



Southern California Viking Club

September 23, 2008

Club Members,

Today I'm writing to share some sad news – Wally Hilgenberg passed away this morning after a battle with Lou Gehrig's disease.

To you club members that had an opportunity to meet Wally at one of our club events – you probably feel as saddened as I do writing this letter. Wally was a dear friend to our club and to me. Wally supported us in many ways – including attending our club dinners in California and Minnesota. To you new members who missed the chance to meet him personally; I suggest you read an article Tim Yotter from the Viking Update wrote on Wally at a Search Ministries breakfast on January 17, 2008. I think this article captured Wally. The article can be found at <http://min.scout.com/2/720898.html>. Another wonderful article was written by Patrick Reusse and can be found at: <http://www.startribune.com/sports/vikings/13852326.html?elr=KArksi8cyaiU9PmP:QiUiacyKUU>.

The last time our club saw Wally was at a dinner in St. Paul when we went back for the 2007 training camp trip. It was at this event that I found out how much Wally loved the Lord and how truly blessed he was as a person. Wally shared with me how important relationships are to him and how blessed he felt he was to have this precious gift from God we refer to as life. What struck me the most was not Wally's love of God and family, but, rather how important it was to him to share with the people he loved how important their relationships meant to him. Wally was one of those precious few that truly understood the teachings of his faith and he made sure to follow those teachings when he built relationships – all relationships. I do not know this for a fact – but I believe if Wally loved you, he had the courage to tell you. Because this is the Wally that I got to know – I know a lot of his teammates are deeply saddened today as well as every member in the Hilgenberg family.

As a club I would like to take this opportunity to pass our prayers and love to the Hilgenberg family and his extended Viking family. In our sorrow we rejoice that Wally is now at peace with our maker – Jesus Christ. Wally is survived by his wife, Mary; four children; and 14 grandchildren.

As a friend and as a fan I would like our club to honor Wally in a way that Wally and his family would be proud of – so here's my thought. Please make your relationships right – if you have a brother and you haven't talked in years, call him and let him know how important he is to you. If you've grown apart from a parent, a sibling, a child – mend that relationship through faith and love. Let the people that are important to you, know you love them and that they are precious to you. It is this basic understanding of love; that I think would honor Wally's memory best.

Goodbye 58 - You are Loved,

Wm. R. Martin
President
Southern California Viking Club