



Michael Donald LeBlanc

June 29, 1944 - July 3, 2022

Mike passed away peacefully on July 3, 2022. He lived a long, adventurous life filled with international travel and a passion for writing short stories and poetry describing the many places he called home. His sense of freedom began with living away from home to attend Our Lady of Lourdes High School in River Rouge in 1962. Grandmother (Mimi) opened her home to Mike and siblings Pam and Pat for their high school years. It was there that he formed lifelong friendships. Mike played football and was on a local rowing team. After graduation Mike hopped on a train to move to Chicago. As Dad was a railroad conductor, he and his nine siblings had free passes. Mike's first job was working as a bank teller. Soon, life in the big city was interrupted by a draft notice from the U.S. Army. After basic training Mike was stationed in Italy followed by a tour in South Korea during the Vietnam war era. Mike continued his lust for travel as he got a BA at Northern Michigan University and a Master's in Creative Writing at Western Michigan. He used his love of exploring the world with its many culinary traditions and began working as a chef in Chicago. Then he was in the Upper Peninsula where he first saw the film *Brokeback Mountain*. Drawn by the beauty of the mountains Mike hopped on a bus to the West. In Montana he met cowboys and lived on a working ranch. Then it was St. Petersburg, St. Louis, Missouri and San Diego. With each move Mike made sure he had access to his VA healthcare services. In retirement he was approved for full Military disability and returned to the Detroit Metro area to be with family. He is preceded in death by his parents

Bernadette Marie LeBlanc (St. Amant) and Donald Eli LeBlanc, siblings Jeff LeBlanc, Paul LeBlanc and Susan Karkoski. He's survived by Pam, Patrick, Ralph, Joanne, Jerry LeBlanc and Mary (Bill) Corbett. Mike is beloved by many nieces, nephews and cousins. No service is planned at this time. Mike's family is proud that he will be interred at Arlington National Cemetery. Arrangements entrusted with Vermeulen-Sajewski Funeral Home, Westland. To share a memory please use the Share a Memory tab on this web page.

Tribute Wall



“ *Michael Donald LeBlanc*

December 07, 2023 at 05:11 AM



“ *I met Mike Mike at the beaver creek saloon in Sheridan Wyoming we became friends then he moved to the windy city.then he brought me a plane ticket to come visits thanks for youre kindness youre friend Paul lacek*

Paul lacek - June 14, 2023 at 05:09 PM

RL

“Mike was my “oldest brother “ being four years my senior. He was in fact very bright and possessing a wicked and wry sense of humor. He was a “storyteller” from the youngest age and quite the family historian. I wasn’t always sure that I was getting the “straight dope” from him and he later acknowledged to me: “Ok, I filled in the blank spaces sometimes.... Nobody wants to listen to a dull story!” Mike was not ambitious in the standard sense. He desired neither “career” nor possessions. He may be the only person that I ever knew of his generation who declined to get a driver’s license. He wanted to and did simply “live life to experience life”.... sort of like Hemingway, perhaps a bit more Proust. Mike was social and enjoyed “interesting company” and a “good time”. He dealt with things as they came up....with intelligence, humor, some disdain, and a unique “elan”....certainly did not want to follow too many rules and most definitely was not concerned about meeting anyone else’s expectations...”You live your life and let me live mine”.

Anyone who really knew Mike would attest that he was, like our Dad, a kind man. He thought deeply and had tremendous skills at expressing himself verbally and in writing. He was quick to engage people and equally quick to sum them up and form his impression of them. On the most essential level he was really a philosopher. Mike was very proud of his military service and will rest eternally at Arlington.

Mike valued honesty and “the plain facts of the matter “ and had a keen awareness of any pretense or posturing. He called a spade a spade. He would not shy away from acknowledging his lifelong struggle with alcohol addiction and he was so very supportive of anyone trying to effectively deal with it. He was deeply injured by the homophobic environment he grew up in during the 60’s and he grew past that and identified as a proud, gay, independent and unique man.

He adjusted to getting older; to major losses and to becoming an amputee with grace and empathy. He was ok with living alone with “Henry” his beloved cat the last few years and he was still planning new moves and some adventures when he developed a terminal

cancer prognosis. He spoke proudly of having lived just the way he wanted to and having feasted well at a very diverse table.

He afforded me a great privilege those last few weeks.... He trusted me and confided in me and allowed me to do everything that I could to be of service to his final needs. As rough as it was I will always cherish that time. He became the “good big brother “ whom I could be proud of.

He was a complex and somewhat enigmatic man... “ he was sailing, he was flying, he wanted to be free”....and he was. He lived a free life; a kind life; a “gritty life” in many ways... but it was always HIS life....

I am privileged to call him brother.

Ralph LeBlanc

Ralph LeBlanc - August 20, 2022 at 07:17 AM

SF

Very sweet and very well written as always! I love and respect such true spoken words. I love you dad and we will miss you Uncle Mike!!



Sondra Feibel - August 20, 2022 at 09:19 AM

NC

*Ralph,
What a beautiful expression of love and summary of your big brother's life. May he rest in eternal peace.*

Cousin Nancy

Nancy LeBlanc Croitori - August 20, 2022 at 02:16 PM

JG

“Michael and I shared much rowdy experiences at O.L.L. and beyond until his death. Let me share one of the first extravagances. In the summer of 1961, we traveled to New York City by railroad to see musicals along with 300 others; celebrating the 25 Anniversary of the National Catholic Theater Convention. Together we saw CAMELOT with Julie Andrews, Robert Goulet, and Richard Burton. They sat front stage to answer questions. When asked if we could see one or two stage settings, Julie called back the crew for us to admire its complexity.

We also saw THE SOUND OF MUSIC starring Mary Martin. Mary shared screen-photos of her career. Many remembered her from SOUTH PACIFIC and the television production of PETER PAN. However, this was 1961, and the successful movie with Julie Andrews didn't come out until 1963.

Mike and I lobbied to have "Climb Every Mountain" as our Class of '62 class song. At the 10th reunion everyone raved about beating-out future classes. And we have sung it with gusto at each reunion celebration.

Sincerely, with pride in our friendship, John Goniea

John Goniea - July 12, 2022 at 09:52 PM

JL

Hi John thank you for your lovely memories that you shared mike loved you and Marianne very much

joanne Leblanc - July 13, 2022 at 01:44 PM

CR

“ *What I remember most about Michael is his sense of humor. He could always be counted on to add at least a chuckle to pretty much any situation. My heart goes out to his siblings and the many others I know will dearly miss him. Sincerely, Cindy Reece*

Cindy Reece - July 12, 2022 at 01:03 PM