giles Dalby – A Celebration of Life – April 16, 2013

Slide show and Background music

We welcome you on behalf of the people of First Presbyterian Church, and Giles Dalby's family. We are grateful for his life with us, and we honor his memory with stories, songs, and scripture.

Giles Dalby's legacy will be remembered by many in light of his service as County Judge, his work at Plains Capital Bank, and his leadership in his church. For Giles himself, his legacy is family. Individually, they are stronger than the sum of each part: Nelda. Liz and Bob. Becki. Charlcie and Johnny. Giles and Mendy. Lindsey, Lauren, and Tadd. Sarah, Jarrad, and Whitney and John. Hannah, Cody, Tayla, and Lyndyn. Donae, Justin, K'Nell and Tyler, and Giles Wilson and Cheyanne. Aubree. Kendall. Jaxon. Stella. Family.

We begin by the Grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Love of God, and in Communion with the Holy Spirit. Let us pray:

Prayer: Our God of grace and glory, we remember and honor Giles today and we thank you for giving him to us to know and to love. By your compassionate presence, console us in our mourning. Inspire in us the confidence of a certain faith, the comfort of holy hope, and the peace which passes all understanding; through Jesus Christ our Lord, Amen.

Remarks from Lindsey, Sarah, and Giles Wilson.

From Lindsey:

You may know him as Giles, some call him G Boy or the Judge, my cousin Tayla has even called him Oh Yuck, but to our family, he will always be our Papa. And he was the best Papa there ever was. My name is Lindsey Elliott, and I am the oldest grandchild of Giles & Nelda. Papa called me Alpha, and their youngest granddaughter Lyndyn, Omega, which I loved. He told me he did this because when I was born, it was the start of a new life for him. Like the Bible, signifying his beginning and end. On behalf of our family, I would like to thank everyone for being here today to pay your respects to my Papa. He would be pleased, and still somehow surprised, to see so many people here today. Whether you knew him as a husband, father, grandfather, business associate, or friend, you probably had the same level of appreciation for him that I did. Ralph Waldo Emerson said "It is not length of life, but depth of life." I think today proves that Papa's depth of life was boundless.

I loved my Papa from the moment I laid eyes on him. I'm told when I was a toddler, and we would meet Papa at the horse races, I would literally leap out of whomever had me, and into my Papa's arms. He even installed a swing in their kitchen for me and would push me for hours on end. He spoiled me so bad by calling my parents and telling him he wanted me to come visit, so he would get in his little plane he had at the time, and fly

to pick me up in San Angelo. He loved it when I got on the plane would tell the pilot, "Ready to go, Tom". When I reflect on my time over the past few years with him, I remember meaningful conversations and a lot of jokes being shared out at the ranch. We would often fill him in the next morning of any escapades he missed after he had gone to bed the night before, and he would just laugh at us and say he was glad we had a good time, because that's all he cared about. When I think about him the words that come to mind are: hard worker, caring, faithful, respectful, generous, service-oriented, a businessman, but most of all family man. These are just a few words that come to mind, because it is impossible to summarize how great a person he was in words. What I think a lot of people know about my Papa was he was a very educated and successful businessman & Garza County Judge. He didn't need to be Judge, he just felt he might be able to help out the County he loved. He received so many honors and awards, and half the time we didn't even know he received them. What I hope you learn today was the man that I know. He was a die-hard Green Bay Packer fan, often making his great-grandchildren pose in pictures wearing cheeseheads. He was a caring and loyal husband for over 60 years. Nana told us how when he first laid eyes on her, he pointed at her and told his friend, that's the girl I'm going to marry. Now don't get me wrong, he knew what buttons to push with Nana. If he wanted to rile her up, he would call her granny & start laughing. I guess it worked, because she stayed by his side until the very end, saying she loved him more that day, than the day they married. I'm hoping his good choice in a wife will carry on and maybe he will send me a husband! Nonetheless, my grandparents relationship will always be a guiding force for my own. He wouldn't tell you about the numerous kids he helped go to college, or paid for their braces. He wouldn't tell you about the books he had printed for the entire first grade, or the boxes of bears he sent to a children's hospital, but I will. He was adamant about service and giving. After years of service, he retired from public office, concluding an impressive 34 year tenure and is still, the longest tenured county judge in Texas. He had a great sense of humor, and I felt like I could talk to him about anything. He was a shoulder to lean on, a friend to rely on, and a rock for our whole family. Our family has always been close and always stuck together. My Papa's pride and joy was his family. He took care of every one of us in one way or another. He never wanted us to leave after get togethers. He would get so sad on the day our family would pack up to head back home. He gave us all his love but also his discipline when we really deserved it. One time my cousin Whitney and I were arguing over who could hold our newest baby cousin, and he sat us down & told us the importance of loving each other and not taking family for granted. He didn't yell at us, or get angry, just told us how important it was for us to get along. I would often ask my Mom as I got older if Papa ever got angry, because I had never seen it? She and my Aunt Charlcie assured me, oh yes, he did. I later found out in true Papa fashion, one of my favorite Papa stories. My Aunt Charlcie was quite a pill in her younger days, and on occasion known to come home after her curfew. She told me she would attempt to sneak in through their breezeway, and still, he would always be there waiting for her at the back door. So she would freeze, gauging his reaction. He would wave for her to come on in, which she would decline. So again he would wave her his way, and again she would decline. So as this went on, he would get more adamant she come in the house, where she would finally try to run right past him, never being successful at evading him. Towards the end of his life, it was very difficult for our family to watch him struggle with illness. Even though he was fighting such a difficult battle he always remained strong

and was optimistic. He showed the most concern for Nana & us and how we were doing. He wanted to make sure we would all be ok, and stick together. I've often heard from people that no one was a stranger to him because he always made you feel important when you were with him. The strength that he showed the past 2 years and his love for us is something that I will never forget. We know the only way to honor him is to carry on his legacy of service and helping others. That legacy is something us Dalbys take very seriously. I was interviewed by the Lubbock Avalanche-Journal earlier this week on an article they wanted to do on Papa, and the reporter asked me numerous questions on what I would miss most about him and what had I learned from him. As I was answering his questions, I realized how much impact he had on my today. That I would not be as service-minded and compassionate without his input. The reporter finished the interview asking me, "how did I intend on carrying out his legacy?" I thought for a second, and finally realized. He doesn't expect huge sacrifices or donations from me. His service was based on the value of giving what time and donations you can, when you can. These little weekly or monthly accomplishments add up to the character of great people like Papa. We are so proud of everything he accomplished and what he taught us. Maya Angelou said "A great soul serves everyone all the time. A great soul never dies. It brings us together again and again." I know that is what Papa would want. Papa, we will miss you each & every day and will never forget what you taught us. I'll love you forever, I'll like you for always. As long as I'm living, my Papa you'll be.

Remarks from State Senator John Whitmire.

Musical Interlude: "Amazing Grace." On the Bagpipes.

Scripture readings:

Psalm 121

**I lift up mine eyes unto the hills. From whence cometh my help?
My help cometh from the Lord, who made the heavens and the earth.
He will not let your foot be moved; he who keeps you will not slumber.
Behold, he who keeps Israel will neither slumber nor sleep.
The Lord is your keeper; the Lord is your shade on your right hand.
The sun shall not smite you by day, nor the moon by night.
The Lord will keep you from all evil; he will keep your life.
The Lord will watch over your going out and your coming in
from this time forth and for evermore.**

Psalm 23

**The Lord is my Shepherd; I shall not want.
He maketh me to lie down in green pastures. He leadeth me beside the still
waters. He restoreth my soul.
He leadeth me in the paths of righteousness for His name's sake
Ye though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death,
I will fear no evil for thou art with me. Thy rod and thy staff they comfort me.
Thou prepest a table before me in the presence of mine enemies.**

**Thou annointest my head with oil; my cup runneth over.
Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me all the days of my life.
And I will dwell in the house of the Lord forever.**

John 14:1-3.

Let not your hearts be troubled; believe in God, believe also in me. In my Father's house are many mansions; if it were not so would I have told you that I go and prepare a place for you? And when I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again and take you to myself, that where I am, you may be also.

The Rev. Elizabeth Abraham will lead prayers in just a second. We'll close by praying together as our Lord taught us. You should know that Presbyterians tend to pray for the forgiveness of our debts rather than our trespasses. And I think Alan White would appreciate this – it's because, given the choice, we prefer it that way.

Prayers and Lord's Prayer.

Loving and Holy God, we gather at this time to remember the remarkable, humble and gracious life of Judge Giles Dalby. Right now, Giles would be shaking his head at the fanfare of this occasion, and yet smiling with sheer gratitude at the overwhelming gathering of dear friends and cherished family. While none of us ever wanted this day to come, we are thankful that Giles was able to die peacefully last Friday evening, overlooking his ranch, the special place in his life where he experienced a sense of home and where he knew that his roots, his rocks, and his faith would truly see him through. We ask, O Lord, that you will be with Nelda, his family, and all of us in this time of sadness and sorrow – my our fond memories of his laughter, joy and love of life, his genuine care of people and his life of service help to heal the hole we feel from his absence in our midst. As we give this gentle, giant of a man back to you on this day, and acknowledge the many ways Giles has left this world a better place, we pray that his tough, adventurous, and determined spirit would be a guide and inspiration to all of us who seek to live lives of dignity, respect and honor that are a blessing to others and that truly matter to you, O God. In the name of our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ, who gives us life in this world and in the next, let us now pray together, Our Father...Amen.

Musical Interlude – “I Can Only Imagine.” MercyMe

Scripture and Sermon

From the book of Joshua, Chapter 1: “After the death of Moses the servant of the Lord, the Lord said to Joshua ... ‘arise, go over ... into the land I am giving ... to the people of Israel. ... as I was with Moses, so will I be with you; I will not fail or forsake you.’”

I came to Texas from Wisconsin. I'd been here about a month when I got an invitation early in the week to preach at the Presbyterian Church in Post for the

first time. A day or two later, I was having lunch with my then new friend Tom McGovern, who many of you know teaches at the Medical School. The preaching invitation in Post came up in the conversation. Tom smiled wryly and said, as only he can, "So you'll be meetin' the Giles boys then!"

The Giles boys.

I met Giles Dalby that next Sunday, and quickly learned there was at least one other Green Bay Packer fan on the Llano Estacado. (It occurs to me now that he may have told me that in strict Pastoral confidence). As our friendship grew over the next nearly 20 years, I watched him find similar ways to make us all feel uniquely connected to him personally, and to this place he has loved and served for a lifetime.

He'd probably cringe and roll his eyes at my alluding to John F. Kennedy right now. But Giles Dalby never asked what his County could do for him; he asked only what he could do for his County. He answered that question every day with his service to all of us. The list of achievements and contributions are endless. Focused mainly on justice and jobs. And forbearance. Choosing public service can be thankless often as not. I remember one time there was a particularly contentious flap of some sort. And as Judge, he found himself in the middle of conversation, and the media. I asked him after church why he puts up with all that. If ever a man didn't need the aggravation He kind of chuckled and said something to the effect, "It needs to be done, and I know how to do it." If ever a man described his calling.

To the extent he talked about it at all, Giles felt most strongly about his public contributions as Judge, and in his work at Plains Capital Bank. But there are literally thousands of people whose lives he touched in ways largely known only to Giles, and to the particular individuals involved. A set of braces. A tuition bill. A semester's worth of books. A well-placed phone call to cut some red tape. You get the idea. I heard a story the other day about an engineering project near Post that had one wheel stuck in some political mud. Which he quickly un-stuck. And his comment at the time was, "Let's not get in the way of someone trying to do it right." If ever a man described a political philosophy.

The evidence of this public service shows up in lives quietly changed, and lived since for the better. There is still the occasional thank you note Nelda finds tucked here and there, often not recognizing the names. Each one uniquely special to Giles.

For Giles, public service was a matter of stewardship. He understood that he was deeply blessed. He was rooted to this great land. The Cross H Ranch was his sanctuary -- the place where he connected to the Ground of his Being. And every day in public service was, in effect, his "thank-you" note to God for blessing him with faith and family.

Family. This is what he talked about when he talked about his life. His knack of making all of us feel special and uniquely connected to him stemmed from how deeply connected he was to his family. Each of his children knew they were unique, special, and deeply loved – quite equally. No one needed sibling rivalry to get his undivided attention. Collectively, Liz, Becky, Charlcie, and Giles are a team. When he was one-on-one with any of them, their deal was the most important at the time.

They tell me how generous he was. When they asked for something they needed, he'd usually just provide it. Generally because they usually had a good reason. But if they asked for a loan, he'd make certain and sure it got paid back. That mindset is probably why he and Alan made such a good team – taking Plain's Capital from where it was to where it is – a pretty long trip. He called Lindsey "Alpha" and Lyndyn "Omega." Lauren, Sarah, Whitney, Hannah, Tayla, Donae, K'nell, and Giles Wilson were "Team Papa" in his life. And the "Greats" – Aubree, Kendall, Jaxon, and Stella – their parents and grandparents will connect them to Papa Giles with stories.

Nelda.

His richest blessing was the love of his life. They found each other early and renewed their vows as partners-in-life every single day for over 60 years. Ups and downs, but mostly ups. They certainly took that "sickness and health" part seriously. It was rather amazing – providential maybe – that as they each faced, and faced down, health issues over the years, things tended to cycle. One would get strong before the other faltered. They held each other – they held each other up. We don't have to ask them how they did it. We only have to remember how honored we have been to watch them be. Watch them be together.

I'm told that throughout their marriage, through even these last few weeks, they began and ended each day with quiet and private words of endearment. Expressing in their own way to each other what it means to love, and to cherish ...

"After the death of Moses the servant of the Lord, the Lord said to Joshua ... 'arise, go to the people ... (and) I will be with you.'"

We have lost one of our last of great patriarchs. And now it comes to us, individually and collectively, to answer the call to Joshua as God gives us the wit and will.

"What will we do without him?" I'll bet Joshua wondered.

We will figure it out.

We will, in our own way, keep going to our people. Extending hands and hearts of service, support, and love.

I was at 36,000 feet eight days ago high over Albuquerque. I knew that this was just about the time Giles Jr. came home with him to the ranch. I found myself looking out at the vast land below and thinking about “the Giles boys.”

I think this happens to all of us from time to time. I got a flash of insight. Right then. This was so literally out of the blue, that I take it now to be a spiritual connection to Giles in that I knew then that he’d made it home. Maybe also because, at that moment, I was 36,000 feet closer to where I knew he was going – home again, as it turns out, last Friday evening.

Honestly, it was like taking dictation and I wrote this down, a week ago yesterday. I think of it now as “The Code of the Giles Boys:”

Rule

- 1. Faith and Family First.**
- 2. Tend to business; have fun – not necessarily in that order.**
- 3. When in doubt, see Rule 1.**

I’m heartbroken at the loss of my friend.

I’m energized by his legacy of leadership, his smile, and the unforgettable sound of his laughter.

I will strive each day, in some way, to honor His Honor.

When in doubt, see Rule 1.

Let us pray.

Into your hands O merciful Savior we commend Giles, your servant. Acknowledge him we pray, a sheep of your own fold, a lamb of your own flock. Receive him into the arms of your mercy, into the blessed rest of everlasting peace, and into the glorious company of all the saints in light. Amen.

Benediction: To Honor Giles, - Go into the world in peace. Have courage. Hold onto what is good. Return to no-one evil for evil. Strengthen the faint-hearted, support the weak, help the suffering. Honor all people. Speak and act with love on your lips and in your heart. Be generous. Be humble. Faith and Family First.

Let us go in Peace. The service continues at Cross H Ranch.

