

# **EULOGY FOR BROTHER GENE DAVIS**

## **Given by Brother Ben Beauchamp**

**From: C. Ben Beauchamp <benb@alpha.net>**  
**Sent: Tue, October 5, 2010 5:16:15 PM**  
**Subject: Gene's Eulogy**

Eulogy .October 3, 2010 Eldridge Eugene Davis, Jr.

My name is Ben Beauchamp and on September 28, 2010—I was having early morning coffee in a small café near my home between Brenham and Navasota when my cell phone rang..... changed my life! I've never met a man I loved, respected and admired more than Gene Davis. The Cross on my lapel was given to me by Gene nearly 50 years ago. He would not have wished for us to be sad today, but we are.

Our mere attendance reflects the affection we feel for our departed friend. Many others tried, but were unable to be here. I thank you Jan, for allowing me speak publicly of Gene. There are many among us that knew Gene as well or better than I, but I'll do my best for him.

Unlike Gene, I will be brief and try to speak without using those darn engineering terms he was so fond of.

Gene was born during the height of **WWII** on April 6 1943. He was a handsome child and become a handsome man. His Daddy was an electrician installing the electrical systems in Destroyers and other war ships in Orange Texas. Eldridge was the first born of Phyllis and Slick's two children. His beautiful sister, Nancy would come later, after the war. Port Arthur was no longer a small town, as it had been when our parents grew up there and the refineries and

other industries offered the chance for many coming out of the depression to better their lives. Mr. Davis ultimately opened an Electrical Contracting Company; he and Phyllis raised Gene and Nancy and lived the American dream. While my parents knew the Davis family; I first remember meeting Gene as a youngster, at the Methodist Temple in downtown Port Arthur. Even then, Gene was an active member practicing his faith.

He graduated Thomas Jefferson High School in 1961 and was a member of the National Honor Society as well as many other clubs and student organizations. He played football as an end on the Yellow Jacket team. Many of his classmates and teammates are here today to honor him.

Some of you were with Jan and Gene recently and spent time in Florida with Jimmy Johnson and other classmates at Jimmy's home. Gene told me they much enjoyed it.

Gene was popular in high school and was a stellar student, both in conduct and example. If you met him and got to know him, you liked him. He played the guitar and was fun to be around.

Upon graduation from Thomas Jefferson he began his college career at "Harvard on the Neches" or more accurately, Lamar State College of Technology in Beaumont; majoring in Electrical Engineering.

Now, I know for a fact, that my Daddy loved Gene more than me because Daddy had gone back to college later in life and received an Electrical Engineering Degree from Lamar in the mid 50's. Double E's have a special bond in that they think logically, speak math and know a heck of a lot about everything. I still think electricity is a miracle and being a year younger than Gene, my parents were mostly concentrating on my being potty trained before I graduated high school.

Starting Lamar in 62 and pledging Sigma Chi Fraternity was a fortuitous choice for me. My "big brother" or mentor in that organization was Gene. I grew to admire Gene Davis in those days. His steadfast faith, his

diligence in his studies, his maturity, his endearing friendships and his thoughtful counseling were a blessing to me. Gene actually listened to what folks said, thought about it and made rational decisions. What a fine example for a green south county boy. He continued this throughout his life and I as well as others have benefited from his friendship these many years. Dennis still says it was the only thing that kept us off death row.

There was also a wild side to Gene, I won't even mention the 'chug a lug' contest he won on the beach in Galveston during Beach Week; his prize kept us supplied with adult beverages for several days; nor shall I discuss the Christmas when we took all the discarded gift wrapping and threw it into his neighbor's pool. It wouldn't have been a big deal except the paper faded and dyed the sides of the pool a bright pink color. Phyllis was not amused. Fortunately Slick had a good sense of humor and our scheduled execution was commuted.

I will speak of one college event and that was a Sigma Chi, Sweetheart Ball held at the Port Arthur Country Club. While couples dreamily danced by the pool in the moonlight, I watched in amazement as Gene, dressed splendidly in a rented tux, quietly climbed the pool ladder and made a perfect swan dive from the high board into the pool.

The amazing thing about that event was; emerging from the water, soaking wet, the tux and other formal clothes shed the water in a remarkably short time and later we were in the rest room while Gene, appearing completely dry was combing his hair; someone threw open the door and said, "Did you see that guy make that dive into the pool from the high board?" Gene never missed a stroke combing his hair, looked at me with a grin and said, "Must have been a professional; best dive I ever saw!"

Gene's dorm room was downright dangerous. The wall light switch might operate the radio or some other gadget and one never knew what to expect if any electrical switch was flipped. While we were fishing on

Bolivar, he once found a completely worthless piece of rusted junk buried in the sand and stated it was a radio and he was going to fix it. Unbelievably he did and incorporated it into the wiring in his room.

Gene did well in college and upon his graduation was rewarded by an offer of employment from none other than General Electric Corporation. GE did not hire many young men from small colleges, even one as prestigious as “Harvard on the Neches.” Congratulations Eldridge Eugene Davis, Jr.

He left Lamar, for Houston after a stint at corporate headquarters and started what would become a long and successful career with GE. I was side tracked by the Marine Corps and other misadventures but finally graduated and went to Houston in 69 where I teamed with Gene and our buddy Dennis Hollander. We all lived together for many years at 10010 Memorial Drive. Dennis and I shared a two bed room apartment and Gene had a one bedroom next to us. Dennis and I agreed it was the safest arrangement for all of us. You may have seen a TV show about hoarders, people who keep things and never throw them out. That was the best way to describe Gene’s apartment.

In addition to being an electrical nightmare, there was a maze of huge boxes of magazines, newspapers and literally tons of other junk that he was going to get around to reading, studying or fixing. It was wall to wall. Gene worked very hard. He was often gone for days or weeks. I enjoyed listening to him discuss the projects he worked on. In addition to smaller things, he installed huge pieces of equipment in paper mills, steel mills, generating plants, ships and other locations throughout Texas and other parts of the US. He was a competent professional and enjoyed his work. He was both capable and reliable. I am still impressed with the things he did because Gene Davis was one heck of an Electrical Engineer.

We all grew older, and eventually moved apart: finally potty trained I did finish law school in spite of the partying. Gene continued a distinguished professional career and lived life to the fullest; his

friendships never diminishing his bonds never wavering.

Gene was also a serious person with a terrific sense of humor. He was a deep thinker, sometimes really deep. True story Gene, what day is Easter? Answer; Easter Day is the first Sunday after the full moon that occurs next, after the vernal equinox. The full moon involved is not the astronomical Full Moon but an ecclesiastical moon that keeps, more or less, in step with the astronomical Moon. Resulting in that Easter can never occur before March 22 or later than April 25. -“Gene, all I can say is, good luck to the Easter Bunny!”

Over the years, many here have partied, laughed, and worshiped with Gene. We have also cried with him during such difficult times as the loss of his Mother and Sister so long ago. His Daddy too.

Through the good times and tough times, we studied, swam, sailed, skied, fished, vacationed and always enjoyed his company, his wit and easy going attitude; it was infectious. I valued his advice and assumed he valued mine until he recently said he didn't think I was a very good lawyer but my counseling was free.

Gene was passionate about his life. If you sailed or skied with him, he understood all sorts of things about what he was doing while I was just struggling to keep from capsizing or falling. He just didn't go skin diving; he became a Senior Master Dive Instructor. I could go on for many hours about the times and life of Gene and many here today could add volumes to his legacy. Gene was simply a good person, a gentleman.

It's difficult to capture the spirit of such a fine man in a brief speech and he deserves better. He liked most everyone and they in turn liked him! He was a fair minded person, unpretentious and smart as a whip. His affection for his family was shown by his love for his Uncle John, and was saddened by the recent loss of John's wife, his Aunt Dorothy. He loved his stepmother Virginia; always referred to her daughter Pam as his sister. In his heart, I know she was. He spoke fondly of Jan's children and family. Gene was one of those people you wanted to be friends with for life. You just couldn't help but like him.

Everyone agrees his marriage to Jan was one of the best things that ever happened to him. The woman is a saint and he loved her dearly. Who else would go skin diving with a crazy swan diver and live with a hoarder. She nursed him through his cancer and made him well. He was happy. I thought he never would find a house that met his stringent engineering specifications but he did and not too long ago, he built Jan a pond in the back yard of their beautiful new home. Gene was proud of that pond. Ever true to his nature he could come see me and then get on line and take me all through the house and yard with a security system he had installed. Life was good. I thank you Jan for being such a positive influence on his life and loving him the way you do. We share your sorrow.

Gene quietly practiced his faith throughout his entire life and was doing so till it ended. Jan and Gene have shown their abiding love for our fellow man and a dedication to their faith by their actions every day; bolstered by their many trips south to help improve the lives of poorer folk in other countries and their work in prison ministries. Jan & Gene Davis lived their faith by example; partners till the end.

### Gene's Dash

I viewed my parent's graves today; my grandparents lie near by,  
A host of others are also there, their stones now stately lie.  
Eulogies were lovingly delivered, at the funerals of those gone, I then  
thought of each of them, and two dates carved in stone.

The first date noted, is that of birth; the second brings us to tears, What  
matters most, I have come to learn, is the dash between those years.

This simple dash, as we all know, represents their time on earth, And  
each of us, now lovingly remembers, what this tiny line is worth.

It matters not, how much they had; the cars, the house, the cash, What  
matters most, is how they lived, the time within that dash.

I thought about this long and hard, are there things that I should change?  
Unable to know the time I have; is my dash near the end of its range?

When our eulogy is given some future day, and our souls shall come to  
pass.

Will, we be as pleased, with things then said, as were said of Eldridge's  
dash?

So I will end this eulogy by saying

Goodbye to a loving son  
Goodbye, to a loving brother  
Goodbye, to our memorable friend  
Goodbye, to a dear husband  
Goodbye, dear Gene

We all know that our Lord is getting a really good electrical engineer

But for goodness sakes Gene; promise us, when you go anywhere in  
Heaven, please leave the wiring alone!!!  
God's speed Eldridge Eugene Davis, Jr.

I THANK YOU