



## Paul Moody Gustafson

October 11, 1919 - April 9, 2009

Paul Moody Gustafson of Wooster, Ohio, died peacefully early Thursday, April 9, at his home in the company of loving family. He was 89.

Born Oct. 11, 1919, in DeKalb, Ill., he was the son of John Otto Gustafson and Edith Moody Gustafson. He grew up in Norway, Michigan. After graduation from high school at age 16, he moved to Chicago where he worked while attending North Park College. He earned an associate's degree in 1938 and continued his studies at the University of Minnesota and Northwestern University in Evanston, Ill.

Drafted in 1940, he became a medic. Later he trained as a navigator and flew 22 combat missions with the 34th Bomb Group, 8th Army Air Force out of England. After the war, he returned to Northwestern University where he met his future wife, Mary Jane Tucker. They married in 1946.

After finishing his studies at Northwestern, they moved to Grand Forks, N. Dakota, where he began a 43-year career teaching sociology. He taught at the University of North Dakota, Grand Forks; Macalester College in St. Paul, MN.; and Hiram College, Hiram, OH. In 1964 he earned his doctorate in sociology from the University of Minnesota. He retired from regular classroom teaching at Hiram College in 1985 and moved to Wooster but continued to teach in Hiram's Weekend College program until 1993.

A true scholar, 'Gus' was deeply committed to teaching and lifelong learning; his students' growth was his primary endeavor. He edited "The Journal for the Scientific Study of Religion" for many years. His career provided extraordinary opportunities to travel and explore foreign cultures. He taught in England, Italy and Malaysia (as a Fullbright Scholar) making lifelong international friends.

He was a wonderful father and husband and was able to provide some exceptional life experiences for his family. Paul loved basketball and scored games for Macalester and Hiram Colleges. In Wooster, he became a loyal booster of the Fighting Scots. He was a member of Westminster Presbyterian Church in Wooster. For many years, he was an active volunteer at Wooster Community Hospital.

The family is very grateful for the assistance and care from Wayne County Hospice.

He is survived by his wife, Mary Jane, "Tuck"; daughter Karen Rose of Depoe Bay, OR; sons Eric (Karen) Gustafson of Pleasant Prairie, WI; Bret Gustafson of Kansas City, MO; Mark (Marilyn) Gustafson of Wooster; and brother Jim Gustafson of Albuquerque, NM; sister Dorothy Jones of Topeka, KS; six grandchildren; and four great-grandchildren.

A celebration of his life will be held at Westminster Presbyterian Church House on the College of Wooster Campus on Saturday April 18th at 1:30pm. Following the service there will be a time of fellowship to visit with the family. Custer-Glenn Funeral Home, 2284 Benden Dr., Wooster is handling arrangements. Words of comfort may be shared with the family at: [www.custer-glenn.com](http://www.custer-glenn.com).

The family requests memorials be made to Hospice of Wayne County, Central American Medical Outreach (CAMO), or the Paul Gustafson Hiram College Library Fund.

# Previous Events

## Service

APR 18. 1:30 PM (ET)

Westminster Presbyterian Church  
353 E. Pine St.  
Wooster, OH

## Visitation

APR 18. 2:15 PM - 12:00 AM (ET)

Westminster Presbyterian Church  
353 E. Pine St.  
Wooster, OH

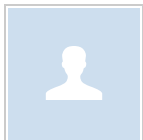
# Tribute Wall



“ *Bret and Family:*  
*So sorry to read of your Dad's passing- this will change everything,*  
*but those changes are all part of life. We extend our sympathy to*  
*you and hope the feeling of loss eases day by day.##imported-*  
*begin##Mickey and Barb DeWitt##imported-end##*

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May 01, 2009 at 08:38 AM



“ *Mrs G and family; Maris and I were saddend to hear about Mr. G's*  
*passing. I remember him fondly, always with his pipe close at hand,*  
*just like my dad. Our thoughts are with you.##imported-begin##Laila*  
*Sprogis Zvejnieks##imported-end##*

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April 20, 2009 at 10:55 AM



“ Dear Tuck,

*I was very sorry to hear about the death of Paul. I know you two had a great life together and he had a great impact on many students and colleagues. I don't know all the friendships you two shared, but I'm sure they were as valuable and rewarding as those I know he had with us at Hiram College. I was grateful for Paul as a short-term colleague, and most grateful to you both for making my first and only home purchase a breeze. Our family has enjoyed “your” home for almost 21 years now. Thank you for giving us a great start on our family life.*

*Please know that you and your family are in my thoughts today and always. I am very sorry to miss the service and fellowship today. I am with you in spirit, though.*

*Know that Paul was loved and respected by many more than just you and your family. Also know that you are, too. Take care of yourself.*

*Best regards in sympathy,*

*Matt Hils##imported-begin##Matt Hils##imported-end##*

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April 18, 2009 at 02:03 PM



“ *I was very sorry to hear of Dr. Gustafson's death. He was one of my favorite profs at the college. I remember his family very well from growing up in Hiram. They were good friends to the entire community. My thoughts and prayers are with the family at this sad time.##imported-begin##Roberta Killey Zuver##imported-end##*

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April 17, 2009 at 09:02 AM



“ For me, Paul was a mentor whose spirit and example will stay with me always. I'll be in Chautauqua County on Saturday so will miss the celebration of his life. Mary sends love to you. Jack Vimmerstedt###imported-begin##John Vimmerstedt###imported-end##

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April 16, 2009 at 09:34 PM



“ Dear Karen and Family: I was sad to hear about the loss of your Dad. As you know, I graduated from Hiram College in 1970, and way before that I went to Camp Christian in Delaware, Ohio. When I came back to Hiram for reunions, etc. I would occasionally see your Dad. He was such a good person. I hope that the rest of you are in good health. My condolences and blessings, Viri Andrick New York City, NY###imported-begin##Viri Andrick###imported-end##

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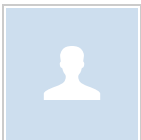
April 16, 2009 at 08:14 AM



“ My thoughts and prayers are with the Gustafson family. I was a sociology major at Hiram College (Class of 1971) and Dr. Gustafson was my faculty advisor and professor. I'll always remember his kindness and the concern and respect shown towards his students.###imported-begin##Diane Arrington Lilly###imported-end##

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April 15, 2009 at 06:27 PM



“ I was a sociology/religion major at Hiram, Class of 1973. Dr. Gustafson was a kind, fair and very inspiring professor.###imported-begin##Carolyn (Claeys) Albertson###imported-end##

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April 15, 2009 at 09:26 AM



“ Tuck: Sorry to read about Paul. I still think about you on occasion. I hope your life, even missing Paul, will continue to be fruitful.

Micky Oakley class of 1982 Hiram###imported-begin##Micky Oakley###imported-end##

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April 15, 2009 at 07:47 AM



“ I knew Dr. Gustafson from my days at Hiram College. He was a very gifted individual who held your attention the minute we entered the classroom. He was an extremely kind and caring individual. Because of him Sociology became my second major. Please accept my sincerest condolences. His kindnesses and sincerity will live on in the lives of the others he touched.###imported-begin##Frank Schenck###imported-end##

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April 15, 2009 at 07:16 AM



“ Professor Gustafson was one of my favorite teachers at Hiram. I found him interesting, honest, and intellectual, and he told fascinating stories. He made learning a challenge and a joy. I still remember that class although it is now 40 years later.

I wish you peace in your sadness for the loss of this fine teacher who added much to my education and that of many other Hiram students during our time there. Teachers like Prof. Gustafson made Hiram special.###imported-begin##Barbara Spielman Passero, Hiram College, '68###imported-end##

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April 15, 2009 at 12:34 AM





“ *Professor Gustafson was one of my first professors when I was at Hiram College. I always found him to be kind, sensitive to the needs of students, caring, open and determined that we did exceptional work. I extend sympathy to the family in your loss of such a dear man however, I pray that you are comforted knowing that he left a powerful legacy and that his life made a difference!*  
*Linda Gaines-Class of 1979*###imported-begin##*Linda Gaines*###imported-end##

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April 14, 2009 at 09:39 PM



“ *I was sorry to learn in my email today about Prof. Gustafson's passing. I send my sympathy to the entire family.*###imported-begin##*Nadine Stafford*###imported-end##

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April 14, 2009 at 07:13 PM



“ *I am so sorry to hear of Professor Gustafson's passing. He is one of the people that makes Hiram College such a great place. Paul taught my first class at Hiram - the freshman colloquium, I still remember reading about Lapplanders! He was so kind to an overwhelmed, homesick freshman and was a good friend and mentor during all my time at Hiram. Always a big smile when I'd see him on campus. I remember Tuck's big smile, too!*

*Beaux Berkeley*  
*Hiram class of '85*  
*Wellington, New Zealand*###imported-begin##*Beaux Berkeley*###imported-end##

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April 14, 2009 at 06:51 PM



“ I am saddened to hear of your loss. "Gus" was one of my favorite professors at Hiram College, often teasing me after a basketball game and certainly providing the rigor of quality instruction. May God bless your family in it's time of loss and bereavement. You all will remain in my thoughts and prayers. Kevin '81##imported-begin##Kevin L. Jackson##imported-end##

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April 14, 2009 at 06:27 PM



“ I was deeply saddened to read about the passing of Paul Gustafson. He was my favorite professor during my years at Hiram College, always kind and caring, which was not necessarily the norm during the late 1960's and early 70's. It truly mattered to him that we understood his lessons, which were often more about life than the textbook in front of us.

As an adult, I returned to Hiram for a few years and was happy to be able to count Paul among my dearest friends. Many of my daughter's baby toys made a move to his home for use by his family and I was happy to pass them to such a kind man.

Please express my heartfelt gratitude for him and his enormous part in my life to his family and friends.

Sincerely,

Linda Mathews (Maxwell, Hiram College grad, '71)##imported-begin##Linda Mathews (Maxwell)##imported-end##

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April 14, 2009 at 04:50 PM



“ As a Sociology major at Hiram College, Class of 1972, I had the wonderful opportunity to learn from Dr. Gustafson. His patience, kindness and caring for his students was a tremendous gift as was his deep knowledge of the subject matter. I am saddened to learn of his passing and send my best wishes and prayers to his family.##imported-begin##Wayne Hill##imported-end##

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April 14, 2009 at 04:44 PM



“ I am so sorry to hear of Paul's passing. Some of my fondest memories of Hiram are those that I spent with your family on Sunday mornings. You truly were my second family. Thanks for being such a wonderful, loving bunch.##imported-begin##Wendy Fox Lichtenwalter##imported-end##

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April 14, 2009 at 04:43 PM



“ Dear Tuck and family: I was saddened to read of Paul's passing. Even tho our paths crossed just a few times when I was in Wooster with mother, I remember the quick smile and pleasant greeting to the both of us. Know that you all are in our thoughts and prayers during this time. Sally and John Young##imported-begin##Sally Griffith Young - Sharon PA##imported-end##

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April 13, 2009 at 05:55 PM