

*As our journey together ends  
We will be at your side through  
The long night vigil  
We will walk with you through  
The valley of lengthening shadows  
Loving and comforting you.  
But as your journey takes a turn  
On the road we've never traveled  
We must let you go  
Thank you for leaving us with memories to  
Mend our broken hearts  
Joy comes in the morning  
Because now you are home.*

Good afternoon everyone and welcome. My name is Katie Anthony Clapp, and I am a funeral director and celebrant, and I am honored to be here today as we tell the story of Michael, G. AMAN, to mourn his loss and to celebrate his legacy.

When someone who we love passes away, it is necessary that we pause; that we come together, as a community, to say this person mattered. This is a safe place where we gather to formally acknowledge that Michael was so important to each of you, either directly or indirectly, and find some comfort in knowing that you do not grieve alone. The communal grief that we experience is an

important part of this journey we are all on together. It is through this grief that we see the universality of the human experience. No matter the details... politics, religion, lifestyle... we all experience love and pain, joy and heartache. As the poet Rumi said, “we are all just walking each other home.” As we walk together on this journey today, we will celebrate Michael’s life and legacy together. On behalf of the family thank you for being here today and showing the family through your presence here today, that they do not walk this road alone.

Michael was a son, a brother, a teacher, a friend, a father, and a husband. We will now hear from some of the people who knew him best, in all the different facets of his life. It’s beautiful really, that in the end what matters is not so much what we did, but who we loved. And death leaves such a big space in our lives. But as Mitch Albom said: Death ends a life, not a relationship. Now, to hear more about those relationship, I would like to invite Michael’s brother Steve to start us off by sharing with us Michael as a brother:

### **The Early Years- By Steve Aman**

Marsha asked me if I would be willing to share a few memories of the early years, growing up with Mike, so here goes.



*Michael as a Baby*

Around the year I was born, 1951, Dad built a house on Ridge Road where the farm was. This house was the source of my earliest memories, of course, and Mike would have been only about 6 or 7 years old when the family moved into the house on “the Ridge”. There were 2 large bedrooms upstairs, and one of them was set up with three single beds for 3 of us boys. When Mom and Dad were thinking about features for their new house, they deviously came up with this device that ended up being cursed endlessly by us boys. Somewhere downstairs was a button, like a doorbell button. At the other end of a wire was a loud buzzer placed conveniently between 2 of the beds, about head height. When it was time for us to get up in the morning for school or for chores on the farm, someone, I imagine with great glee, pushed that damn button downstairs. Needless to say, there was lots of muttering, probably a few cuss words, and covering heads with available pillows on many mornings.

As a kid on the farm, Mike had many opportunities to experiment and try out his



*The Aman Farm*

inventive mind. At one point, Mike decided to build a kayak from scratch. I recall him fashioning the outline of a wooden frame, adding ribs and eventually covering the whole thing in a layer of canvas. Several coats of green paint, and a hand-crafted paddle from some scrap of wood that he found around the farm completed the vessel. Since we lived a short distance from Irondequoit Bay, testing the seaworthiness was quite simple. My memory says that the kayak did indeed float, but it was so unstable that Mike quickly got dunked in the bay.

On some winters there would be acres of smooth ice throughout the peach orchard, like a huge skating rink. Once again, Mike's creativity turned to "what can I build" mode. Wahla, how about an ice boat? It was a great idea, and he did indeed build a sail worthy craft. Except the mast holding the sail would easily snag in the



peach trees. No problem, load it up and take it to Irondequoit Bay. In those years, there were actually a number of ice boats and even cars and trucks would venture out onto the ice. All good!

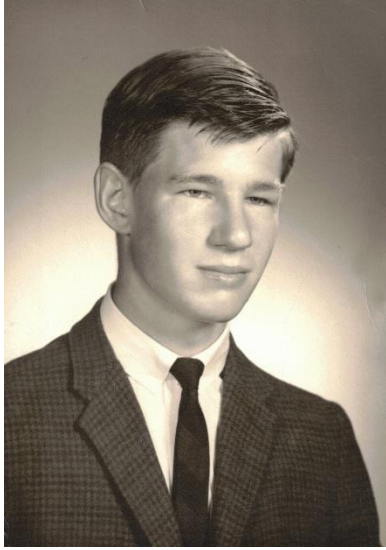
It certainly was true that growing up on a farm meant that there was a multitude of ways to be creative and inventive when we found ourselves with free time, away from

various farm chores. Our Dad was a part of this as well, inspiring us with his taking an old car that was no longer road worthy, cutting off the top and trunk, removing the back seat, and installing a large wooden platform. With this “flatbed” or “jalopy” as we came to call it, we could drive down the space between the rows of peaches and load a hundred full baskets of fresh picked fruit. The jalopy would then be driven to shade near the barn where we would sort through each basket, removing any blemished peaches, making sure the baskets were sufficiently full, and making sure the reddest side of the peach was facing upwards. Handling these peaches necessarily meant that our hands would be covered with a layer of peach fuzz. As a typical and annoying big brother, Mike would occasionally walk past me and nonchalantly rub his hand across the back of my neck. In case you didn’t know, peach fuzz makes one itch like crazy!

The jalopy was a useful tool in other ways as well. Along with lot cars (more on that in a moment) and tractors, the flatbed was one of the ways in which we



kids learned to drive. All of these motorized contraptions used clutches and gears and gas pedals, and we quickly learned the importance of synchronizing the use of



the clutch along with the gear shifter. Failure to do so created a horrible grinding sound from the transmission.

Mike was an ace when it came to driving any of these vehicles. The lot car that I mentioned was another version of an old car that was no longer road worthy, but was fun to drive around the various roadways on the farm. It gave all of us kids a means of learning how to steer and brake and fishtail on the sandy lanes.

One day Mike wanted to impress me. I'm not sure if it was intended to terrify me, or to get me to see his driving skills. At the back of the farm, there was a steep drop off that became a large gully leading down to the bay. Mike got the idea of barreling towards the drop off as fast as the old car would go. At the last possible moment, Mike turned the wheel hard to the right and the rear end of the car fishtailed perilously close to the bank. Somehow, the car reacted as instructed, and with inches to spare, the rear wheels grabbed into the soft sand and we were just as quickly headed in the other direction. Big grin on Mike's face. I thought I was going to die. I'm pretty sure I screamed.

Loudly. After that, I only remember wanting to get out of that car as quickly as possible.

That was not the only brush we had with death or demise. Our Dad had made this simple platform that was quick and easy to put on the back of the tractor. The result was that any of us could put it on the tractor and make a run to gather those last dozen baskets of peaches out in the orchard, or head up to the barn to grab some more empty baskets. We found lots of hidden uses for the platform, including moving human cargo, which usually meant Mike driving while I stood on the platform, hanging on to the rear tractor fender.

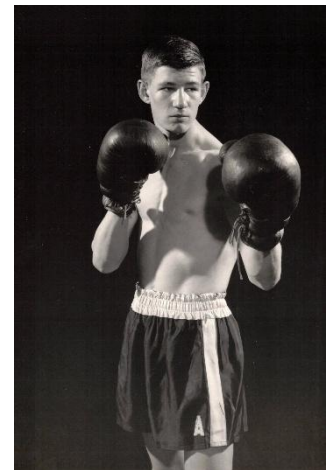
One day we were returning from out back towards the house, Mike at the wheel and me standing behind him. Somehow the revolving rear tire on the right side of the tractor grabbed hold of my right foot and swept it up into the all too narrow space between the fender and the inside of the tire. I shouted at Mike to stop the tractor, and amazingly he did so pretty quickly. I was able to pull my leg out of it's trap with no broken bones, only a few inches of skin scraped off both sides of my calf. I clearly had my guardian angel working overtime that day. In later years when Mike and I would reminisce about various events in our lives, that

incident came up on occasion, and we would both grimace a bit at the memory of what happened versus what might have happened.

I mentioned a gully at the back of the farm. At the other end of this huge gully was a creek that ran from the corner of the farm and wended its way towards Irondequoit Bay. At some point, Mike decided to dam up the creek and create a small pond. He had an ulterior motive, a deeper and more inventive plan. Mike had collected a dozen or so of the empty 2 gallon tin cans that accumulated around the barn and saved them for this

moment. After the dam backed up the water and created this little pond, he had scavenged some boards from somewhere, made a simple platform, and with wire and who knows what else was able to fasten the empty oil cans to the bottom of the raft. I remember Mike somehow coaxing our Mom to go down into that woods

and see Mike's Huck Finn creation. I'm not sure who was more proud, Mom or Mike, when he climbed on his raft and poled around the pond.



Our grandma Nora owned a cottage on Sodus Bay, about an hour drive from home in those days. This is where Mike taught me to fish. I say that a bit tongue in cheek, because what

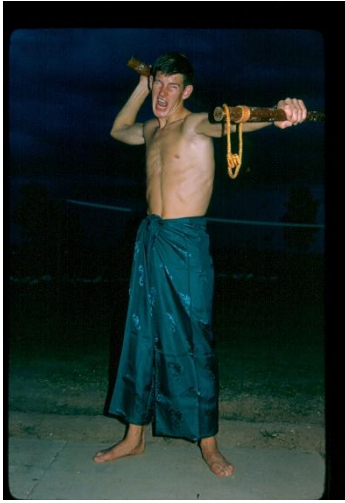
the teaching consisted of was how to put a worm on a hook and dangle it off the dock. It seemed there was always a school of sunfish just waiting to impale themselves on that hook. Mike quickly showed me how to respond to a bite by setting the hook, and it never took long to catch a batch of sunfish. One time we decided to clean them and cook them for supper. I think we spent hours cleaning about 20 sunfish for about 4 ounces of edible fish flesh.

Mike also taught me how to water ski. Now, in our family, our Dad was largely known as the master of teaching folks how to water ski. He loved to do it, and he was good at it. But, because Dad was a fulltime farmer, even our



time at the cottage often meant return trips home to the farm to take care of one timely job or another. So, we had this little wooden framed, canvas covered boat with a 30 horse Seahorse outboard motor on it, and we had a pair of what seemed like huge, wide platform like water skis. While Dad was off doing whatever needed doing on the farm one day, Mike took me out and taught me how to get up on two skis. It started a rivalry among us boys, constantly challenging each other to get better

and do crazier things on the skis. It was one sport that was ingrained into all of us kids, and we all had a blast doing it, whether we were the one being towed behind the boat, or the driver of the boat.



Mike left home to go to the University of Windsor after high school. It was really the end of the early years as I remember them.

It wasn't long after getting his bachelors degree from the University of Windsor, having started on his masters at Illinois, that he was drafted into the army. We were all fortunate that

he didn't get deployed to Viet Nam, but he was stationed in Thailand for most of his service time. Having studied psychology in college, the army in it's unwavering wisdom made him a dental assistant. Aside from a couple of home visits during leave, we didn't really see him until after his discharge from the service.



When Mike returned from serving in the army, he was different. There was a calmer, more serene version of Mike. I don't know what happened to him during that time overseas, but it changed

him in some subtle but important ways. He brought a genuine inquisitiveness to family relationships, and the level of inquiry and wanting to get to know everyone on a deeper level was apparent. I was a newly married man when Mike came home, and he brought Mary and me a beautiful set of Noritake china as a wedding gift. We still have a few pieces that have survived the last 55 years! Far more important and precious was a respect that Mike engaged in with us siblings, as well as with Mom and Dad. One of the greatest gifts that he gave to me personally was him wanting to know what I was up to, and through various lengthy conversations, he embellished that desire to know me better with deep respect. He joined me in ancient ceremony, and he sat in on my men's circle. He wanted to know about my work on the farm as well as my work with the Resilience course I co-developed. Mike set a high example for others to follow by his inquisitiveness and his level of respect. Thank you for that wonderful gift, Mike. You are a blessing and a good brother.



*Steve, Mike and Marty*

## Mike as a Teacher – Cristen Farmer

My name is Cristen Farmer and I was Mike’s graduate student from 2005 until 2011. I would like to give you a sense of what Mike meant to his students and trainees, and I’m going to organize my embarks around three themes: generosity,



*Mike and Grad Students 1992*

selflessness, and fun. Mike was extraordinarily generous. I know now, having been out from under his wing for a while, that the amount of time and attention he put into his interactions with us was not the norm. I often remind my own trainees that “commenting is my love language,” which is a trait I inherited from Mike. He would, without fail, provide us with exquisitely annotated revisions of our work. Some of it was grammar—the man loved to identify a split infinitive— but mostly it was evidence of him having engaged deeply with whatever you were writing about. Those comments were evidence that he cared enough to share his intellect and his time with you, just because it would make something that you cared about better. That attitude is probably a big reason why he was such a successful collaborator. By the time I arrived at OSU, most of Mike’s academic work was in the context of big multi-site studies that he

led with Gene Arnold and several others here today. Through this work, he helped to spearhead methods around doing clinical trials with children who have developmental disabilities. He worked so hard to improve the lives of children and their families, and doing good science that would benefit them was the only goal. He was not concerned with his own star—though it was considerable—I bask in this light when people are impressed that I trained with him! His selflessness was always on display, and I hope I’m able to embody that lesson in my own life.

Finally, I want to talk about fun. We had so much fun in our suite in the Nisonger Center—it was a few rooms



*Dr. Aman with Grad Students 2012*

surrounding a common area where

we ate lunch and had meetings. The most emblematic story I can share is the time Mike allowed us to get an office pet. Krystina Wilson, a

research coordinator, and I somehow convinced Mike that the experience of children participating in our studies would be enhanced with an office pet. I don’t know why on earth Mike approved this, though I’m sure Krystina and I bothered him about it incessantly, and I can’t imagine that any of the building powers that be approved it. But we did, in fact, procure an office pet—a gerbil that we named Miek, after the way Mike persistently signed



*Not Miek*

his emails, always transposing a few letters. Every afternoon, we put Miek in his plastic ball, and we'd hear the plasticity clink as Miek explored the suite, running into table legs and doorframes. And every afternoon, we'd hear a more dramatic clink, followed by Mike's voice exclaiming, "that damn rodent!" Because every afternoon, zooming out of his office to the bathroom or the fax machine or whatever, Mike would kick Miek. We had so much fun, and I am so grateful to his family for sharing Mike with us. I want you to know that I carry him with me every day, and his huge impact on the lives of people with disabilities will continue through all of the students and trainees who he mentored.

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### **Mike as a Colleague and Friend - Luc LeCavalier**

Hello friends. It's an honor to be here. As sad as I feel, as sad as we have all felt, it's great to be able to reunite to celebrate a great man, a great friend, a great colleague. I will talk about Mike as a colleague. I want to talk about him professionally, although he

was much more than a colleague for me – he was a mentor and friend.

For those of you who do not know much about academia, I can tell you that it's an amazing world, it's a competitive world, its challenging, but rewarding. It's an environment in which Mike excelled. He did so for a long time, and that's difficult to do. It takes discipline, intelligence, skill, and a lot of hard work. Mike won millions of dollars in grants, he published 100s of scientific articles, Mike was known around the world. As an example, one of the instruments he developed to measure behavior problems was translated in dozens of languages and is used around the world.

Mike was a founding member of the Autism RUPP along with some of the most influential researchers in the world. This group went on to conduct several clinical trials that had major influence on the field. Mike's achievements and contributions to the field of developmental disabilities have been recognized by several organizations including the American Psychological Association and the American Association on Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities.



I could go on and on about his achievements but that's not what this is about. Related to this, and much more important than all of this in my opinion, is the impact he had on the people. Mike was humble and kind. Kind to everyone, all the time. Study coordinators, students, colleagues. He really cared about the students. He was generous. Generous with his time. He was the type of collaborator that would do the hard thing – not delegate it. He's the guy you want to be in the foxhole with.

I shared many laughs with Mike. I don't always know if he did it on purpose, which made it even better. Many layers to it. Went from terms like meeting "fortnightly" to expressions like "getting you knockers in a twist." There was a time when a group of us (5) were meeting daily to talk about how we could influence the search from college of medicine for a new Center Director (our boss). He gave us the nickname the "the vigilantes" [a member of



a self-appointed group of citizens who undertake law enforcement in their community without legal authority, typically because the legal agencies are thought to be inadequate." I still laugh

when I think of a time where a dean or someone important came

to talk to us at a faculty meeting. The guy shows up with long shoes, shirt not completely tucked in, a large tie, crooked, and believe or not something around his mouth like he had just finished eating a donut or something. Mike turns around to me and whispers and says “don’t you think he looks like a clown.”

I saw Mike act in tough situations. When you’re alone with someone and you see them deal with a dilemma or a conflict – be it clinical or political – that you see what they are made of. Mike always did the right thing. he was always a class act in the process.

Mike changed many lives through his interactions, teachings, and work. The lives of professionals, clinicians, students, adult and



*Retirement Gathering December 2012*

child patients. I am one such example. I would not have moved to Ohio had it not been for him. He played a big role in the recruitment process. And what a privilege that was. I still think to myself, how lucky is this guy from small town in Quebec to have had an internationally recognized scholar and gentleman as a mentor.

My favorite memories are really when we had lunch together and talked about science and life. We did that 2-3 times a week for about 10 years. We obviously talked about science. He got it, he was a pragmatist. Excellent about seeing the bottom line. But we also talked about our families, the buckeyes, and baseball. We both enjoyed baseball. It was wonderful. Marsha and Mike invited me in their home many times. Was very kind. They did that with many others too.

And with all of that, as sad as it was for me to witness Mike's degenerating health and passing, I remember fondly many of our experiences, and like many of you, I feel very fortunate to have had him as a part of my life. Thanks for the opportunity to speak.

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### **Mike as a Father – Chris Aman**

Dad had a number of places that were really special to him. New Zealand was a special place, with its beaches and forests and charming people. His new home in Clinton was, with family nearby and towering trees and great sunsets. One of those places that stands out to me in particular was our family cabin in Greenwood.



*Mike at Greenwood 2010*

Over the years the extended Aman family has owned several cabins in the woods north of the town of Greenwood. Greenwood is a sleepy little village that nestles in the foothills of the Allegehneys of southern New York. The cabin that was in the family when I started going lies up a backroad, followed by a dirt



road, followed by a wood foot bridge. A creek trickles below and stands of oaks sway above. And over the years, that cabin became really central to my time with Dad, and reflecting back, it also serves as a lens into the

man Dad was. So, I'm going take the time today to share with you some of my experiences at the Cabin with Dad that I'll always treasure.

Family and tradition were very important to Dad, and part of that was sharing the deep connection the Amans' had with the Greenwood area. I was introduced to it the second summer we moved to the US, in 1988. I remember dad leading us up Rock Creek, guiding us up the waterfalls, and explaining the long family history behind the camps that lined the stream. He told stories of his brothers and cousins fishing the waters, adventures, cookouts, and friends joining the family in the fall to hunt deer. He loved passing on the skills he learned growing up, and as we got older,

he took pride in showing us the ins and outs of archery and marksmanship at our makeshift shooting range, starting campfires, and navigating the woods and streams.

As I grew older still, I came to appreciate Dad's skill as a handyman. The cabin is in constant need of upkeep. And Dad was always one to address problems when he ran into them, so he was



constantly making little fixes. He was a good carpenter. He could do plumbing. He could even fix a broken window. And over the years, I learned a lot from him. Eventually he, along with the rest of the cabin membership, took on the biggest renovation in the cabin's history, rebuilding the bathroom. Dad threw himself into the task with the same focus and enthusiasm he always had, and we spent many weeks planning and staging and making trips to the cabin to work on the expansion. Dad was as proficient with a miter saw or a hammer as he was with a scientific study, and his knowledge and experience were a big part of making that renovation a success.

We spent the better part of four years working on that expansion, and it was during that process that I had the opportunity to bond with dad not just as father and son, but as



peers and as friends. We spent many nights talking on the phone or the back porch about how we were going to tackle challenges, and great hours on the road chatting about wherever the conversation took us. And I'm so glad for that, because Dad was a great guy. He was thoughtful and generous, supporting and wise and treated everyone he met with respect. He had a great, dry sense of humor but, but also loved to give folks a gentle ribbing. He was someone you could have a serious conversation about a tough topic with, or just spend quite time with without saying much, just enjoying each other's company. Those memories of Dad's skill, work ethic, and companionship will stay with me forever.

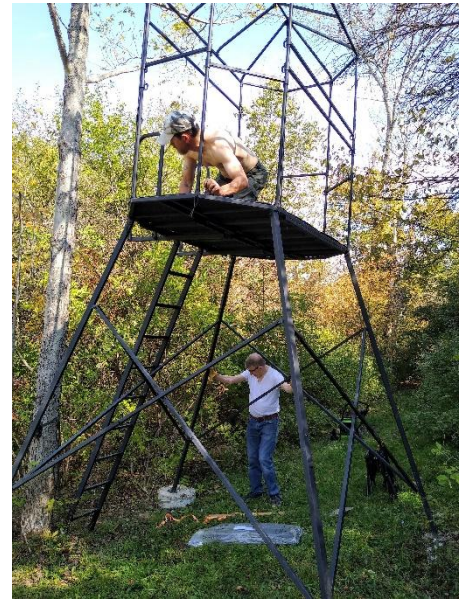
Dad had always a sportsman too, and hunting seasons at the cabin might have been my favorite times to spend with him. Dad hunted small game as a youth, and when I started hunting at Greenwood after I finished college it inspired Dad to revisit those roots. Our early forays into deer hunting weren't tremendously successful as far as harvesting deer went, but I did get to



experience Dad's love of the outdoors, and his love of the bonds with the friends and family that he enjoyed during that season. Those trips were another example of those connections with family and history being so important to Dad.

Our last trip to the cabin was in November of 2024 for the deer gun season. Dad was already showing signs of what we would later find out was his tumor's resurgence.

In the afternoons I helped him up to the blind overlooking our food plot, and we enjoyed our last hunts together. The first day, he had an opportunity on a nice doe, but when he went to shoot, the rifle went "click" . Unfortunately, we had miscommunicated about the status of his gun, and the sound of a firing pin falling on an empty chamber made a very distinct sound that the deer didn't like much.



But getting a deer was always just a small part of the these trips for Dad and he just chuckled about it, talking about how it would be a good story to tell people later on. Fortunately, I got a small buck a few days later, and we got to drive home with a full cooler, laughing about the one that got away. About two months later, we got Dad's last diagnosis. We spent his last year together



as much as we could, reminiscing about the cabin, grilling those back straps and venison burgers on the back porch in the sunset, and making the best of the time we had.

In a couple of months I'll be back at the cabin with Mom and Stephen, taking some of Dad's ashes up to that hunting spot. It will be a tough time of reflection I'm sure, and we'll be thinking of all those things that I saw in Dad every time I came up to the cabin with him. We'll let him go there, among the wild apple trees and oaks, the fields and the stream. There is a permanence to that land; regardless of the turmoil in the world, that small town stays the same, those creeks still trickle and those oaks still sway. And there is a permanence to the mark Dad left among us. In his work, in his kindness and humility, and the role he played in all our lives. A long time from now, those oaks will still be swaying at Greenwood, and a part of dad will still be there among them. And a part of him will still be with us too.

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### **Mike as a Partner and Husband – Marsha Aman**

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I've struggled with this eulogy for weeks. I've gone to bed thinking

about it; I've dreamed about it, and I wake up thinking about it. Mike would not be happy with me! We met more than 50 years ago when I had just turned 22. He is so much a part of who I am that losing him is like losing part of myself. In a sense his story is our story. So, that's where I'll begin.



I had just graduated from university and was working as a temp at the University of Illinois. My first posting that summer was a two-week assignment at the Children's Research Center where Mike was finishing his M.A. We spoke a time or two, and I thought he was cute but I don't remember much more. Much to my surprise, however, he phoned after I left to ask me out.

That first date led to another, and we were soon seeing each other 3-4 times a week. I quickly learned that he was leaving for New Zealand at the end of the summer to set up a behavioral lab in the Psychiatry Department of the new Auckland Medical School. He told me about his new job and his hopes for the future, about his family, and about the time he spent in the US Army where he served as a dental assistant. Again, my memories are vague about what we did all summer, but I do remember sitting one evening

on the quadrangle at the university as he talked about his family and thinking that he was the kind of person I would want to marry someday. To say I was captivated is probably an understatement.

The summer ended far too soon, and on our last evening together, Mike suggested that I join him in Auckland when I finished my internship. I have no idea how long Mike might have thought about this idea or whether it was a sudden impulse, but I promised to consider it. During the next six months, we exchanged 2-3 letters a week, and Mike sent me the occasional gift. What began as a suggestion became a possibility and then a reality when I flew to New Zealand late the following March with \$400 in my pocket and a one-way return ticket as far as Fiji. I had complete faith in Mike's promises and never once doubted that everything would work out.



Upon my arrival, we picked up where we had left off, and it was during this period in our lives that I got to know the fun-loving, adventurous side of Mike. Everything was new, and many familiar things were different. The washing machine was a wringer machine in a shed outside, and traffic drove on the left. I couldn't drive Mike's 1957 Morris Minor because the seat wasn't adjustable, and I was too short to push in the clutch all the way.

But we both learned to adapt to these relatively minor inconveniences.

Night life was limited, but recreational opportunities abounded. On weekends we explored the many beaches, rode ferries to gulf



islands and the North Shore, visited the geothermal pools, and occasionally went to the horse races. We went camping several times in a borrowed tent. When the weather didn't cooperate, we would often spend time in Mike's lab. It was in the basement of an ancient house next to the Med School that wasn't fully finished. Mike covered the dirt walls with fabric and

programmed studies using relay equipment because computers weren't yet available. He would patiently explain what he was working on, and I helped where I could.

Christmas in NZ coincides with summer and the school holidays, and at that time the country pretty well shut down for three weeks. We took advantage of the lull to travel from the far north of North Island to the far south of South Island. By the time we ended our stay in NZ, we had both come to love this magical country. Unfortunately, our working holiday visas were time

limited, and after 18 months the government refused to renew Mike's.



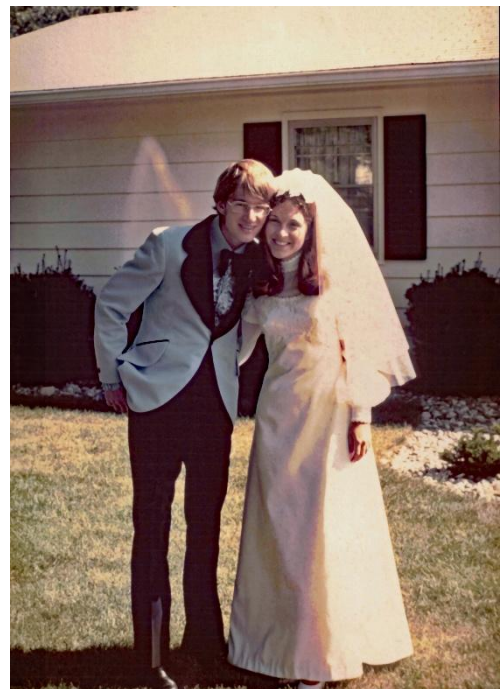
I had learned by then that Mike loved a good adventure, and he wasn't quite finished with this one. We were friendly with several couples who had traveled overland on their way from

Europe and Canada to New Zealand. Mike decided that we should do the same in reverse. He was eager to show me Thailand where he had been based for one year of his military service. It took him time to persuade me this was a good idea. I was far more worried about all that could go wrong and how much it would cost, but in the end he succeeded. We made our way from Australia, to Bali, on to Singapore, then overland by bus and train through Malaysia to Bangkok. We spent a month in Thailand before moving on to Hong Kong, and then Taiwan.

Yes, things did go wrong, and there were times I gladly would have gone straight home. By the half-way point in our journey, I couldn't face one more breakfast of fried rice, so Mike found a restaurant that claimed to serve hard cooked eggs. They sounded perfect so we both ordered two. What we each received instead were two glasses filled with eggs that were nearly uncooked. I was

absolutely crestfallen and close to tears when the waiter rushed over to see what was wrong. Mike graciously ordered fried rice for me then proceeded to down all four eggs himself! When we finally reached the US again, however, I had to thank Mike for pushing me to agree to the trip. We experienced far more acts of kindness during our travels than unpleasantness, and we always tried to show the same kindness to our overseas visitors.

Returning to the US was quite a culture shock after being away for such a long time, especially after Mike took a job in Los Angeles. There was a huge difference between the brown hills and smog of LA and the lush greenery and blue skies of New Zealand. Mike wasn't excited about his job, but we wanted to get married and it seemed to be the only one on offer.



When his boss at the Medical School, John Werry, passed through LA in the fall of 1974 and offered Mike his old job back plus the opportunity to work on his Ph.D., it didn't take us long to decide to leave LA. So, in July 1975 we shipped our few belongings to Auckland, drove east to visit our families, and then flew back to New Zealand with our newly minted permanent resident visas.

This is when Mike truly began his professional career. During the next 12 years Mike's passion for research blossomed. John encouraged Mike to design his own studies, to seek out



sources of funding, supported Mike's travel back to the US, and much more. Both John and his mentor in Illinois modeled all of the characteristics of the ideal researcher: curiosity, integrity, and adherence to the scientific method. Mike had not reflected until last summer when John died just how much Mike's approach to working independently as

a researcher and as a mentor for his students and younger faculty was shaped by John. It was during this time, too, that John introduced Mike to Nirbhay Singh who coauthored the Aberrant Behavior Checklist. This has gone on to be translated into 43 languages and dialects and is used throughout the world, an accomplishment of which Mike was justly proud. Ken Gadow told me recently about a gathering of fellow graduates of the Children's Research Center. Mike was asked how he wanted to be remembered when he retired. Mike replied that he would like to be thought of as having done yeoman's work – that is to have worked diligently as part of a team to accomplish something of value. He succeeded brilliantly.



Both of our sons were born during this period. Of necessity Mike was very much a hands-on father.

Without our mothers to call upon for help, we were forced to become entirely self-reliant. Our marriage became a true partnership in all that we did. Mike was asked once who wore the pants in our family. He responded that we each got a leg. Awkward at times, yes, but we made it work. He never balked at taking something on from changing diapers to bathing tired toddlers, and reading bedtime stories. He loved his sons unconditionally and was always there when they needed him (even though it may not have always seemed that way to them).

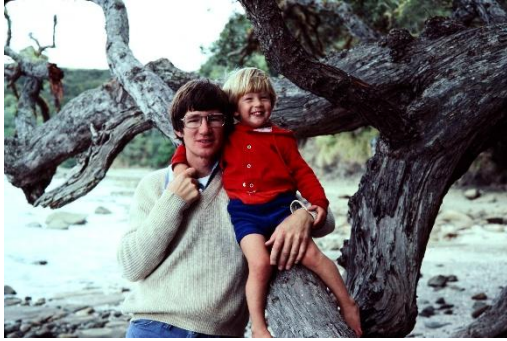


We all came to share Mike's love of the great outdoors. In New Zealand we hiked the many trails surrounding Auckland that seemed like primeval forests with the many tree ferns we found



there. The beaches offered attractions both at high tide or low tide, winter or summer, east coast or west. Each had its own unique appeal. We camped until Chris and

Stephen arrived, but then switched to staying in small cabins at a campground an hour's drive north of Auckland. They were just feet from the high tide line and offered more space than our little tent. We spent many a vacation there until we left Auckland for the last time. Since returning to the US, the family cabin of which



Chris spoke became a regular destination. Ten years ago, we purchased three acres of land adjacent to the cabin, and Mike and I spent many happy hours there

clearing brush, hiking the hills, and enjoying a campfire each night. It never felt like work when we were together.

Mike definitely was an extrovert and enjoyed any kind of social gathering, especially the annual Aman Pig Roast. I don't believe that we ever missed one after we returned to the US permanently.

Mike happily provided pizza for the Friday night welcome for many years to relieve the hosts of having to provide snacks. He

loved visiting with his nieces and nephews and their children to learn

what interested them. He participated enthusiastically in all of the silly games, trivia contests, and hay rides. In 2023 after life



opened up again following Covid, he almost single-handedly organized one last pig roast so that we could remember nearly 40 years of reunions and the people we lost during that time.

Most of all, I will miss the big heart Mike often wore on his sleeve.

When we were attending the wedding reception for niece

Jennifer, Mike and I were dancing when he saw Lenore, widow of Mike's oldest brother, standing off to the side. Mike impulsively

grabbed her, pulled her into our little circle, and the three of us swayed together for the remainder of the dance. And when Chris and I left the dance



floor after our mother-son dance at his wedding, tears of happiness were streaming down Mike's cheeks unabashedly.

Mike's terminal diagnosis came as a shock to all of us. He was sad about what he would lose – about the trips we wanted to take and the plans we had for our new home – and he worried constantly about leaving me alone. However, we tried not to dwell on that.

Instead, Mike and I looked at photo albums and reminisced often about the wonderful life we had together, how lucky we were to have found each other, and about the wonderful people we met along the way. We sat outside when the weather permitted and

enjoyed watching the squirrels and listening to the birds and farm animals. He greatly enjoyed visits and phone calls from friends and relatives. Mike was so grateful to Stephen and Chris for their love and help during his last months and for Crystal, Jake, and Natalie who also helped in so many ways. I would not have been able to keep Mike at home without their assistance and that of a wonderful hospice team. I hope you know how thankful Mike was to have such a loving, kind family.



At the end it seemed that the only thing left of the man I met in 1972 was his big heart, and that was more than enough.

Song: “What a Wonderful World” by Louis Armstrong

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