



## Robert Arthur Gilbert

November 12, 1960 - September 19, 2024

### A Life Well Lived

Robert Arthur Gilbert (Bob), 63, went home to be with the Lord on September 19, 2024. He passed away peacefully at home, surrounded by family, after a 10-week battle with brain cancer.

Bob was born in Jamestown, NY. He graduated from Cassadaga High School, and went on to the Cornell School of Hotel Administration, class of 1981. His hotel industry career began at MHM, Richfield, before moving on to an illustrious career as the CEO and President of HSMAI for the next 30 years.

During his tenure, Bob deftly led HSMAI through historic world events that significantly impacted the hospitality industry, including the terrorist attacks on 9/11, the 2008 recession, and the Covid-19 pandemic. In each instance, his leadership ensured that his organization and team emerged stronger than before.

Bob was a forward thinker, committed to evolving his way of business with the changing times. He was a trailblazer in the hospitality industry, expanding the global reach of HSMAI. Bob was a kind, generous, and inclusive leader, who impacted so many individual careers and ultimately the entire hospitality industry.

Above all, he was a man of strong faith. Bob was a servant of the Lord his whole life, always finding ways to help others personally and professionally, and guiding those around him by example to Christ. He developed his faith through church families of Centreville Presbyterian Church (CPC) in Virginia as well as Mill City here in Ft. Collins.

He was also a proud husband, father, and grandfather that cherished times when the whole family could be together. He was our favorite family travel planner, prioritizing finding ways to get the whole gang together.

Bob is survived by wife Kim, children Rob and Sarah Gilbert (grandchildren - AJ, Rylee, Charlotte, and Weston), Kate and Oscar Hernandez (grandchildren - Lorenzo and Mateo), and Laura and Erik Walters. He is survived by brother John Gilbert, and sister Jean and Andy Abbey.

He was preceded in death by parents Howard and Wilma Gilbert and brother Chuck Gilbert.

We were blessed to have 10 weeks to tell Bob how much he was loved and for him to hear from so many friends, colleagues, and family members. Since Bob was able to enjoy conversations and visits from friends from around the world, the family has decided to not hold a formal celebration of life.

Our life is guided by God. We find solace in John 14: 1-3 and hope you do as well:

“Don’t let your hearts be troubled. Trust in God, and trust also in me. There is more than enough room in my Father’s home. If this were not so, would I have told you that I am going to prepare a place for you? When everything is ready, I will come and get you, so that you will always be with me where I am.”

In lieu of flowers, we invite you to donate to the HSMAI Foundation Century Campaign, in honor of Bob and his extensive impact on the hospitality industry.

Learn more about his career and impact:

- HSMAI Foundation Century Campaign - <https://global.hsm.ai.org/hsm.ai-foundation-century-campaign/>

- President and CEO of HSMAI, Bob Gilbert Announces Retirement - <https://www.hospitalitynet.org/news/4122965.html>

- HSMAI Perspective: Signing Off, In Gratitude | HSMAI Americas - <https://americas.hsm.ai.org/insight/hsm.ai-perspective-signing-off-in-gratitude/>

- HSMAI Announces the Passing of President and CEO Bob Gilbert | HSMAI Americas - [https://americas.hsm.ai.org/press\\_release/hsm.ai-announces-the-passing-of-president-and-ceo-bob-gilbert/](https://americas.hsm.ai.org/press_release/hsm.ai-announces-the-passing-of-president-and-ceo-bob-gilbert/)

We encourage you to leave your thoughts, messages, and prayers below.

# Tribute Wall

DK

“ Dear family of Bob Gilbert. I wanted to share a tribute article I wrote about your father, whom I loved dearly as so many others in the hotel industry did. - Doug Kennedy

[https://www.hotel-online.com/press\\_releases/release/remembering-bob-gilbert-for-his-humanity/](https://www.hotel-online.com/press_releases/release/remembering-bob-gilbert-for-his-humanity/)

Doug Kennedy - November 19, 2024 at 05:00 PM

CH

“ Bob was one of the most kind and genuine people I've met. His care and passion for people and the industry set the gold standard of servant leadership and being a visionary. His ability to make you feel welcome and valued at every interaction was inspiring. Bob, you are greatly missed. You have made a lasting impact and we will continue to carry your legacy with us always.

Chris Hardy - November 18, 2024 at 10:45 PM

MF

“ Thinking of you Bob as I finalise our conference for this year in Dubai .. I know you are looking down at us and watching over me as you always did ... Green is for you because your plants grow and prosper always ... Miss you truly



Mona Faraj - October 04, 2024 at 05:42 AM



“ *Bob was much more than a great leader...he was a very kind and caring man...a true people person and connector. When you had a conversation with him, he made you feel as if you were the most important person in the room! Bob is a true industry icon and his impact will be felt for years to come.*

*Speaking personally, I am grateful that Bob was so respectful of the legacy of my father, Frank Berkman and we talked often about how he hoped my dad would have been proud of the job he was doing... the answer to that was a resounding YES!*

*He handled his diagnosis with such grace and never lost his sense of humor. I am comforted that, after a brief battle, he passed away peacefully surrounded by his loved ones.*

*My heart goes out to Bob's beloved family. I will miss him dearly as a colleague and friend as will everyone who knew and loved him.*

*Kathie Stapleton  
Greater NY HSMAI*

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**Kathie Stapleton** - October 03, 2024 at 01:15 PM

SA

“ *Bob was more than just my big brother at Phi Kappa Tau—he was a true mentor and an incredible friend. His kindness, wisdom, and support left a lasting impact on so many people, including me. Bob’s warmth and generosity shaped the lives of everyone fortunate enough to know him. You will be missed my dear friend. My heartfelt condolences to Kim and the family.*

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**Steve Anderson** - October 01, 2024 at 05:35 PM

BP

“ When we were young our family would visit Wilma and Howard often. I remember going to the barn with Bobby when Howard was milking. We would go up in the hayloft and Bobby would show me the kittens. We would take them down and Howard would give them milk to drink. We used to have so much fun playing in the barn. I also remember him baking a cake for me with his new Easy Bake oven when he first got it! Years would go by before we saw each other again. I called him Bobby and with a smile he told me it was “Bob”. The entire family had the same smile that lit up their whole face. Bob was always so happy and kind.

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**Beverly Pfeiffer** - October 01, 2024 at 03:34 PM

SS

“ Stephanie Schell lit a candle in memory of Robert Arthur Gilbert



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**Stephanie Schell** - September 30, 2024 at 05:49 PM

SS

“ Stephanie Schell sent a virtual gift in memory of Robert Arthur Gilbert



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**Stephanie Schell** - September 30, 2024 at 05:49 PM

SS

“ Very devoted to his faith.

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**Stephanie Schell** - September 30, 2024 at 05:48 PM

SB

“ I met Bob almost 23 years ago in Chicago when I was a Ph.D. student. We talked about my joining HSMAI as a student first. I am a Professor now, still connected to HSMAI and I can say that till the end, Bob shared thoughts, ideas and ways to strengthen the relationship between the industry and academia. He stands out as a true ambassador of education and forged several initiatives to bring it closer to industry. As a person, he was magnanimous, thoughtful and a won friend. I will miss you and so will the scores of people like me whose lives you have touched and enriched. RIP Bob! My heartfelt condolences to Kim and the family.

Srikanth Beldona - September 30, 2024 at 03:34 PM

JA

“ My heart goes out to Bob's family during this incredibly difficult time. Bob's impact on all of us is immeasurable—he wasn't just a leader, but a guiding light, a mentor, and a friend to so many. His wisdom, compassion, and unwavering dedication have touched our lives in profound ways, and the emptiness he leaves behind is felt deeply by all of us who had the privilege to know and work alongside him. His legacy will live on in the countless lives he influenced, but the warmth of his presence will be missed forever.

*Please know that my thoughts and prayers are with you all.*

*With heartfelt sympathy,  
Jerastine Antia*



Jerastine Antia - September 30, 2024 at 03:16 AM

JO

“ On behalf of HSMAI Puerto Rico, we extend our deepest condolences. Bob was such a light and an inspiring leader to all of us. He will be greatly missed. We send our prayers for strength in this difficult time.



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**Janid Ortiz** - September 26, 2024 at 01:10 PM

MS

“ Being a member of HSMAI since 1974 and president of the NE Pa Chapter in 1976, I became passionate about HSMAI. When Bob became our Executive Director in 1995 there was a huge sigh of relieve because the organization was a mess. Working with Bob as Director of Chapter Relations was a labor of love! There were so many difficulties for him to overcome; staff problems, financial insecurity and membership decline. He was so amazing in his approach to remedy these issues. His leadership was "steady" and insightful. The 20 years spent working for/with him was certainly the highlight of my career. He leaves more than a legacy, he is the reason HSMAI exists today. Behind every successful leader there is a strong and vibrant woman, and Kim epitomized that role. In addition she makes the best chocolate peanut butter balls gifted to the staff each year. The sadness of his untimely passing is difficult at best but must be unimaginable for his family, May they find peace in the knowledge he is in God's house now.

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**Margie Sheffer** - September 26, 2024 at 09:47 AM

DI

“ I was blessed to have Bob's friendship through middle and high school at CVCS and college at Cornell U. We shared some fun times in 4-H through the years, too. Bob was a very special person in our lives and some of my fondest memories include Bob among our small group of high school buddies. Condolences to his family. May God comfort you. Looking forward to meeting Bob again when Jesus returns. 🙏

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**Diane** - September 25, 2024 at 04:55 AM

JO

“ I had the pleasure of working with Bob and Kim at MHM (Richfield) in the 80's and 90's. He was a true leader and always encouraged all sales associates to have fun and enjoy growing their careers in the hospitality industry.

*My wife and I flew to Denver to visit with Bob and Kim on September 8th. The time we spent with them reviewing the fun times we had working together but also socializing in Texas and Virginia brought smiles to our faces. Bob will be looking down upon his family and all friends knowing he had a positive influence on everyone that helps all to stay focused on why the Lord put us on earth*

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**Jim O'Neill** - September 24, 2024 at 07:03 PM

KC

“ I went to school with Bob. We were in Valley Minstrels together. He was such a sweetheart. I always knew that he would do something special in his life. It sounds like he touched many lives! May God be with you and comfort you in your loss.

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**Kathy Hallett Cross** - September 24, 2024 at 05:35 PM

LT

“ Prayers for all of you as you go through this HUGE loss! Bob's leadership in the Hospitality industry made a tremendous impact to countless people over so many years! So smart and strategic, yet always led with kindness and humility. To learn He was a man of faith is no surprise...He presented as such- always. God Bless you all. Rest in Peace, Bob...

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**linda price topp** - September 24, 2024 at 11:04 AM

TP

“ Shaken by the suddenness of Bob's death. My love and prayers extend to Bob's family. For me, Bob was a terrific mentor in the church. His leadership skills and the poise he exhibited gave such comfort and wisdom. Both Kim and Bob opened their home to many Bible groups and it was within this environment that trust, transparency and friendships grew. Bob always had time for conversation and he went out of his way to find out personally how you were doing. Bob was a very kind and gentle man who cherished his family. His face would light up with that wonderful smile whenever he spoke of his children and grandchildren. Heaven was created for such men. The resort is open, Bob.

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**Todd Pangman** - September 24, 2024 at 08:59 AM

KF

“ Kim and family your loss is so profound...we are so sorry but know he is fully restored...we are praying for everyone...sending hugs

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**karen freiberg** - September 23, 2024 at 10:53 PM

TP

“ Heartbroken for Kim and the family, comforted knowing that as a man of faith, Bob is up in heaven with his eternal father. A joyful and faithful servant who lived by example as a kind and loving brother in Christ. I will always remember his hearty laugh and sage wisdom. A truly gentle and genuine soul who touched so many, he will be sorely missed. In Christ's love Tony

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**Tony Polizzi** - September 23, 2024 at 08:19 PM



“ All our love as we pray for peace, comfort, and moments of joyful memories for all of you. Bob was an amazing man and he is gone way too soon. I know he was so proud of his family. Love- Kelly, Steve, Alex and Brooke Johnson

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**Kelly Ivey Johnson** - September 23, 2024 at 02:51 PM

LH

“ May Bob be seated at the right hand of our Lord and Savior... right where he belongs. What a truly wonderful and inspirational life he led. My prayer for Kate, Laura, Rob and of course Kim is the wonderful memories you share of Bob will carry you through the next very very difficult days and months. I am praying for you constantly

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**Lisa Halterman** - September 23, 2024 at 12:23 PM

JA

“ 1 file added to the tribute wall



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**Jackie** - September 23, 2024 at 03:06 AM

AA

“ It’s hard to imagine life without Bob if you were closely associated with HSMLa. I had the honor of meeting BoB almost 18 years ago and we developed a very close friendship and partnership. He was always available, cheerful, extremely hard worker and always open to new ideas. I had the honor of serving on 2 board terms under his leadership. It’s hard to imagine what it’s going to be without him. Rest in peace Bob

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**Anil Aggarwal** - September 22, 2024 at 07:05 PM

JC

“ I remember family events at the pond, Bob bringing college friends along to see what all the Hoopla was about, my brother Mike and Bobs marathon Monopoly games. Bobs decorating 4-H cakes for fair and just his fun loving spirit. His laugh reminded me so of Uncle Howard, there was joy in just listening to his laugh. HE WILL BE MISSED BY MANY!

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**Jonica Conklin** - September 22, 2024 at 04:46 PM



“ 1 file added to the album Memories Album



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**Bohlender Funeral Chapel** - September 22, 2024 at 11:20 AM

MH

What a lovely family picture! Such a beautiful treasure. ❤️

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**Monna and Garth Hardy** - September 22, 2024 at 10:12 PM

MI

*I will miss Bob dearly and I am so grateful that I had the opportunity to have him in my life as a colleague and friend. I always looked forward to our time together throughout the years. In my eyes he was a gentle giant. He had the ability to bring people together for the good of the industry. He always did this with kindness and compassion. He was admired and respected across the industry and by anyone who had the opportunity to know him. Rest in peace, Bob.*

Michael Innocentin - September 23, 2024 at 09:35 AM

CD

*I am so so sorry to hear about the passing of such a wonderful and godly man. My 23 year daughter died from the same devastating brain cancer (Glioblastoma Grade IV) Bob was diagnosed with. She also loved and served the Lord. My dear friend of 25 years, (Bob's sister) Jean Abbey, was so supportive during that time. There are no earthly answers to such a loss, but I know Bob is happier than he ever could have imagined possible. I pray for comfort for all of you in your grief while you wait to be reunited with Bob. 🥀🥀🥀🥀*

Colleen Donelli - September 23, 2024 at 07:10 PM

JP

*25 years ago, Bob took a chance on a small town girl with no hospitality experience from Indiana to join the HSMAI family. I watched Bob lead HSMAI through some trying times, being the strong leader through it all. He had a knack for "seeing around the corner". I am grateful for the experiences I have had because of Bob and even more grateful to call Bob a friend!! Heaven is blessed to have Bob in their presence, and I am sure he will be "negotiating" a special place in heaven 😊 HSMAI will never be the same without him. His love and passion for the hospitality industry will never be matched. God bless you, Bob, and provide comfort for your wonderful family! 💜💜💜*

Julie Parent - September 25, 2024 at 01:47 PM