

# Dean Alan Wile

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## EULOGY BY DAVID GARDNER

I'm honored to have been asked by his family to tell Dean's story. To Julia and I, he is our hero!

Their are four areas of his life I want to address. Together they make his story. Separate but intertwined, they all seem important for me to tell you. Some of you will know parts of it, but other areas will enlightening and hopefully help you understand why so many of us wanted to join with his family and celebrating his life. Love God, and Love others!

### Where Dean's story begins:

Pomeroy, Iowa 1957. One of four children born to and raised by Melvin and Benita Wile. His brother passed away several years ago but..His two sisters are here today. Patty and her husband Jerry - Coleen.

Population 646, comparable to Snook, graduating class of 24. Football, baseball, FFA, 4-H...showed animals and was on judging teams - all, the while helping on the family farm. Friends...everyone. Dean was what I call "a friend collector." Church...EVERY WEEK. He graduated High School as a 6'4", 250 lb. All State football player, with plans to take over the family farm. So what did Dean get from this childhood?

### 1. He learned love of country, the USA!

His father pasted away last year at the age 95, he was a fighter pilot in WW2. Flew Dangerous missions over Germany and France. Shot down, he spent 1.5 yrs as a POW, enduring an 86 day, 500 mile death march from Germany to Lucky Strike Camp in France.

Dean respected and looked up to his father. As the last child left at home, can you imagine the conversations that they had that helped shape Dean into the man we all loved. He knew the costs of the freedoms we enjoy... and what it takes to keep them! If you look on his jewelers bench you would always see an American Flag. Come see it, it's still there...I think we are going to leave it there!

I believe his father is what lead to one of our many illegal but necessary interview questions for new hirers that Dean would always ask.....what kind of car do you drive? Asked with his little smirk.."If your driving a Japanese car..I'm not sure you're an American." But always sprinkled with Dean's gracious humor.

### 2. He learned faith and Church....go to church!

He strongly believed we should LIVE a sermon, not just PREACH one. We would hear from our young team...I don't like the music, I don't like the preacher.....Dean's answer...go to church! Every week! Maybe church isn't about you. Not that hard. Love God, love others! This was who he was!

### 3. He learned love of family!

This commitment was real, deep and consistent. With us, he kept this part of his life private. When his family came to town he would keep them to himself. Not sitting around a table talking...working!! He always had projects for them. On the occasion he let me know they were here, Julia and I would always invite them over for dinner. I believe he allowed this to happen...once! His family was HIS family! He loved them dearly!

### 4. And he learned WORK! Hard work!

**HE LIVED IT AND LOVED IT!** His first year out of a High School he started a hog operation with his dad, help run the farm and worked at the feed store...everyday! And remember when I said he was a friend collector... so most evenings he and his many friends "went to town". Work hard, play hard! I honestly don't think he separated the two.

At the age of 19, Dean's life took a life direction change. Dean and three of his buddies were in a car accident. Two of them died, one was injured and recovered, and Dean was paralyzed. I say this was a life direction change, because his life continued! He NEVER let his paralysis and wheel chair define him! He was defined by all that I have told you..love of God, family, others and hard work!

He spent the next 10 months in the MAYO Clinic. 27 major surgeries and untold hours of therapy. His mother, as you guess from what I have said about their family...moved near the hospital for the full ten months. His father came up on weekends. Through all he endured in the hospital, Dean remained Dean. During the last half of his stay...the hospital,would move the new patients facing their new reality as paralyzed...into Dean's room...so that he could impact them positively! Never a complaint, blame or pity.

**STRONG!**



During the last month of his stay the hospital encouraged patients to experience different occupational options based on their limitations. Dean chose jewelry, working with his hands..building something! They then helped him find a school for this trade, based on his mobility.

Paris Junior College, in Paris, Texas...get him out of the snow! Dean didn't like the town of Paris, but he liked and excelled in the program...and he collected more friends. Many are still his friends today! Arnold, one of his classmates called me yesterday from Atlanta. He and Dean had spoken only two weeks ago. A friend collector! One the few things Dean enjoyed while in Paris was the lake outside of town. Having a great time with friends... cold beer and swimming in the lake. That's right...swimming...wheel chair no problem, just roll that sucker down the boat ramp and off you go. And just how do you get a soaked 250lb man in a wheel chair out of the lake... no problem. Just grab a rope tied to a truck and pull his ass up the ramp. No problem!

In April 1981, he graduated as jeweler, a watchmaker and a gemologist. NOW begins the second part of this story. The one y'all are most familiar with:

The Dean, Julia and David show...quite an unusual enduring partnership. I was opening what was called...The Diamond Room 707 for Carl Bussell, next to Charli's on Texas ave. now that location is On the Border. We needed a jeweler so Carl called PJC and they suggest Dean, a smart hard working farm boy from Iowa...in a wheelchair. I said we would love to meet him.

We hit it off immediate and so our journey began. The success we enjoyed was amazing and fun. Two years later, through a sequence of events, Julia and I decided to open our own store and asked Dean if he would like to come with us. With a tremendous leap of faith he left a secure, paying job and joined us in our adventure.

In Dec '83 DG's opened. The real work was just beginning. During the day we took care of customers...at night we made jewelry. You remember that work ethic he was taught.....it kicked in. I thought I was a work alcoholic... but I had met my match...my brother from a different mother!! We kicked butt. I'm sure we average over 60 hrs per week our entire career. And our bond grew deeper and deeper.

But...business, as most of you know, isn't always great. As many in this room remember, in the mid to late 80's we experienced an economic downturn... to us a collapse. As Dean and I would joke...it was as if God came down and took all the cash...and now said...try this for a while... We rode out two bank failures, three landlords and ended up, wrestling with FDIC and the the RTC for over four years. I remember Julia and I meeting with Dean and suggesting he look for a different job. We HAD to ride it out but he didn't. His answer...lets get back to work!!! We're not finished yet!

Dean and I knew we weren't the smartest guys, or the most creative guys... but we were willing to outwork anyone! One crazy partnership! During this time we became family. I remember being over at his home one evening early in our journey. He used his leg braces to stand up. OMG, I saw all 6'4" of him. A monster man, the man he saw! You see, over time with Dean, the chair disappears. I know y'all experienced this too. It was there but it was NOT who he was. You saw his big grin, his huge heart..and you became his friend. I had never experienced anyone like Dean! We loved him...and so did y'all!

I'm pleased to report, evidenced by me standing here...we did make it through. We, together, learned to be thankful for EACH and EVERY customer...but Dean already new this!! He was obviously a great jeweler, actually an amazing assembler, but that is a different talk. More importantly remember I said he was a friend collector. I don't believe Dean ever sold anything...he simply helped his friends!

**Love God, love others.**

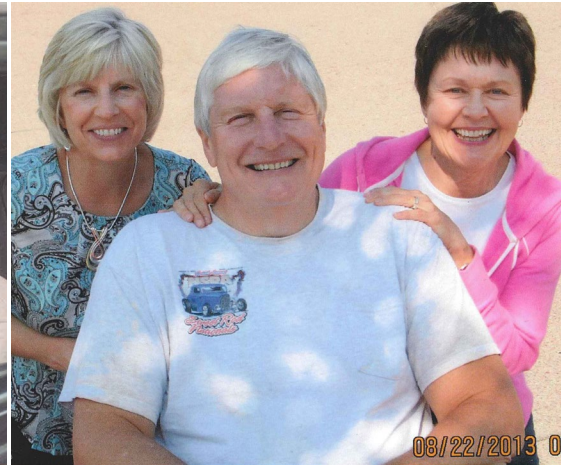
As evidence by your attendance today, he simple become friends with **EVERYONE**, was totally honest and with his work ethic and skill set... would do anything for his friends. Likeminded, Julia, Dean and I, with tons of help and incredible customers or friends, we experienced business and friendship blessing beyond our wildest dreams.

Another blessing of Dean being on our team that I need to tell you about, was his mentoring of young men and woman. We were always building something, tearing something down, doing our own remodeling...always something. These young folks would have opportunity to,work along side Dean and I believe they grew up a more well rounded, self-reliant, can-do adult. He loved them...and they loved him. Big-John, Cody, Tyler, Steve, Erik...the list is huge, and many are here today. Friend collector.

The third area I want share is his passion for cars..and WORKING on cars.. actually, not cars but street rods. This is when you take an older model car and rebuild it into something crazy, beautiful and amazing! The first I remember him acquiring was a '56 Chevy, 2 door. It was beautiful. Already a street rod, he upgraded the wheels, did some improvements and enjoyed it... but I think he got board. He wanted to WORK on them not just own them.

He then bought a Model A. A true project. In his one car garage, attached to his duplex, living next to his good friend Clarence Junek...he built a rod! Took it from an old wreck to a car that could not only keep up with my Vette but he could drive it to Iowa! Heaven had landed!

Time for a new project car!! Next up a 1940 Ford coup. Bigger, more comfortable and cooler!



He soon bought a few acres past the airport and moved “out of town” He enlarged and remodeled the house and then...built a shop. I MEAN A SHOP!! It's almost as big as our store, hydraulic lifts coming out of the ground, every welder and auto tool known to man and room for three or four projects at a time. By this time, he had help start the Bluebonnet Street Rodders Association! A local group of hot-rod enthusiasts. AND, he started traveling around the state and country to small and very large street rod car shows. Some would have over 5,000 cars show up. Now, combine this with his friend-collector personality and you know why Dean has developed deep friendships across the state and nation. As a matter of fact, in two months he is scheduled to receive Lone Star Street Rod Association's Street Rodder of the year award!!

**YOU ARE IN A WHEEL CHAIR!**

Don't you just get amazed??? His great friend Rick Ploeger was telling me how “generous” he was with his shop, talents and time. His quote was that Dean was God's finest. Don't y'all agree? Rarely would I stop by on a Sunday afternoon or Monday and NOT see 3-4 of his buddies working together on a project...his or theirs, drinking beer and watching NASCAR races. Love God, love others!

The fourth and final area I got to tell you about is what happened in the last 8 years. He bought his own farm. Between Carlos and Lola...just down from Yankees. 20 plus acres and the full circle was complete! He grew, cut and bailed hay. I said **HE GREW, CUT AND BAILED HAY!** He bought tractors, cutters, bailers and everything that goes with it!

**YOUR IN A WHEEL CHAIR! Dean lived!**

Big John, a young man that worked with us, was telling me about working with Dean on his farm and they needed to go check on something in the back acres. Let's take the gator says Dean, enthusiastically. How fast will it go. About 50 is Dean's reply. Noticing it didn't have hand controls Big John offers to drive No, just get in. How do you drive it. Like this...picks up his leg and drops it on the gas pedal. Pretty soon they are flying 50 miles per hour across the field! Comes around the bend, oops, got to stop. Picks up his leg and drops on the brake, screeching to a stop. Big John changes his britches and offers to drive back. Not needed says the big guy and he drops the leg again. Living, memories forever!

Every Christmas Eve Dean and I had a tradition. After we delivered the last gift and everyone left for home we had stayed back and had a drink and talked. Having just finished a month of 80 hour weeks, we loved to share some war stories of the season. Usually Julia joined us. For the last five years I asked him if he wanted to keep working. He had an offer from us to retire. He could go do what he wants and we would keep depositing his checks. He always wanted to keep working. We thought he did this because he loved us... he did it because he loved y'all. I hope you can wrap your mind and heart around that! I'm still working on it!

I know Dean hated me to quote verses but forgive me, Dean is not “gone”!

**1 JOHN 2:25** This is exactly what Christ promised: eternal life, real life! If we accept Christ as our savior...this promise is for each of us!

**JOHN 14:1-2** Let not your hearts be troubled, believe in the Father, and believe in Me. In my Father's house there are many rooms, and I go to prepare a place for YOU!

God, one suggestion.....you might want to give our brother Dean a really BIG room, because there are a lot of us that want to come hang out with him.

Want to live an amazing life, follow Dean's example..**Love God, love others!**

