



Michael Sporakowski

June 9, 2023

Michael Sporakowski left this world on June 9, 2023, to tee off on the celestial fairways where he can once again play golf with his departed friends and family and hopefully play a few hands of poker in the clubhouse.

He is survived by his wife Judy of 59 years and his two daughters, Karen Sporakowski and Laura Lawson; his two sons-in-law, John Vile and Bob Palmer; his brother-in-law and wife, John and Shaun Garrett; and cousins and numerous friends.

After getting degrees at Penn State and Florida State University and doing his postdoc at the University of Minnesota, Mike worked briefly at the University of Illinois before arriving at Virginia Tech in 1970. He worked there until 2003 and was a professor and eventually department head in the department of Family and Child Development. He taught many classes, did extension work, was a marriage counselor, and was the president of the National Council on Family Relations (NCFR). He was also the editor for the journal of NCFR for a number of years.

Mike was a lifelong avid golfer who started playing early and was on golf teams by the time he was in high school and college. He tried to share his love of the sport by teaching his wife and daughters to play but they lacked his talent and enthusiasm. Fortunately, Blacksburg provided many golf-playing friends and Mike was able to finish his career at Virginia Tech teaching golf to students who he lamented never quite learned to dress appropriately for the sport.

Beyond golf, Mike had many interests and passions, including community service, animal rescue, church, marksmanship in the senior Olympics, and more, all of which benefited from his time and generosity. His good will and kindness will be sorely missed.

His funeral service will be held at Christ Episcopal Church in Blacksburg on Saturday, June 24 at 11 am (<https://www.christchurchblacksburg.org/>).

In lieu of flowers, donations can be made to one of Mike's favorite charities such as the Blue Ridge Parkway Foundation (<https://www.brpfoundation.org/>) or Best Friends Animal Society (<https://bestfriends.org/>), or the Blacksburg Volunteer Rescue Squad (<https://www.blacksburgrescue.org/>).

Previous Events

Funeral Service

JUN **24**. 11:00 AM (ET)

Christ Episcopal Church
120 Church St. NE
Blacksburg, VA 24060

Tribute Wall

AP

“ *Its funny how things work in this world we live in. I live in Cyprus now, thousands of miles away but this past week, I have been thinking about Mike a lot. So I tried to look him up only to find out his passing away this past June.*

I am indebted to Mike for his considerable assistance in getting my PhD from the Dept of Human Development back in December, 2001. He supported me in many ways throughout my Phd and I just want to say a big thank you to him.

May our Lord Jesus Christ rest your soul Mike.

Andreas Philaretou

Andreas Philaretou - September 17, 2023 at 12:24 PM

MF

“ *Dear Mrs. Sporakowski and family,*
I was deeply saddened to learn today of Mike's passing. I was one of his last graduate students, if not the last. He was very patient and supportive of me and I appreciated him very much. He always struck me as a man of great integrity who was devoted to his family. I know you all will miss him terribly. My condolences to you,
sincerely Martha Foy

Martha Foy - June 23, 2023 at 01:27 PM

NB

“ I was saddened to learn of Mike's passing just now. He meant a lot to NCFR and to the Southeastern Council on Family Relations. We served on boards together and as a new professor, I learned many things from both him and from Lee Axelson at numerous conferences. He was a great guy and full of spirit and light! Thank you for sharing him with us in the family organizations. Blessings and comfort to you on your loss. Norma J. Bond Burgess, NCFR President 2022-2024.

Norma J Bond Burgess - June 22, 2023 at 05:22 PM

GB

“ I am so sorry to hear about Mike's passing. He was an outstanding teacher and researcher and a very kind and generous person in every respect. He provided excellent consultation and editorial assistance to me in publishing one of my first papers in Family Relations. I always looked forward to seeing him at annual NCFR conferences. My heartfelt sympathy to the family--may your rich memories of Mike help comfort you during this difficult time. You are in my thoughts and prayers. Gary Bowen

Gary L. Bowen - June 22, 2023 at 04:17 PM

MC

“ My sincere sympathy to you, Judy, Karen and Laura & families on the loss of Mike. He was a very special person and I have been so privileged to have known and worked with him. He was one of my best NCFR Presidents from 1995-6 and a great editor of the Family Relations Journal. We sort of bonded because of our Polish heritage, but his graciousness, humor and dedication to NCFR is most memorable. I will never forget the wonderful dinner Mike and Judy hosted when I visited Blacksburg. I remember the delicious flank steak he grilled, and the wonderful conversation with you and the Axelsons. He was always so interested in the conferences and we would always meet for dinner to discuss his roots in Minnesota. I will miss his newsy Christmas letters. You are all in my thoughts and prayers as you grieve his loss and celebrate his long and productive time on earth as well as his contributions to making the world a better place. Mary Jo Czaplewski

Mary Jo Czaplewski - June 14, 2023 at 11:59 AM

HC

“ Judy, I am so saddened to learn of Mikes' passing. He was a favorite customer at State Farm where I worked for so many years. I can still see his smiling face as he came through the front door. All my very best to you and family.

Hilda Compton - June 13, 2023 at 05:01 PM

TR

“ Laura, So very sorry to hear of your dad's death. He sounded like a wonderful person. Will lift your family and all those he touched in prayer.

Trina - June 13, 2023 at 02:06 PM

ME

“ Judy and family, we are deeply sorry for the loss of Mike. Mike was a man of integrity, dignity and love for each of you. A great husband, Dad, family member and friend. May God comfort each of you during this very difficult time. Cherish all the wonderful memories that he left for everyone. May God heal your broken hearts a little each day. Judy the love that you two shared together is a wonderful example what marriage is all about. Love you Judy. We will be praying for each of you. God Bless

Mike & Charlotte Epperley - June 12, 2023 at 06:46 PM

CW

“ We are so sorry to hear about Mike's passing. He was such a great president of the National Council on Family Relations, and he was always so supportive of the staff. We will all miss him so much. We express our heartfelt sympathy, and we pray that the love of family and friends and your many happy memories will sustain you in the days and weeks ahead.

Cindy Winter - June 12, 2023 at 05:46 PM

MM

“ Michael taught me the nuances of 357 Poker but also to laugh at everybody's jokes, regardless. he was a gentleman from whom I learned to accept the views of others with a smile.

Mike Martin - June 12, 2023 at 09:04 AM

BK

“ Mike was a dear friend, someone whose company I very much enjoyed! Being part of his "poker gang" for several years was a special treat, especially during the pandemic times when we maintained our game through online means. My sincere condolences to Judy and his family. Bill Knocke

Bill Knocke - June 12, 2023 at 09:03 AM

MW

*dear dear Judy...Richard and I just learned of Mike's passing... how we love you all and have great memories of our lives lived together in Blacksburg. Thank you for all you meant to dad and mom and the beautiful memorial service at your house. God bless you always.
Malinda*

Malinda Mauldin Whitelaw - December 28, 2023 at 01:21 AM