

14

Staff



Ms. West



Mr. James



Ms. Unruh

Remembering

A Teacher, A Mentor, A Friend

Story & Photos By Stephanie Austin

He loved PGA and the school's unique and flexible schedules, and the students who walked the halls. He gave high fives to everyone he passed. In October of 2019 Thomas Gilbert, a beloved former student teacher, passed away. Mr. Gilbert had been teaching at Fort Collins High School in the fall of 2019. A social studies and history high school teacher, he was always enthusiastic when teaching.

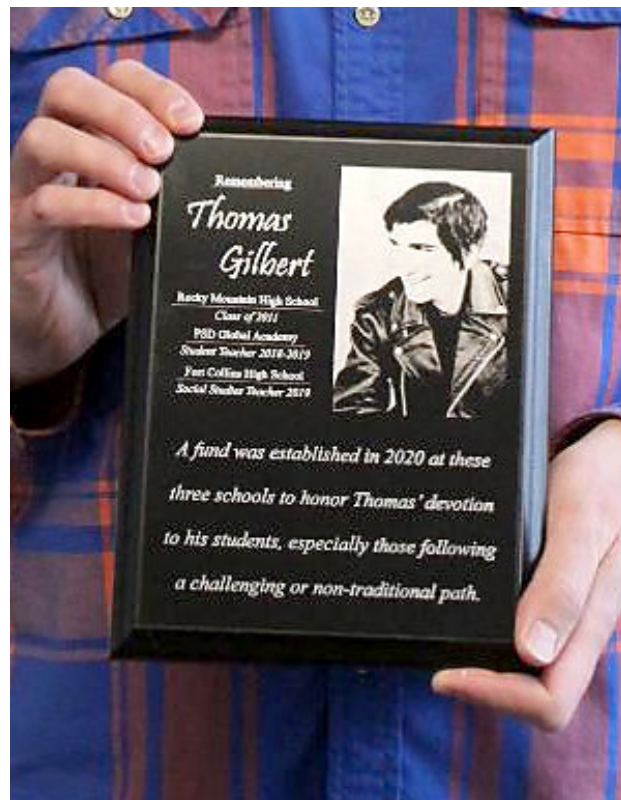
Trevor Presson, 11th, remembered his positive attitude. "He always seemed fun and chill, and excited to be there," he said. "He was so genuine."

Gilbert made a large impact on the PGA community, always smiling and talking with the students and staff around him, including junior Tobi Miller. "To this day I still miss him," he said. "He didn't care if you were different. He was one of a kind, and no one could replace him."

Gilbert's mentor teacher Mr. James thought back on their first encounter. "He came in for an interview with me for student teaching in November of last year," Mr. James said. "I remember thinking, 'Oh wow, he looks very punk rock.' He had an air of confidence about him, and I could tell he would connect with students, especially at PGA."

Gilbert will be greatly missed by his family, friends, and students, but will always be remembered. At the celebration of life held at Avogadro's Number, I had the opportunity to share that he made an impact on me, even when he was only at the school for a semester. When Mr. James informed my class that we were going to have a student teacher, I remember being worried. But that was before we all met Mr. Gilbert. Right after our first conversation, I had a feeling that I wouldn't want to say goodbye to him. And I was right. I will never forget him.

In honor of Mr. Gilbert's "devotion to his students, especially those following a challenging or non-traditional path," a memorial fund has been established by the Gilbert family. Mr. Gilbert's confident and kind energy, and a touch of punk rock, will be left behind. But it will be the passion & personal connections that made him a great friend and teacher.



(Above) Mr. James holds the plaque honoring Mr. Gilbert and the memorial fund. (Below) Mr. Gilbert is pictured in this file photo from the spring of 2019. A graduate of Rocky Mountain High School, Mr. Gilbert student taught at PGA, and had been a history teacher in the fall of 2019 at Fort Collins High.

Q: What is something you lost in 2019?



"Sleep because of my children."
-Ms. Unruh



"My motivation to do school."
-James Messick, 10th

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