

## Gilbert F. White 1911—2006

Prior to his death in 2006, Gilbert F. White was Gustafson Distinguished Professor Emeritus of Geography at the University of Colorado and widely recognized as a leader in the world environmental movement. Because of his life-long interest in the problem of flooding, he was known as the “Father of Floodplain Management.” Gilbert recognized that flexible human adaptation to flood hazards, such as removing structures from floodways and opening up floodplains, was potentially a more effective approach to flood disaster reduction than rigid “structural” solutions, such as constructing dams and levees.

Gilbert held and demonstrated a profound Quaker faith. The underlying notion that humans should live in harmony with their environment, coupled with a deep commitment to improving human welfare through social policy, guided his work. His career encompassed not only floods and other natural hazards, but water quality and resource management in developing countries, global environmental change, preservation of arid lands, geographic education, and international cooperation regarding water resources in areas such as the Middle East and the Mekong and Nile river basins.

Gilbert was highly regarded by all who knew him, not only because of his extraordinary work, but also because of his kindness, his respect for each individual he met, and his remarkable integrity.

In the broadest sense, Gilbert promoted understanding of, respect for, and protection of the natural order, which includes inevitable extremes such as floods and other natural hazards. In a word, he championed stewardship—preserving nature and promoting sustainable use and husbandry of the natural resources of the earth. To learn more about Gilbert F. White, visit [www.colorado.edu/hazards/gfw](http://www.colorado.edu/hazards/gfw).

*“Floods are ‘acts of God’, but flood losses are largely acts of man.” GFW*

## Gilbert F. White Memorial Committee Members

- ▶ **Elizabeth Black**—Artist, Community Organizer
- ▶ **David Butler**—Former Senior Editor, Natural Hazards Center, University of Colorado
- ▶ **Sylvia Dane**—Emergency Management and Planning Coordinator, University of Colorado, Boulder, former editor of the Natural Hazards Observer
- ▶ **Marshall Frech**—Director, The Flood Education Project; Producer, “Flash Flood Alley” and “The Water’s Edge”
- ▶ **Lisa Green**—Parks and Recreation Department Representative, City of Boulder
- ▶ **Ann Large**—City Manager’s Office Staff Liaison, City of Boulder
- ▶ **Christian Muller**—Outdoor Stone Sculptor, Boulder Sister City Plaza artist and contractor
- ▶ **Clancy Philipsborn**—GFW student, Certified Floodplain Manager and Hazard Mitigation/Disaster Recovery Consultant
- ▶ **Claire Sheridan**—Gilbert’s surviving spouse
- ▶ **Diane Smith**, CU Natural Hazards Center Representative
- ▶ **Molly Tayer**—Community Facilitator
- ▶ **Alan Taylor**—P.E., CFM, Alan Taylor Consulting, LLC; Floodplain Manager, City of Boulder, Retired
- ▶ **Oakleigh Thorne II**—Environmental Educator, Founder Thorne Ecological Institute
- ▶ **Kathleen Tierney**—Director, CU Natural Hazards Center
- ▶ **Mary White**—Gilbert’s daughter, Eco-Artist
- ▶ **Ken and Ruth Wright**—Gilbert’s friends and colleagues

TO LEARN MORE ABOUT FLOODS IN  
BOULDER PLEASE VISIT

[www.boulderfloods.org](http://www.boulderfloods.org)

*“Each of us should ask what in his teaching and research is helping our fellow men strengthen their capacity to survive in a peaceful world.”*

Gilbert F. White

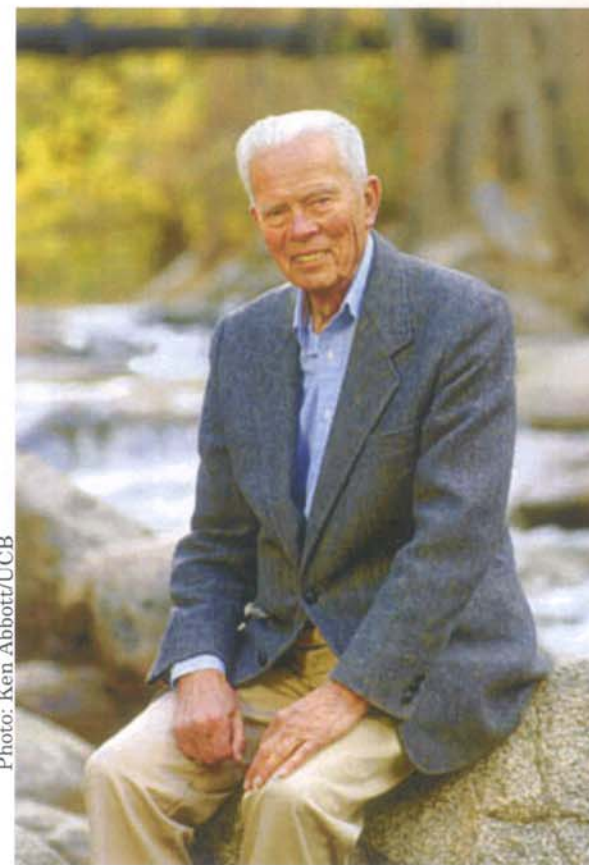


Photo: Ken Abbott/UCB

The Gilbert F. White  
Memorial

# The Gilbert F White Memorial

The Gilbert F. White Memorial Committee was established in 2006, at the request of the Boulder City Council and Boulder City Manager, to design and implement a memorial to Gilbert. The committee is made up of friends, family, colleagues, and students of Gilbert, as well as City staff.

Early on, the committee agreed that Gilbert himself would have wanted a memorial that had some practical and educational use, and the committee decided that a memorial promoting flood hazard education in Boulder would be most appropriate. Here is the resultant plan:

## Incorporate a flood level marker in the memorial.

A flood level marker is a vivid reminder of the powerful force of rushing flood waters. The marker's size will startle both a viewer standing next to it and someone driving across the Broadway Bridge who will be able to see the top of the marker from their car.

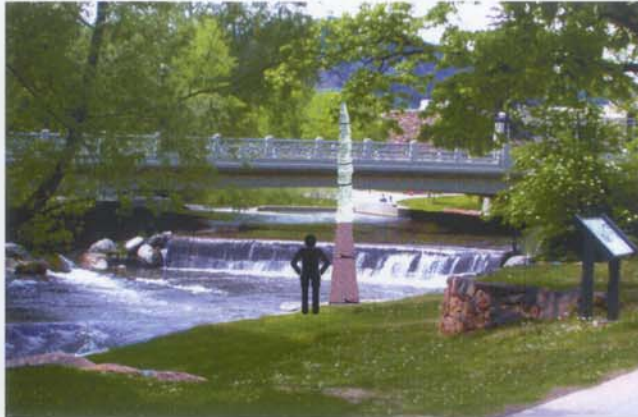
This flood marker was designed by **Mary White**, an eco-artist and Gilbert's daughter, and **Christian Muller**, a local artisan who created Boulder's Sister-City Plaza. It is made of sculpted granite and smoothed recycled transparent jade float glass, which was chosen for the top part of the marker because it reflects light and movement, like water. The stone base is an excellent surface for engraved text and discourages climbing and vandalism.

The marker will be very stable: supported by a central metal column and concrete foundation. LED lights, powered by water or solar energy, will illuminate the core of the glass obelisk.



## Locate the memorial near Broadway and Boulder Creek.

This area is at the nexus of a major transportation corridor, and the major floodway in Boulder. It is also at the apex of the area where the greatest flood damage will occur in Boulder. This high traffic area provides an excellent opportunity to educate large numbers of people.



Preferred location, showing relative size of marker

## Include seating and interpretive signs.



Examples of rock-work and interpretive signs.

The site will provide a comfortable contemplative spot and information about

- ▶ Gilbert F. White
- ▶ the flood hazard in Boulder, and
- ▶ quotations from Gilbert.

**Approximate Cost: \$100,000**  
(Monument, Interpretive Signs, Landscaping & Seating)

## Help Build Gilbert's Memorial!

Your tax-deductible donation to the **Gilbert F. White Memorial Flood Marker Fund** will build a lasting tribute to Gilbert and will educate thousands about flood risk in Boulder.

## Yes! I want to help!

- \$10-\$99—The Swell Donor Level
- \$100—The 100 Year Flood Donor Level
- \$500—The 500 Year Flood Donor Level
- \$1000—The Hurricane Donor Level
- \$5000—The Tsunami Donor Level

Thank you for your generosity!  
All donations are fully tax-deductible.  
Questions? Call Molly Tayer at 303-499-5444 or  
Elizabeth Black at 303-449-7532

Mail this form and check made out to  
"Community Foundation, Gilbert White Memorial  
Fund"

to: The Community Foundation  
1123 Spruce St  
Boulder, CO 80302

The Gilbert F. White  
Memorial