



Aaron Gates

January 16, 1978 - January 21, 2020

Aaron Phillip Gates, 42, of Tulsa, passed away January 21, 2020. He was born January 16, 1978 in Ponca City, OK, the son of Phillip and Marilyn (Raffety) Gates. After completing his home school education and earning honors as a National Merit Scholar, he attended The University of Oklahoma where he earned a Bachelor's degree with a double major in French and English with a history minor. He found his passion for teaching at Oklahoma State University where he graduated with honors with a Bachelors of Secondary Education. He was a member of Phi Beta Kappa, as well as an accomplished pianist. His true love was teaching and that shone through in his love for all of his students.

Throughout the course of his home school education Aaron achieved a mastery of the French language. He went on to develop a deep love and appreciation for France, French culture, and all of the wonderful people he was fortunate enough to have encountered during his travels in France. He used everything he learned through these experiences to enrich the lives of many students, friends and family members.

Aaron is survived by his parents Phillip and Marilyn of Granbury, Texas; brothers Joseph Gates and his wife Jennylynn of Tulsa; and Benjamin Gates, wife Heather and kids Haylen, Gracyn, Samuel and Miriam of Wagoner. He also leaves his maternal grandmother Naomi Raffety of Granbury. Many aunts, uncles, cousins and treasured friends and everyone whose lives he touched also survive him.

A Celebration of Life service will be held on February 23, 2020, 2p.m. at Adventist Fellowship, 15303 E. 21st Street, Tulsa. In lieu of flowers, the family asks that you consider donations to The Khalid Jabara Foundation at socialjusticelibrary.org.

Tribute Wall



“ Aaron Gates

October 23, 2023 at 01:21 AM



“ *If you were to ask me any fun memories from school I'd say the chances are high that it was in Mr. Gates room. Although more than ten years ago now I can still remember the comforting feeling I got in his class, a feeling no other teacher or assortment of kids could ever reproduce. It felt like home, everyday. Learning felt like playing, and playing felt like a different world. I've had several teachers since him, but not a single teacher sticks out in my head like him, and I doubt one will. Thank you for everything*

Zack Powers - September 08, 2023 at 09:47 AM



“ *Mr. Gates was the best teacher I probably had. I just graduated from 5th grade, I remember the classroom we were in. It was the last day and we were signing autographs from our old French teachers and I passed his old classroom and started remembering memories from 1st grade, good memories. My brother would have been in your class last year if you hadn't have have moved schools. Every Mardi-Gras after you left you came and saw us! I miss you Mr. Gates.*

Lorna Fowler - June 18, 2021 at 05:14 PM



“ I found this picture today and it made me think of the memories shared yesterday at Aaron’s service. This was Max’s first day of first grade and Aaron was welcoming all of the kids, even though it was pouring rain outside, cast and everything! Didn’t matter to him - always so fun, rain or shine! Thank you Aaron for pouring your love into both of my kids. Rest In Peace, friend.



Kim Goen - February 24, 2020 at 04:53 PM



“ Mr. Gates was the best teacher I could ever ask for. I was blessed to have him when he was an intern and his first ever class at Eisenhower. If it wasn’t for Mr Gates, I would not be the person I am. He made learning French so enjoyable to where now it became my passion. He is the reason I am pursuing a double major in French and French Education. I hope to be half as good as him, no one could ever compare to the love and joy he gave us daily. Thank you Mr. Gates, for inspiring me, giving me a passion, and loving every kid no matter who they were. You were the best teacher I could ever ask for and I am eternally grateful for you. May you rest easy.

Emily Moshiri - February 23, 2020 at 09:32 PM

LB

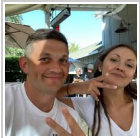
“ *Au revoir petit Patapon, tu nous manques un peu plus chaque jour, nous sommes heureux d'avoir pu t'accueillir de nombreuses fois à la maison, nous aurions aimé le faire encore plus longtemps. Prends soin de toi la haut, soit heureux. Tu seras à jamais dans nos coeur
Charles et Léo*

Léocadie-Jeanne Boudet - February 23, 2020 at 08:52 AM

CC

“ *Aaron changed everything for our kiddo and for us, and we won't ever forget it. He was an incredible role model and the kind of teacher that kids, parents, and other teachers ALL loved. He poured himself into everyone in his class. We were so, so lucky. Love and peace to his family.*

Claire Combs - February 01, 2020 at 10:44 AM



“ *Aaron Gates gave my daughter a reason to go to school everyday when she was in his class. When her mother and I would ask who is your best friend at school she always replied Mr. Gates. Thoughts and prayers to his family and friends. 🙏*

Jonathan Young - January 31, 2020 at 08:06 PM



“ *Peaceful White Lilies Basket was purchased for the family of Aaron Gates.*



January 28, 2020 at 04:39 PM

 Carol
Moshiri

“ I was M. Gates homeroom parent years ago. Emily is now a freshman in college. Aaron was there with Emily as she went to France for a month her fifth grade year. I don't think I would have been able to send her if I had not known Aaron would be there. He was an amazing man and an amazing teacher. He had found his true calling and he has touched the lives of so many children. Emily, because of Aaron, is double majoring in French and French Education. His passion is now becoming her passion. I was blessed to get to know Aaron all those years ago and spent time in that first grade class. Prayers to his family and all the students missing him. Rest In Peace, M. Gates. We will miss you.

Carol Moshiri - January 27, 2020 at 07:57 PM

AC

“ M Gates was a bright light in the lives of everyone he taught. We were blessed to have been part of his tribe. He instilled confidence in our daughter, ignited a love of reading and taught her to be curious about the world around her. He lovingly gave her the nickname Meremere, to which she still gives him credit. She was fortunate to not only have him in 1st grade, but also as a chaperone for 3 weeks in France. As a parent, It was a comfort and relief, knowing he was the one there to ease their (and our) worries and lead them on this amazing adventure. We are eternally grateful to and for Aaron. He will forever be in our hearts and memories. We pray that his family feel the community of EIS family surrounding them in our hearts and prayers.

Amy, Jeff and Meredith Castleberry - January 27, 2020 at 03:32 PM

JK

“ Aaron was a true gem. He was a shining light in the lives all of the students he taught as well as the people he taught with. I taught with Aaron for many years and the grace and care that he took with each student was a sight to see. He treated all of his students with respect and love. I loved being in his classroom working as well as chatting with him on plan time. As a friend he was hilarious and always lived life to the fullest! He always said good morning and checked in own children. My boys loved it when he would come and hug them and tell them to have a great day. My girls loved to work in his classroom before the school year would start. They have such great memories of laughing with him and helping him to get the classroom ready for a new year. He will truly be missed by me and my family. His loss is such a great loss to all, but especially children.



Jennifer Kelly - January 27, 2020 at 11:41 AM

JF

“ M. Gates was a kind, caring, and patient soul. As my son Rhett says, " he was everyone's favorite teacher." He always led by example and the kids followed him like he was the pied piper. How many elementary schools have a chess club that is bursting at the seams? Of course, how many first grade teachers teach all of their "scholars" to play chess? He touched the lives of so many EIS students and I know he will live in their hearts forever. He will be greatly missed.

Jennifer Fultz - January 27, 2020 at 11:35 AM

ME

“ *Monsieur Gates was an absolutely amazing and caring man. The time and effort he had put into teaching me and the other kids in my class about French and anything we asked him really was amazing. His loving, encouraging, and patient attitude towards the children in his classes was inspiring and . I hope to be even half as great a teacher as he was when I start teaching. Rest in peace Monsieur Gates, you will be missed.*

Makayla Ewen - January 26, 2020 at 07:36 PM

ME

And beautiful I meant

Makayla Ewen - January 26, 2020 at 07:36 PM

MG

Thank you, Makayla. As a student you experienced things about Aaron in a special way. You will be a wonderful teacher.

Marilyn Gates - January 26, 2020 at 09:07 PM

DA

“ *Aaron, words cannot express how much you will be missed. You have been my precious friend and neighbor for nearly 10 years! oh how I loved to step out of my apartment on a beautiful spring day or a hot summer evening only to see you out on the patio, our friendship and our love for the many stray cats that hung around (for the tuna you fed them) meant so much to me! you are so beloved by all Aaron and I will never forget you my precious friend! I love you, from your friend Darla!*

Darla - January 26, 2020 at 07:34 PM

MG

Aaron was a lover of animals!

Marilyn Gates - January 26, 2020 at 09:10 PM

MG

“ I am Aaron’s Mama. I love him with a mother’s heart. Thank you all for the beautiful words about Aaron. They have blessed our hearts!

Marilyn Gates - January 26, 2020 at 05:25 PM

AB

I am so sorry for your loss. All three of my children were blessed to have been taught by Mr. Gates. While he is no longer here to teach in a classroom, my prayer is that through those that learned from him he will continue to touch the lives of others. He was truly a gift to the children he taught. Not all teachers 'get' children and how they learn but he most certainly did. To know him was to love him and appreciate him. Please know you and your family are in my prayers.

Alison Brown - January 27, 2020 at 11:50 AM

TF

“ Our hearts are heavy to learn of Mr. Gates' passing. He was kind and inspiring as he introduced his students to language, music, and even hatching chicks. Good speed, Aaron .

The Geary family - January 26, 2020 at 01:03 PM

TF

“ Aaron was such a good teacher for our son who loved him so much. Such a smart man. Such a good pianist. Such a good heart. ❤️

The Cano family - January 25, 2020 at 11:31 PM

JK

“ Aaron was such a bright spot in my day when we worked together at Eisenhower. He will be missed!

Jennifer Kerns - January 25, 2020 at 03:07 PM

SC

“ I never had the honor of meeting Aaron personally , I was familiar was his little bright green car pull up to his parents home, next door, knowing they were enjoying his company greatly! They always had the greatest love and respect for their son and still do, no doubt. Your parents love you so! Rest peacefully with Jesus, Aaron.

Shawn Crosby - January 25, 2020 at 02:39 AM

SC

Aaron, your Mom and Dad spoke so highly of you. Your caring heart and dedication to kiddos. They also spoke of how smart you are. They love you beyond measure!

Shawn Crosby - January 25, 2020 at 02:10 PM



Danielle
Carlohyphen

“ *These tributes to Mr. Gates all reveal a deep admiration for his extraordinary gifts as a teacher and profound gratitude for his humanity. I volunteered in his first grade classroom on a weekly - sometimes on a biweekly - basis for two school years. Even as a French scholar with more than a decade of teaching experience at elite universities, like his first grade students, I always felt inspired in Mr. Gates's classroom. I never ceased to be astonished by his phenomenal linguistic abilities and teaching skills. He had complete mastery of the French language and how to convey sophisticated vocabulary and concepts to his students in a fun and accessible manner; deep cultural knowledge about French history, traditions, and daily life in France; he was always up to date on current events as well as educational debates and curricular changes in France; he also shared his love of French classical and pop music with his students, and taught them to sing many of the traditional songs and "comptines" that kids their age would have been learning in France. Mr. Gates knew how to reach and inspire so many types of learners and kept all his "scholars" engaged in his lessons. While he had very high academic standards, he always took care to educate the whole child. When my daughter was in his classroom, along with the other kids, she learned to play chess and to have what Mr. Gates referred to as an "after you attitude" (as opposed to a "me first attitude"). Over the years we became good friends and he spent special moments with our family attending concerts and performances with us and sharing meals with us at our house. My daughters would always cheer when they saw a bright green car drive by our car, claiming excitedly that it was "Monsieur Gates." We loved Aaron Gates so much. We are so terribly sad that he has left us, but we are grateful to have been among the many fortunate people whose lives he touched and changed for the better.*

Danielle Carlohyphen - January 25, 2020 at 01:34 AM

RW

“ *Mr. Gates was kind and compassionate to his students. He seemed to care for them all, and knew how to handle them with gentle patience. He was a tremendous teacher to our son, and went the extra mile for him. We will always be grateful to have known him.*

Rob Wright - January 24, 2020 at 11:28 PM



“ *Mr. Gates knew his calling when he became a teacher; it was evident in the friendships he made with parents and the respect he received from his students. We all loved him and he went out of his way to get to know each student; he wanted all of them to succeed. As parents, we knew our kids were safe and in a caring place when we dropped them off with Mr. Gates. My son recalled how Mr. Gates went to talk to his kindergarten class to welcome them to first grade. Gunner said they were all so excited to be going to his class.*

I just thought of Mr. Gates a few weeks ago when I was meeting with my son's high school advisor. I shared with him something that Mr. Gates had said about Gunner. After all these years, his words of wisdom stuck with me.

The world was a better place because he was in it; my heart is broken.

He will always be with us and he will never be forgotten.

Rest in peace my friend until we meet again.

Yvette Davis-Onkst - January 24, 2020 at 09:07 PM

GG

“ Mr. Gates made a difference. A big difference. He was so important in my daughter’s life. He delighted in her, and she in him. I will never forget the parent-teacher conference where he told me, “The only problem I ever have with Avé is if I don’t let her answer every single question, when I finally do call on her, she just backs up and answers all the questions I didn’t call on her for!” We laughed together over that, and then I asked him to help me shut that down. 😂😍 Every interaction with him was a delight. He was SUCH a talented educator. I love the respect he gave his students. He called them his “scholars” and treated them like they were the brightest students in the world.... and they adored him right back.

I cannot day enough how much his presence will be missed on this earth. He was a treasure. He made a difference.

He will never be forgotten. ❤️💔

Gayla Gower - January 24, 2020 at 07:50 PM

SA

I totally forgot about the “scholars” thing. I loved that so much ❤️

Sarah - January 24, 2020 at 08:23 PM

SA

“ I’m not sure how to even put my adoration and appreciation for Mr Gates into words. Not only was he an amazing, compassionate, kind and special teacher but he was just an all around great guy. We were fortunate enough to have had 2 kids go through his class and I am forever grateful for the impact he had on our family. My heart sinks every time I realize that his bright light has gone from this world too soon. There are no words or comfort that can really help during these times but I just want his family to know that he was so very, very loved and there are so many of us grieving together.



Sarah - January 24, 2020 at 07:07 PM

LN

“ There are not enough words to express how fortunate our family was to have had this man in our lives. His commitment to his students as individuals, his patience and kindness, his ability to connect made him that once in a lifetime educator and friend. He has such a special place in our family’s heart. Thank you to his family for sharing this beautiful person with us.

Laura New-Morgan - January 24, 2020 at 06:56 PM



Hannah
Middlebrook

“ It is not hyperbole to say the world is a better place because M. Gates was in it. He touched so many lives with his true compassion, his love of teaching, and his singular ability to make each child feel loved and appreciated. Students flourished in his classroom where it was safe to do things differently, move at their own paces, or march to their own beats. M. Gates influenced countless young people and their families, including ours, over the years and we are all better for it. Our family wishes comfort and healing for his family and all who loved him.

Hannah Middlebrook - January 24, 2020 at 06:39 PM



ME

“ Aaron Gates was both mine and my daughters favorite teacher. My daughter loved him because he was laid back and empowering to her. He always took into account for her ADHD, giving her extra to do, sitting on a ball. The accommodations were endless. He told her it was because he was the same. And I loved him because of the same reasons. But most of all because He would calm me down.

You will be missed Aaron Gates for all the good things.

MaryAnn Emmons - January 24, 2020 at 05:02 PM



LA

“ Aaron was an incredible, sweet and pragmatic man who excelled as mentor to his students. He leaves a legacy of caring without walls - a true lesson to us all. I am honored to have worked in the same institution with him. Peace to friends and family.

Leonardo De Andrade - January 24, 2020 at 04:27 PM

KG

“ Mr. Gates was a gift. Both of my kids will tell you he was their favorite. We've been sharing many memories of him over the past few days, and my heart is filled with so much joy remembering and so much sadness at the same time. Aaron, you will be so missed, but always remembered. Thank you for your impact on both of my kids. They are both better for having known you, having been taught by you, and for having loved you. ❤️

Kim Goen - January 24, 2020 at 02:29 PM

CA

“ Mr. Gates was a wonderful teacher and mentor to all of our family . His kindness and patience will always be remembered and will be greatly missed.
The Abraham Family

christy abraham - January 24, 2020 at 01:06 PM

CM

“ Both of my children were lucky enough to have M. Gates for 1st grade. He brought my shy little girl out of her shell and helped her find her voice and 5 years gave my son the gift. He truly saw the potential in every student and helped them shine. As a parent I knew that he was my partner and advocate for my children's education. Every chance I could I tried to say thank you, but it felt woefully inadequate to the level of appreciation I had for his impact in our lives. Our family is better for knowing him... he will always be our superhero.

Cynthia Mooney - January 24, 2020 at 12:59 PM

JS

“ Aaron was an amazing teacher. He was incredible with children, never losing patience and always treating them with respect. He guided them gently and went out of his way to get to know them. He made a huge impact and will be greatly missed.

Jennifer Starr - January 24, 2020 at 12:49 PM

SS

“ I had the privilege of interviewing and hiring Aaron for his first teaching job. He was an amazing teacher who developed great relationships with his students and families. His impact will be felt for many years to come. Oklahoma lost one of its best this past Tuesday! Prayers to His family, friends and students. Sincerely, Stacy Strow and family.

Stacy Strow - January 24, 2020 at 12:48 PM

MB

“ We all learned so much from Aaron Gates. ❤️

Shortly after the start of French 1st grade, Mr. Gates started giving the weekly French spelling test- with the words still on the chalk board! I asked him if that was a mistake. He said no. Mr. Gates went on to explain that the students that knew the material would automatically write out the words never even noticing the answers on the chalk board and the students that were having anxiety about taking a test might still need the extra help, until they become comfortable with their new environment. Mr. Gates was always supporting all of the learning styles in his classroom. As we move forward, let us honor Mr. Gates by respecting our collective differences and supporting everyone in our community.

Mr. Gates always walked backwards when he was walking with his young & sometimes spirited students in the Eisenhower hallways. He was constantly looking to see if one of his students needed extra support. If someone was struggling, worried, or not being respectful of others, Mr. Gates would gently redirect or reassure that student. As we go forward, let us honor Mr. Gates by keeping an eye out for people in our community that may be struggling and may need our support. If you find yourself in need or feeling hopeless, honor Mr. Gates and reach out. We care about each of you. You matter to this community.

Aaron, our friend & teacher, will never be forgotten, his life lessons will always be with us, and he will be forever in our hearts.

#finsforever



Missy Bruns - January 24, 2020 at 12:12 PM

LK

“ Aaron Gates was the best teacher my child ever had. He was warm and compassionate and you could tell how much he cared. May you find peace and happiness, Aaron, in your afterlife. You will be greatly missed. God speed ❤️

LeLanya Kunesh - January 24, 2020 at 11:37 AM



“ M. Gates was the teacher everyone wants for their child. The teacher people remember fondly as their favorite when they are older. He was kind and gentle, funny and creative. He was grace personified. Whether a child was shy and introverted or rowdy and wild, he had a way of guiding each to bloom and believe in their own strengths. Both of my children had the privilege of being his pupils and both met his 100 Books Read Challenge (in French!). I had the opportunity to assist him in the classroom and I was always in awe of his patience and talent with 29 six-year-olds. Merci M. Gates pour tout ce que tu as fait pour ma famille. Tu nous manqueras. Repose en paix, bien-aimé professeur.

Jennifer Jackson-Stowe - January 24, 2020 at 09:22 AM

DN

“ God Bless you Aaron for taking care of David T. You are a wonderful person. Love David and Lauren New

David New - January 23, 2020 at 06:42 PM