



Melvin "Mel" John Gabel

December 25, 1937 - February 12, 2026

Memorial services for MELVIN "MEL" JOHN GABEL will be held at 1pm Saturday, April 18, 2026, at the first Baptist Church in Torrington. Immediately following the service there will be a celebration of life reception for Melvin at the Pony Express Room. Memorials can be made to the First Baptist Church in Mel's name. The Colyer Funeral Home is in charge of the arrangements and condolences may be sent to www.colyerfuneralhome.com. Mel died peacefully at the Goshen Health care center in Torrington on February 12, 2026, with his loving wife Nita at his side. He was 88 and succumbed to congestive heart failure which plagued him for the last several years of his life. Mel, a Wyomingite through and through who grew up in Worland, was a self-made man. Mel was born a twin on Christmas Day, 1937, in Scottsbluff Nebraska. The family moved to Worland when he was two. His father died when he was young, leaving his mother to raise him, his three older siblings (Herman - who died in a car crash as a teenager, Evelyn, and Hazel) and his twin brother Marvin. Melvin and Marvin were essentially on their own in high school, living together in the family basement home after their mother remarried and moved to be with her new husband. As a youth, Melvin earned money in a variety of ways - setting pins at the local bowling alley, helping out at the drug store, and doing odd jobs for the local funeral parlor (including stashing the Elks Club slot machines in the basement when there was a threat of a raid.) Along the way he earned his Eagle Scout rank and became a member of the Order of the Arrow, a scouting recognition for those with a

"cheerful spirit of service" - a phrase that would come to define his life. At 18 and against family advice, Mel enrolled in Powell Junior College (now Northwest College) to play football, making him the only family member to attend college. He subsequently transferred to the University of Wyoming where he met Nita at the Baptist Student Union. After a brief courtship they married on January 30, 1960. After Mel received his B.A. degree in Education from UW, the couple moved to Glenrock where he taught math and coached football. Following a year of graduate school in San Diego working toward his master's degree the couple moved to Torrington in 1965. He taught high school math at Torrington High School for 32 years, serving as a class sponsor and Prom supervisor for many different classes. He was a lifetime member of the National Education Association and the Wyoming Education Association. Always athletic, he coached wrestling for a time before moving into officiating. His long career as a wrestling and football official led to his induction into the WHSAA Wyoming Sports Officials Association Hall of Fame in 2002. In his post-teaching years, he served as a data collector, traveling around Wyoming and the United States interviewing research study participants. Mel and Nita are Long-time members of First Baptist Church in Torrington, and Mel served in a variety of roles over the years - Sunday school teacher, youth group leader, deacon, trustee, board chair, worship service leader, handyman, etc. He started a program (called The VIP Program) at the church for intellectually disabled people. Every Sunday the bus from Diversified Services, Inc. would bring these lovely people to First Baptist, where Mel and his co-leader would teach them Bible Lessons and sit with them during worship. The sharing of prayer concerns was always an interesting moment in the service. One of Mel's great passions was Camp WYOMBA, a Baptist church camp on Casper Mountain where he served as a counselor and member of the WYOBA Board. Perhaps most impactfully, he supported a scholarship program for First Baptist's youth to pay for a week of camp, encouraging the youth raise 50% of their cost and the scholarship would pay the rest. Mel's "cheerful spirit of service" showed up in many ways.

He was a Master Freemason, serving in various leadership roles at Masonic Lodge #29 in Torrington. He served on the board of Golden Manor Senior Housing for 40 years. He was a member of Kiwanis and Lions clubs. His involvement in Lions was noteworthy, and it meant a great deal to him. As a Lion, Mel worked with the club's sponsorship of Miss Merry Christmas each year. He would always escort her to visit the local Senior Care Centers. In 2015 he received the Lions Clubs International Melvin Jones Award for Dedicated Humanitarian Services. He helped open the Torrington club up to women members and encouraged former students to join. In 2025 Mel was inducted into the Wyoming Lions Club Hall of Fame. In addition to his various civic involvements, Mel enjoyed golf, playing bridge, drinking coffee with his friends, bumping into former students, playing the penny slots, attending his grandchildren's sporting events, and cheering for the Torrington Trail Blazers and Wyoming Cowboys. Perhaps Melvin is best described by one of the condolence messages the family received: "When Mel walked into a room, everyone there was his friend - they just might not know it yet." Whether sitting next to someone on an airplane, waiting for a restaurant table, or talking to an usher at a ballgame, Mel never met a stranger. He was a kind and gentle soul who had the gift of gab and connected easily with everyone. In addition to his wife Nita, Mel is survived by his three children Tim (Lisa), Tom (Patricia Gallivan), and Mary (Rob Willis) as well as his four grandchildren Colby (Dave Moore), Kelsey (Trey Ratliff), Ben, Abby, three great grandchildren (Emma, Ford, Sadie) and many nieces and nephews who loved him. His Legacy is also carried by the thousands of students whose lives he touched.

Previous Events

Celebration of Life

APR **18**. 1:00 PM - 2:00 PM (MT)

First Baptist Church
2241 Main St
Torrington, WY 82240
(307) 532-2760

Tribute Wall

L(

“ *Lisa Lawrence (Kelly) lit a candle in memory of Melvin "Mel" John Gabel*



Lisa Lawrence (Kelly) - April 18 at 03:37 PM

JF

“ *Joe & Diane Fuller lit a candle in memory of Melvin "Mel" John Gabel*



Joe & Diane Fuller - April 18 at 11:33 AM

CA

“ *Cowboy Joe Club & UW Athletics purchased the Rose Remembrance for the family of Melvin "Mel" John Gabel.*



Cowboy Joe Club & UW Athletics - April 17 at 10:09 AM

RN

“ *Royce & Carolyn Nelson lit a candle in memory of Melvin "Mel" John Gabel*



Royce & Carolyn Nelson - April 09 at 11:32 AM

CS

“ Thankful to have had Mel as a godfather. I'll miss you!



Clark Snyder - February 27 at 11:45 AM

KR

“ Kristi Brown Rodekohr lit a candle in memory of Melvin "Mel" Gabel



Kristi Brown Rodekohr - February 22 at 10:13 PM

KH

“ K.J. Hovis lit a candle in memory of Melvin "Mel" Gabel



K.J. Hovis - February 21 at 02:46 PM

BW

“ Mel was my very best friend. Every Sunday at Church, we sat next to each other — never across from one another. This reminded me of the Torrington High School days when he was my math teacher. HaHa.

Really loved him and will see him again with Lord Jesus in heaven.

Bernie Woodruff - February 20 at 03:19 PM

DY

“ *Darin Yates lit a candle in memory of Melvin "Mel" John Gabel*



Darin Yates - February 19 at 02:50 PM

LC

“ *I'm so crushed. Mr.Gable was one of my most favorite teachers and a friend through life. He always greeted everyone with fun and warmth. I'll never forget his laugh too. I will miss him always!! Much love to all of the family!*



Lisa Rutt Collar - February 19 at 02:13 PM

JB

“ *Mr. Gabel was a great teacher and inspiration to me. He always greeted me each morning with a "Hi Jane". My locker was next to his class room and was one of the first people I saw in the morning. As years went on he continued to always acknowledge me and we had a good visits about the goings on in our lives. He took his friendships seriously and took care to help others. Thanks Mel!*



Jane Betschart - February 19 at 11:36 AM

JC

“ Jody Check lit a candle in memory of Melvin
"Mel" John Gabel



Jody Check - February 19 at 11:36 AM

MS

“ Mel was such a great friend!

Miles Seid - February 19 at 07:27 AM

CJ

“ So sorry to hear about this. Mr. Gabel was such a nice man and great teacher. I remember him driving a bunch of us kids to the roller skating rink in Scottsbluff. As we passed through Henry, he started singing "I'm Henry The 8th" My heartfelt condolences to Mary and the rest of his family.

Carla Juarez - February 18 at 09:46 PM

MW

Thank you Carla! I was so embarrassed whenever he did that in front of my friends but it didn't phase him one bit! :)

Mary Willis - February 21 at 04:03 PM

KD

“ Mel was a wonderful person and lucky to have him as a teacher. He was the best math teacher ever. I will miss visiting with him.

Kathryn Davis - February 18 at 09:16 PM

LS

“ *Mr Gable was a great teacher and friend! After graduation whenever we crossed paths he always greeted me with his huge smile and a hug. Then he asked about my family and asked if I still liked his home town of Worland. You will be missed. Prayers for the whole family.*

Lauree Schmetzer - February 18 at 05:44 PM



“ *Ginger Barthel lit a candle in memory of Melvin "Mel" John Gabel*



Ginger Barthel - February 18 at 03:14 PM

JH

“ *Janet Watt Hartwig lit a candle in memory of Melvin "Mel" John Gabel*



janet watt hartwig - February 18 at 12:08 PM

CL

“ *Such an awesome man. Always kind.*



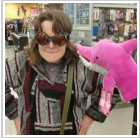
Carol Lenhart - February 18 at 12:07 PM

SW

“ *Shelli Johnson Webster lit a candle in memory of Melvin "Mel" John Gabel*



Shelli Johnson Webster - February 18 at 11:12 AM



“ *Christine Quillen lit a candle in memory of Melvin "Mel" John Gabel*



Christine Quillen - February 18 at 10:28 AM

MM

“ *Mr. Gabel was one of my JH wrestling coaches and my Math teacher every year at THS. He was a great teacher, coach and man. RIP Coach Gabel.*

Michael D. Mitchell - February 18 at 09:23 AM

BH

“ *Bryan Harris lit a candle in memory of Melvin "Mel" John Gabel*



Bryan Harris - February 17 at 09:16 PM

TA

“ Teri Armstrong lit a candle in memory of Melvin "Mel" John Gabel



Teri Armstrong - February 17 at 06:22 PM

MF

“ Mr. Gabel was an amazing math teacher! I remember him saying "let's try this one together. Now you've got it. Do the next one!" He would always greet a person with a smile. Prayers for comfort for the family.

Melodie Foos - February 17 at 05:32 PM

MS

“ Maureen Stull lit a candle in memory of Melvin "Mel" John Gabel



Maureen Stull - February 17 at 04:11 PM



“ Gayle Hascall lit a candle in memory of Melvin "Mel" John Gabel



Gayle Hascall - February 17 at 03:53 PM

DS

“ He was a great class sponsor (1977) and a good friend. He will be missed.

Danni D Stamm - February 17 at 02:36 PM

DS

“ Danni D Stamm lit a candle in memory of Melvin "Mel" John Gabel



Danni D Stamm - February 17 at 02:34 PM

DL

“ Darcy Alexander Lawrence lit a candle in memory of Melvin "Mel" John Gabel

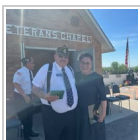


Darcy Alexander Lawrence - February 17 at 01:37 PM

NL

“ Mel was such a good kind soul! My thoughts are with Nita and the kids. Nancy Lozano

Nancy Lozano - February 17 at 01:23 PM



“ Wonderful teacher. Very kind man. He will be missed

Greg Williams - February 17 at 12:49 PM

RN

“ So sorry for your loss. Our thoughts and prayers are with you and your family.



Royce & Carolyn Nelson - February 17 at 12:42 PM

KW

“ Kristy Stall Weglin lit a candle in memory of Melvin "Mel" John Gabel



Kristy Stall Weglin - February 17 at 12:29 PM

PE

“ Pete Elizondo lit a candle in memory of Melvin "Mel" John Gabel



Pete Elizondo - February 17 at 12:12 PM

KY

Mr Gabel was the best teacher, and as everyone has said, he was a very kind man. What a great legacy he leaves. My condolences to his family.

Kay Young - February 19 at 01:50 PM

MH

Mel was the guy on the football refereeing crew that always brought a thermos of coffee and Little Debbie oatmeal marshmallow cakes to share with us on ride to games. His smile and laugh graced every trip. Mel was a friend to all and will be missed.

marv Haiman - February 25 at 12:28 AM

TK

What a special man. Heartfelt condolences to you, Nita, and your family.

Terry Kimbrel - February 28 at 09:43 AM

DC

Thank You Mel for being a friend, a mentor and your deep faith in Jesus Christ. David Cronk

David Cronk - March 02 at 12:14 AM