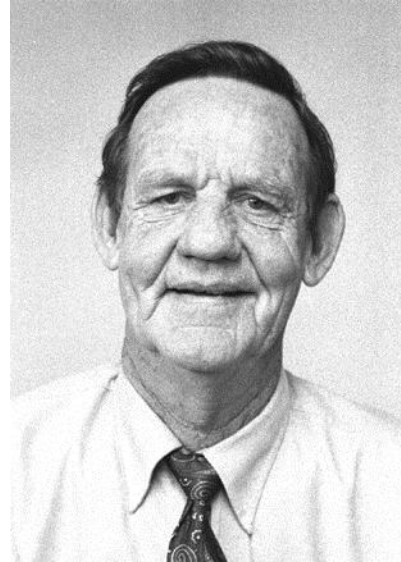


Del Mar College Community Paid Tribute to James F. “Buster” Gillis on Oct. 23, 2003

Family friends invited to attend West Campus event to honor instructor who made ultimate sacrifice

Oct. 24, 2002 is not a day soon forgotten by many Del Mar College faculty, staff and students. On that stormy day, twisters hit Corpus Christi, including the College’s West Campus. One instructor made the ultimate sacrifice. James F. “Buster” Gillis, an adjunct instructor who taught math in the College’s industrial education program, died saving his students when a tornado and debris hit the building where he was teaching.



At 10 a.m. on Thursday, Oct. 23, 2003, the Del Mar College Board of Regents, administrators, faculty, staff and students remembered Gillis with a dedication and several presentations at the Barth Learning Resources Center, located on the West Campus at the end of Boaz Blvd. off Airport Road. The College invited friends of the Gillis family to attend this special tribute, honoring Gillis’ dedication to education and his students.

During the College’s 2003 Convocation, Acting President José Alaniz recognized Gillis’ bravery by noting, “One of our own rose to the challenge and made the ultimate sacrifice. Mr. Buster Gillis lost his life while helping his students get out of harms way. He stood his ground and thought about the safety of his students rather than his own.”

Gillis was teaching students in a computer lab at the center when the storm reached the city. The College’s records showed that 25 students were enrolled in the industrial math course he was teaching last fall.

Gillis started teaching at the College in June 1993. Over the years, the 72-year-old educator taught math at high schools in Rockport-Fulton, Bishop, Vanderbilt and Luling, Texas. From 1968 until 1988, Gillis served as principal for Live Oak Elementary School in Rockport. He also worked as a real estate inspector, examining houses for prospective buyers, between 1988 and 1992. Gillis earned a bachelor’s degree in 1951 and master’s degree in 1956 from Southwest Texas State University.

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