

## **Dr. Gilbert Pierce Haight, Jr., renowned chemistry professor, dies at 92 1922-2015**

Dr. Gilbert P. Haight, Jr., best known for his pioneering work in chemical education, died on Monday, April 27 of natural causes.

Known to family and friends as "Gil," Dr. Haight spent his professional life as a professor of chemistry, exploring and perfecting the delivery of scientific education to college students in a career that spanned the globe.

Born in Seattle on June 8, 1922, Haight spent his early years on Bainbridge Island. The grandson of island pioneer Warren Gazzam, young Gil grew up in his grandfather's house, "Alabama," on the west side of Bainbridge Island. Gazzam was an entrepreneur and founder of the Kitsap Transportation Company, an early steamship company serving western Puget Sound. Gil's father, Gilbert P. Haight, Sr., was an attorney; his mother, Ruth Gazzam Haight, was a Christian Science practitioner.

Gil graduated from Bainbridge High School in 1939, attended Stanford University as an undergraduate, then Princeton University where he received his PhD in chemistry in 1946. Haight worked on the Manhattan Project during the war as part of his PhD research. His avowed interest in chemistry originated in order to avoid becoming a teacher, which he ironically dedicated his life to after discovering a knack for tutoring his fellow college students.

Following his marriage to Shirley Grapek Haight of Boston, Massachusetts in 1946, Haight became a Rhodes Scholar in Oxford, England where their first child, Jennifer Lea, was born. His subsequent teaching positions in chemistry took the growing family to the University of Hawaii, Kansas University, George Washington University, Swarthmore College, Texas A&M, and finally to the University of Illinois where Haight taught from 1966 to his retirement in 1989. He did continuing research during sabbaticals in Copenhagen, Denmark, San Diego, California, Canberra, Australia, and Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia.

Following retirement, Gil and Shirley returned to Bainbridge Island, Washington until their move to Seattle in 2000.

Always dedicated to teaching chemistry to freshman students, Haight ultimately pioneered the blending of multimedia and television into lectures and labs. He also mixed humor and explosive demonstrations as part of his famous Christmas lectures where he revealed what life would be like a few billion years from now after the sun had exploded and temperatures plummeted to minus 465 Fahrenheit. At one time at the University of Illinois his freshman chemistry course had over 3,000 students. In 1989 he won the American Chemical Science Award for his innovative efforts in teaching. He authored a number of chemistry text books used widely throughout the United States and world.

One of his most prideful moments was when his former Swarthmore College student David Baltimore won the Nobel Prize in physiology or medicine in 1975.

Haight is survived by his brother Warren Haight of Hawaii, his sister Mary Pease of Seattle, his wife Shirley and their children: Jennifer Haight of Kauai, Hawaii, Loisanne "Sandy" Haight of Seattle, Washington, Charles "Chad" Haight of Bainbridge Island, Washington, and Stephanie Haight-Kuntze of Berlin, Germany. He was preceded in death by two children, Charlene "Sherry" Haight and Christopher Haight. His grand children include Zoey Haight Diaz, Shayla Miller Love, Adrien Miller, Christopher Kuntze, Cyra Haight, Keagan Haight, and Dylan Haight. In addition Dr. Haight had three great grandchildren, with one more on the way.

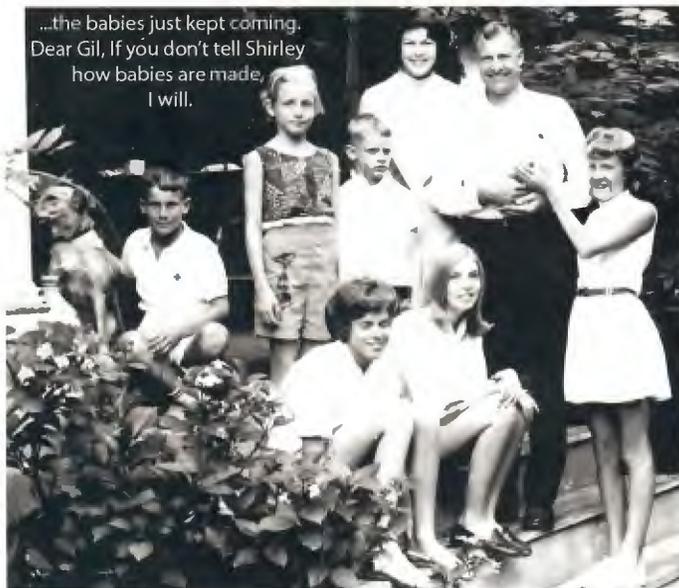
Haight was both serious scientist and a very funny man, mixing humor into his teachings and daily life. A master of puns, he was happiest when eliciting an extended groan from those in his company. When he wasn't teaching, he could most often be found on the tennis court where his unorthodox game drove his opponents crazy.

He will be fondly remembered.



**Gilbert Pierce Haight, Jr.**  
June 8, 1922 - April 27, 2015

## "House of Haight"



...the babies just kept coming.  
Dear Gil, If you don't tell Shirley  
how babies are made,  
I will.

Clockwise: Stuffie, Chad, Stephanie, Chris, Shirley, Gil, Sherry, Jennifer, Sandy



Shirley & Gil: Married for Life

Tennis. "I call it my ailing habit"



"I like applause at the start because we may have to leave here in a hurry,  
or none of us may leave at all, or you may see me for what I am  
and chase me out of the hall."



"The Haightful Perils of Teaching,"  
"Teaching: It's a great racquet"

