



## MICHAEL HOWERTON

August 21, 1951 - April 12, 2019

The world lost a nice man, a good man, and a knowledgeable man April 12, 2019, at the passing of Michael G. Howerton, 67, of Oshkosh.

Michael --- known through the years as Hawk, Howie, HowleyHawk, Big Bear, Mayor Mike, and, most recently, Papa Mike --- died after a more than 15-year struggle with COPD, specifically emphysema. Despite frequent, severe bouts of shortness of breath, he never lost interest in the lives of the friends he kept around him, never lost the love of his wife, his family, his cats, his garden, and his never-ending quest for knowledge in fields ranging from politics to history to natural history to, most of all, genealogy --- Michael believed he successfully traced his own line all the way back to Charlemagne.

He started the area's first COPD support group, Cope with COPD. But he never allowed himself to be completely defined by his illness and still had time for fun. He was a backgammon player and even more, an avid cribbage player, and loved the Badgers and the Packers. Despite health concerns that worsened dramatically in the last five years, he still managed to organize and participate in The Wisconsin Street Irregulars, a team of spelling wizards that competed annually in the Winnebago County Literacy Council's annual spelling bee fundraiser. Michael was the founder, but he still was a good sport this year when, too sick to participate, he sat out this year's competition, and the team went on to have its best year ever, taking the championship.

Michael was born Aug. 21, 1951, in Carbondale, Ill., and was a graduate of Benton Consolidated High School in Benton, Ill. He moved to Wisconsin in the 1980s, about when, after a lifetime of struggling with alcohol, he achieved absolute sobriety.

He went on to get a bachelor's degree in Human Services from the University of Wisconsin-Oshkosh, and worked in the field at three different group homes in years following. He also managed restaurants for many years off and on throughout his life. He married Rebecca Srubas in July of 2005, and together, they raised a magnificent flower garden and a clutter of cats through the years, including the late Bogie, Buddy, and Lizzy, and currently Skeeter and Arlo. Lizzy and Michael had a special bond, and Michael often would ride around with her on the arm of his motorized wheelchair.

Michael joined and embraced the Catholic faith in the spring of 2008 and later became a "Knight" of Columbus.

He was preceded in death by his father, George (March 2012), his mother, Barbra (1998), and sister, Karen Waller (2010).

He is survived by his wife, Rebecca; two sisters, Janice Corn and Patty Howerton, and a brother, Tom; nephews, Dan Corn, Kevin Corn, Mark Flemming, and David Waller; and a niece, Sherry Corn.

Special thanks to the staff at Affinity Hospice, especially nurse Amy; the staff at Lakeland Care, and caregivers D'Artagnon, Jean, and Massy from Home Helpers for the comfort, support, and, yes, love, they provided for Michael during the last years of his journey.

Funeral services for Mike will be held on Wednesday April 24, at 11:00 AM in St. Raphael's Catholic Church with the Rev. Matt Rappl officiating. Family and friends may call at the church on Wednesday from 9:30 AM until the hour of services.

# Comments

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“ Please accept our sympathy. May you feel the love of God through the prayers, thoughts, and love from the hearts of those who care and share in your time of sorrow. May his soul and the souls of all the faithful departed, through the mercy of God, rest in peace. Amen.

**Deacon Donald Schultz** - April 18, 2019 at 04:15 PM

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“ I had Michael as a client in Spiritual Direction. We did it by Skype since he was homebound. I appreciated most his honesty and acceptance of life as it was happening. Rest in peace, holy, humble man of God!

**Anne Marie Lom** - April 18, 2019 at 03:30 PM