

## Bill Gerken

November 2, 1961 - March 8, 2018

William (Bill) Gerken was born November 2, 1961 in Santa Ana to William and Donna Gerken. He was raised on Milbro Street in Costa Mesa with his siblings Cathy, Cindy, Theresa, and Gerry. Together they shared many fun memories of camping at Lake Shasta, Chihuahua Valley, road trips to Iowa, and weekly family dinners. Growing up, the family enjoyed watching Monty Python, which he later shared with his own children, Josh and Danielle, along with road trips to Iowa.

Bill spent several years in Boy Scouts, sang with the Boys Choir and played football in High School. He graduated from Mater Dei High School in 1979 and earned his BA in Engineering from Cal Poly in 1983. Bill began working for McDonnell Douglas, which later became Boeing Aircraft.

Despite Bill's quirky sense of humor, he was a romantic at heart. After nearly two years of dating, he wrote a beautiful poem and proposed to Michelle from the top of the Eiffel Tower. They were married on June 19, 1993 and looked forward to celebrating twenty-five years together this year.

Bill became a proud father to Joshua in 1996 and Danielle in 1998. He loved spending time with his family while cheering at the softball games, loudly clapping at dance recitals, camping with Joshua's Boy Scout Troop, or relaxing watching T.V. Most recently, he enjoyed working on puzzles with

Danielle and playing trivia with friends.

Bill returned to Fullerton College to pursue his love of geology. He shared his newfound knowledge with his son, Joshua, and other Boy Scouts, helping them to earn their Geology Merit Badge during a trip to the desert.

Another passion was carpentry. He began as a small boy carrying tools for his father on job sites to eventually designing and building room additions to his home. His daughter, Danielle, helped side by side to install the hardwood floor. Bill would joke that if it wasn't for his fear of losing a finger, he would have become a carpenter like his father. Instead, he found joy in helping friends with their home improvement projects.

Through Bill's job at Boeing, he was able to relocate to England and later to Hungary with his family. The family shared many fun adventures traveling around Europe. One of Bill's favorite trips was taking Michelle, Josh and Danielle to Paris to see the Eiffel Tower ten years after he proposed. He had hoped to make the same trip every ten years together.

Bill has left a void in the lives of those who loved him. We will forever miss his beautiful smile, infectious laugh, and even his odd sense of humor.

Bill is survived by his wife Michelle and his children, Joshua and Danielle. He will also be remembered by his mother, father, five siblings, and numerous nieces and nephews.

In lieu of flowers, the family would like donations to be made to the Red Cross. <https://www.redcross.org/donate/donation>

The date for the Celebration of Life Service is: Saturday April 7 at 10:30 at

Bethany Baptist Church  
2250 Clark Ave., Long Beach  
Reception immediately following the service.

# Previous Events

## Funeral and Celebration of Life

APR 7. 10:30 AM - 12:00 PM (PT)

Bethany Baptist Church of Long Beach  
2250 Clark Avenue  
Long Beach, CA 90815

## Reception

APR 7. 12:00 PM - 2:00 PM (PT)

Bethany Baptist Church of Long Beach  
2250 Clark Avenue  
Long Beach, CA 90815

# Tribute Wall



“ *Reflecting on Memories created a Tribute Video in memory of Bill Gerken*



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**Reflecting on Memories** - March 25, 2018 at 09:32 AM



Jennifer  
Towner

“ *Growing up (probably since birth) next door to the Gerkins, there are so many memories to share. Like playing steal the bacon, hide-n-seek until the street lights came on or five hundred out in the street your heart was always there protecting Peggy and I, just like a big brother.*

*Bill or Billy as we called him, you were a fine man.*

*To the Gerkin family please know the Towner family sends our love.*

*I know your hearts are heavy as you walk through this, it is the hardest thing to endure. Siblings are your first friends, we are here for you as us Towners understand loosing a sibling having lost Andy, Greg Marilee and Teri.*

*Our love, open hearts and virtual hugs are with you.*

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**Jennifer Towner** - April 27, 2018 at 09:39 PM

LG

“ Upon Our arrival at Vienna airport, Bill and Danielle were there to greet, welcome, and drive us to Pápa, Hungary. It was great to meet such friendly people from the beginning. Bill was always available to help us at work or even just to tell a joke or a story. Our family will continue to remember Bill for his kindness and sense of humor. May he rest in peace. Bennie, Lupita and Angeline Green

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**Lupita Gonzalez Green** - April 06, 2018 at 04:15 PM



“ Simply Elegant Spathiphyllum was purchased for the family of Bill Gerken.



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April 04, 2018 at 01:19 PM

GB

“ Bill and I have been friends since 1st grade. There is a bonding which happens in parochial school which I cannot explain. We lost touch after I transferred during high school but reconnected years later at a grade school reunion. We kept in touch since then and it was always a pleasure. He took me on a tour of the C-17 facility in Long Beach which will always be remembered. His sense of humor was awesome. His commitment to honor, integrity and righteousness was admirable. Bill was a good man and this earth is less of a place without him. May the pain of loss to his family be softened by good memories. Greg Buschhausen

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**Greg Buschhausen** - April 04, 2018 at 01:38 AM

CS

*Greg, wii you be able to make it on Saturday? I remember you from St. John's and would love to see you.  
-Cindy (Bill's sister)*

**Cynthia Salgado** - April 04, 2018 at 12:53 PM

TH

*We are the only two Support Equipment guys told to stay away from all the new hires. One of us might corrupt the newbie. That was our new challenge at the company.  
I had lot fun and lots memories with the Gerken Family.*

**TROY Herzog** - April 07, 2018 at 07:57 PM



“ *Beautiful in Blue was purchased for the family of Bill Gerken.*



April 03, 2018 at 11:57 AM

GG

“ *Please accept our deepest condolences. We are so sorry for your loss. Our prayers are with you and your family during this difficult time. Sincere condolences!*



**Gabriela, Costel and Andrei Gavrilă** - April 03, 2018 at 11:12 AM

CD

“ So sorry for the sudden loss of Bill for you and your families! The first face Danny and I saw at the airport to pick us up for our Papa, Hungary adventure was Bill's. We all became fast friends after that. He will be missed so much, but in our hearts forever! We are here for you. Danny and Cathy Duffer ❤️

Cathy and Danny Duffer - April 03, 2018 at 10:43 AM

DJ

“ My deepest condolences to Michelle, Josh, Danielle ,and family.. That was a Beautiful video of his life. I was shocked and so sad to hear of Bills passing. I bonded with him while cutting his hair for years. We would talk sometimes after for an hour about kids and life. I missed my brother and his humor was a lot like his. I love the Gerken family and being with you guys made living in Pápa easier. I will never forget Bill..❤️🙏

Donna Jones - April 03, 2018 at 07:43 AM

HD

“ Our condolences and love know no bounds. We are shocked and saddened at this news. Our memories of both Bill and his lovingly family are endless. We'll never forget the mini escapade where it flew with military escort all the way to the US. Bill meeting us at the train station complete with cap and sign. Eating out at the 'English pub'. Rick introducing him to the delights of British beer.

Much love from us both and our families,  
Heather and Rick Downing xxxx


Heather Downing - April 03, 2018 at 02:18 AM

JB

“ Bill and I had great conversations when I was running the training office adjacent from his in Pápa. Great guy. Stood up for what he believed was right. His story of his proposal to his wife was a big inspiration to my proposal on the Tower Brodge in London. Bill gave me many great ideas and always had a clever thought behind each idea. He threw big bbqs at his son expense for guys that worked over in the hangar for him or with him. Cooked up great food and we all had a great time. Visontlátásra Vilmos!

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**Josh Bedwell** - April 03, 2018 at 01:58 AM

 Jason Adams

“ Michelle and family. I am truly sorry for your loss. Bill was a great guy and I remember the great times talking with him at work In Hungary. I also enjoyed going to church with Bill at Mark's house. It was great being able to spend time with fellow Christians while living abroad. Krystal and I really enjoyed seeing you all a couple years ago in long Beach and having dinner. I didn't know that would be the last time I would see Bill and I wish I had stayed in touch more often. He will truly be missed but I know he smiling down on you and your family. Please let us know if there is anything we can do. My number is 580-301-2444.

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**Jason Adams** - April 03, 2018 at 12:48 AM



“ 134 files added to the album *Family Memories Album*



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**Reflecting on Memories** - March 23, 2018 at 05:24 PM