



Gene R Rodgers

May 6, 1955 - March 14, 2023

Gene Rodgers, 67, of Austin Texas, passed away peacefully on March 14th after a short illness. Gene was born in Garfield Heights, Ohio, and attended schools in the Berea and Parma school systems. After graduating high school, his plans included moving to and homesteading in Alaska.

After an injury at a school outing at the end of his junior year left him with quadriplegia, his desires to learn and to travel were not dampened. With a little help and a lot of determination, he studied hard during his senior year, and graduated from Valley Forge High School. He attended Cuyahoga Community College, then Kent State University, graduating with a degree in Education. Gene made many wonderful and lifelong friends at KSU.

Knowing that getting about in a climate subject to cold and snow would be impractical, Gene moved to New Mexico, earning an MBA from New Mexico State University.

Settling in Austin, he worked various jobs, mainly to fund his worldwide travels, ultimately visiting 44 countries.

Gene researched and took advantage of a growing number of organizations that help people with disabilities take part in sports and adventures made possible through many types of accommodations. He enjoyed road trips, camping, snow skiing, sailing, scuba diving, skydiving, paragliding and

bungee jumping. Gene joined a trek to the renowned Mount Everest base camp, accompanied by his brother Rob. He produced a jaw dropping music video of his extreme sports activities which can be viewed at: https://youtu.be/xoLgWX4w_-4

Gene's warm and engaging personality and his choice to live life to the fullest after a devastating injury had a positive impact on all those who crossed paths with him. He had a keen sense of humor, typified by quick draw come backs and an ever-present sense of fun. While fiercely independent, he knew how to assemble a team. He set his goals super high and achieved them. Yet, he also appreciated, and was not shy about, acknowledging the accomplishments of those close to him.

Gene left the world a better place than he found it. He worked tirelessly with organizations like ADAPT and the Coalition of Texans with Disabilities dedicating his own life to improving the lives of other people with disabilities. He went as far as being chained to a public bus during a demonstration in Washington D.C., advocating for the passage of the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), demonstrating his courage and advocacy grit. With help from Knowbility, the websites he helped to create met accessibility guidelines. He insisted his book be printed using a font well suited for people with dyslexia and visual impairments.

Gene combined his background as an educator and his creativity, personal charm, and advocacy passion as a television personality and producer. He was one of the first writers and cast members of Art Spark Texas' Actual Lives theatre troop. For over fifteen years, Gene co-hosted and produced with his good friend Dave Dauber the Gene and Dave Show on local public access television, where they reported on SXSW and disability related topics. Among the recorded treasures, Gene left us with a 20-minute interview on We're People First, The Jeff Moyer Show, available on YouTube.

Gene is survived by his brothers Bill, Mike, and Ron, and by sisters Mindy and Pam.

He is predeceased by his parents, Robert and Mary Rodgers, and by brother Rob Rodgers.

A celebration of Gene's life is planned for May 6 starting at 1:00pm at the South Lamar Bridge in Austin followed by a 1:30pm lunch on the Green Mesquite BBQ patio (1400 Barton Springs Road). A memorial gathering for his Cleveland-area family and friends will be held at a later date.

No obituary can ever do him justice. For an in-depth look at his amazing and inspiring life, check out his book, *Awesome by Accident*, on Amazon or at Barnes & Noble. You can visit his website genosplace.org while it is still active.

Gene's family is eternally grateful for all the support he received from so many people in his life including his dedicated attendants Etta and Shirley, his affectionately named Bond girls, Joni and Anne, travel companions, adaptive technology wizards, furniture makers, fellow cooks, medical professionals and so many friends around the world.

To make a difference, please consider donating to the organizations that were important to Geno:

CTD - Coalition of Texans with Disabilities

<https://txdisabilities.salsalabs.org/ctdgeneralfunds/index.html>

ADAPT - American Disabled for Attendant Programs Today

<https://adapt.org/donate/>

Art Spark Texas

<https://www.artsparktx.org/>

Knowbility

<https://knowbility.org/>

Tribute Wall



“ *Gene R Rodgers*

October 05, 2023 at 10:58 AM



“ *Gene R Rodgers*

October 04, 2023 at 06:25 PM



“ *Gene R Rodgers*

September 26, 2023 at 10:57 PM

AM

“ Gene Rodgers was an exceptional man and friend whom I had the privilege of getting to know over the last few months. Gene and I worked together to design products for people with disabilities, and recently, on a podcast promoting his book, *Awesom by Accident*, which will air on *Abilities Radio* in a few days.

Therefore, we were heartbroken to just now learn of his passing, and our prayers and belated condolences are for his family and friends. We hope many people will listen and be touched by his strength and dedication. We will add a fitting tribute to Gene in the podcast, and subsequently make an award in his honor.

Gene Rodgers was truly one-of-a-kind. But really, Gene is in every one of us. He is what we should believe we can be. Therefore, it is my true honor to have known Gene and to count him as a friend and colleague. His memory and courage will be with me forever. Rest in Peace, my dear friend, Gene. Love, Adrienne and your friends at Feeldom

Adrienne Mascho - May 17, 2023 at 02:31 AM

RR

“ Brother Gene rest in peace. I hope to see you on the other side.
Love Ronnie

Ronald Rodgers - March 31, 2023 at 11:08 AM