

JEFFREY GILSTRAP

Jeffrey was born on Pearl Harbor Day (Dec 7) in 1988. Almost immediately he showed that he was walking to beat of his own drum. When he was about 9 months old, he learned to get out of the playpen by holding onto our Doberman's collar while the dog backed up, pulling Jeffrey out. No baby lock could stop him. In preschool, the teacher complained about Jeffrey getting into the "child proofed" cabinets. He always seemed smart beyond his years. One day shortly after moving to the AV when Jeffrey was 3y, we were shopping and he wandered one isle over from me. A moment later I hear over the loud speaker, "Attention Shoppers, we have a lost parent. Would Linda Gilstrap please come to the front of the store." There was Jeffrey, hands on his hips, tapping his foot, "Mother, you walked away!" The cashiers were chuckling and told me that he wasn't even afraid, he was annoyed that his mother had gotten lost.

He had a keen logic. One day he stayed home from kindergarten. He went to the sitters while Mom ran errands with the understanding that he was to rest and not go outside. After the other kids got there when school let out, he started nagging to go play. Not getting anywhere with the sitter, he followed her into the kitchen, leaned on the counter with that hand on his hip again and said, "Look at it this way, would my mother have brought me over here where kids are if she didn't mean for me to play with them?"

He challenged rules when he believed they were unfair. He was always friend with the kid no one else wanted to play with. In spite of the trouble he got into, he was reading at a college level by 5th grade. The worse punishment of all was to lose his library card or to have to wait to read the latest Animorph book.

Jeffrey's teen years were difficult as he struggled for independence in a world where adults call the shots. He was very fond of saying that his civil rights were being violated and resented being told what to do. Strangely though, he discovered he could take orders very willingly if he was enjoying himself while he was volunteering at a pet shop cleaning cages and such.

In high school, he joined the wrestling team, successfully ran for class treasurer, and made friends that shared his interest in computers and anime. He met up with fellow card players at AVC and made many friends as a result. He enjoyed playing games for hours at a time.

After he decided he was done with school at least for the time being, he applied to many, many places for work then found out Magic Mountain was hiring. That was a match made in heaven. He'd get work hours before his shift started to ride the rides or swim at Hurricane Harbor.

Jeffrey cared so much for his mom and little brother Steven. He took care of his mom after she had surgery to remove breast cancer, making her tea and rewrapping her bandages.

He took great pleasure in helping his friends inviting them home when they needed a place to stay. He was always available for a talk or whatever they might need. He didn't hold a grudge. He gave people the benefit of the doubt.

Yes, Jeffrey was truly a friend to the end. And the best son I could have asked for. I learned so much from Jeffrey.

Linda