

Birth: Sep. 10, 1931  
Death: Sep. 25, 2011

Thomas Eugene Gilles, 80, of Kickapoo passed away at 3:40 p.m. Sunday, Sept. 25, 2011, at OSF Saint Francis Medical Center in Peoria, Ill.

He was born in Peoria on Sept. 10, 1931, to Edward and Laura Ludwig Gilles. He married Norma Mae Muzzarelli, the love of his life, on Feb. 20, 1960, in Farmington, Ill. She died on Oct. 20, 2007.

He was also preceded in death by his parents; one sister, Donna Scovil; one niece; and one nephew.

Surviving are four children, Tonya (Stephen) Koch of Morton, Ill., Tom Gilles of Monica, Ill., Mark (Lynda) Gilles of Groveland, Ill., and Brenda (Bill) Raspopovich of Merrillville, Ind.; eight grandchildren, Joshua, Zachary and Jacob Raspopovich, Kristin, Nicole and Bryan Koch and Ashley and Chelsea Gilles; and one great-grandchild, Sophia Raspopovich.

Tom was a pitcher for the Philadelphia Phillies organization in the 1950s.

He worked at Hiram Walker for 26 years.

He was the owner of Gilles Tavern, which has the oldest liquor license in the state of Illinois.

He was a member of the Kickapoo Sportsmans Club and the Hiram Walker Rod and Gun Club.

He served in the United States Army as a sergeant in the Korean War, receiving two service medals while fighting on the front lines.

Tom was an avid hunter and fisherman who loved to be in the woods with his family. He had a passion for fishing for big catfish and held the state record for 13 years when he caught a 28-pound channel cat.

He was a great bowler and was in many leagues, where he bowled a 300 game on Valentine's Day in 1970.

Tom was also a country and western music lover and shared this with his wife and children.

Tom was an outstanding baseball and softball coach. He was a great mentor to many young male and female athletes in the Peoria area. In 1979, he coached the Peoria Karmelcorn softball team that won the state and regional championships and then received fifth in nationals.

He was a softball hitting coach for Illinois Central College in 1998, when they won first place in nationals. Tom also was a coach for the Pekin Lettes women's softball team in the 1980s.

He was very proud that he got to coach all four of his children and they received Division 1 scholarships for baseball and softball.

His two sons played professional baseball.

Tom was a very kind and loving husband, father, grandfather and friend. He was a wonderful father who will be greatly missed.

Graveside services will be held at St. Patrick's Cemetery in Kickapoo, Ill., at 11 a.m. on Thursday, Sept. 29, 2011. Visitation will be held from 5 to 8 p.m. Wednesday, Sept. 28, at St. Mary's Parish Hall in Kickapoo, with a Scripture service at 7:45 p.m.

Burial:

Saint Patricks Cemetery  
Kickapoo (Peoria County)  
Peoria County  
Illinois, USA