



Gilbert "Gil" Loren Watson III

April 28, 1944 - January 10, 2015

Gilbert L. "Gil" Watson III, a former longtime Baltimore Sun editor who led the metropolitan staff during a period of groundbreaking watchdog reporting in the 1980s and 1990s and also was assistant managing editor of Sunday and daily features, died Saturday at Shore Medical Center in Chestertown of pulmonary fibrosis. He was 70.

"Gil may not have had the title of managing editor or executive editor, but in many ways, he was the center, the heart and soul, of the newsroom universe," said Jan B. Warrington, a former Sun features editor who worked closely with Mr. Watson and is now a Baltimore County psychologist. "In fact, his influence was felt throughout the paper, in many departments other than the newsroom. He knew everyone in the building and was in perpetual motion," said Ms. Warrington. "He was a natural, leader, a dynamo — fierce, demanding, competitive — who had impeccable news judgment, a larger-than-life personality, and an infectious laugh." She added: "So many of us owe so much to him. He was, simply, the embodiment of The Baltimore Sun. I consider myself fortunate to have had him as a supervisor, mentor and friend."

David Michael Ettlin, who worked on The Sun's rewrite desk before becoming night editor, was a friend of Mr. Watson's. "What I really liked about Gil Watson was that he was passionate about what he did," recalled Mr. Ettlin, who retired from the newspaper several years ago. "He was passionate about the

newspaper and its mission. He took it very seriously, and he found great joy in doing it. Whenever there was a big story to cover, he rose to the occasion. He was the kind of boss where you wanted to do as much as you possibly could to do the best possible job."

The son of Gilbert Loren Watson II, founder of The Chester River Press in Chestertown, and Marie-Louise "Mal" Watson, an educator, Gilbert Loren Watson, III, was born in Chestertown and was raised on his family's farm in Quaker Neck overlooking the Chester River.

He was a graduate of the Hill School in Pottstown, PA, and earned a bachelor's degree in 1966 from Williams College, and a master's degree in creative writing from the Johns Hopkins University. Mr. Watson, who was also known as "Gibby," worked briefly at the News American before joining The Sun's copy desk in 1968. Four years later, he was promoted to news editor, with principal responsibility for the newspaper's front page.

In addition to his other duties during the 1970s, Mr. Watson, who was a bicyclist, wrote the Wheeling column that was published in The Sunday Sun.

Named metropolitan editor in 1979, Mr. Watson oversaw the reorganization and expansion of the newspaper's Maryland coverage.

He supervised a number of major reporting projects including the "Shadow Government" investigation during the administration of Mayor William Donald Schaefer that operated a multimillion-dollar development loan bank with non-elected trustees. From 1979 to 1981, Steven M. Luxenberg served as city editor under Watson.

When John W. Hinckley Jr. tried to assassinate President Ronald W. Reagan in 1981, it was Mr. Watson who directed The Sun's extensive coverage of the

would-be assassin's activities before the assassination attempt.

Mr. Watson was named assistant managing editor for features in 1982 but returned to the news side in 1992 as metropolitan editor. At the time Mr. Watson left the newspaper in 2001, the former Otterbein resident was the newspaper's weekend editor.

It was always Mr. Watson's plan to return to his beloved Chestertown. An accomplished carpenter, he spent his time renovating old houses. He also became a world traveler.

He also took part in civic affairs and served as a member of the Chestertown Planning Commission and a vice president of the Chester River Association.

Plans for a celebration of Mr. Watson's life will be held in Chestertown in the spring.

In addition to his wife and mother, he is survived by two daughters, Molly Watson of Atlanta and Loren Watson of Brookline, MA; four sisters, Marcia Goldberg of Cockeysville, Durrie Chisholm and Molly Mears, both of Chestertown, and Helen Collison of Chadds Ford, PA; and four grandchildren. An earlier marriage to the former Joanna Pinder ended in divorce.

A memorial celebration for Gilbert L. Watson III will be held at Hynson Lounge on the Washington College campus at 2 p.m. on Saturday, April 25. Watson, a Chestertown native and longtime Baltimore Sun editor, died Jan. 10. He was 70.

Gil Watson was a servant to his community - MyEasternShoreMD: Kent County News:

http://www.myeasternshoremd.com/news/kent_county/article_29b2a99d-f829-5f23-bd6c-577310dce516.html.

Cemetery Details

Private

Previous Events

Memorial Service

APR **25**. 2:00 PM (ET)

Hynson Lounge at Washington College
Chestertown, MD 21620

Tribute Wall



“ *Gilbert "Gil" Loren Watson III*

October 26, 2023 at 06:42 PM



“ *Gilbert "Gil" Loren Watson III*

January 28, 2023 at 12:44 PM



“ *Gilbert "Gil" Loren Watson III*

January 28, 2023 at 08:03 AM



“ *Jane Feigleson lit a candle in memory of
Gilbert "Gil" Loren Watson III*



Jane Feigleson - January 19, 2015 at 06:35 PM



“ *Judy Steiner Friedman lit a candle in memory
of Gilbert "Gil" Loren Watson III*



judy steiner friedman - January 15, 2015 at 05:54 AM

DV

“ Debe Churay Voshell lit a candle in memory of Gilbert "Gil" Loren Watson III



Debe Churay Voshell - January 14, 2015 at 01:14 PM

KP

“ Kay B. Pinder lit a candle in memory of Gilbert "Gil" Loren Watson III



Kay B. Pinder - January 14, 2015 at 09:01 AM

BF

“ Betta Fraccaroli lit a candle in memory of Gilbert "Gil" Loren Watson III



Betta Fraccaroli - January 13, 2015 at 03:08 PM

MR

“ Max & Maryann Ruehrmund lit a candle in memory of Gilbert "Gil" Loren Watson III



Max & Maryann Ruehrmund - January 13, 2015 at 02:41 PM

DL

“ *Dottie & Richard LaPlaca lit a candle in memory of Gilbert "Gil" Loren Watson III*



Dottie & Richard LaPlaca - January 12, 2015 at 05:28 PM

TJ

“ *Tom And Nancy Lee Jewell lit a candle in memory of Gilbert "Gil" Loren Watson III*



Tom and Nancy Lee Jewell - January 12, 2015 at 04:47 PM