



Michael Robert Volpe

July 18, 1954 - June 19, 2022

Michael Robert Volpe, steadfast pillar of inclusive community and tenacious advocate for people with disabilities, passed from this life, surrounded by family and friends at his home in CoHo EcoVillage in Corvallis, Oregon, on Sunday, June 19, 2022. He was born to Doris J. and Samuel V. Volpe in Lake Forest, Illinois, on July 18, 1954. After graduating from Lake Forest High School, he earned bachelor's degrees in biology and forestry from St. Olaf College and the University of Minnesota. He then moved west and took a master's degree in ESL at Oregon State University. The Corvallis area was to remain his home thereafter.

Mike's inner strength and commitment to ambitious goals showed even in his younger years. He was a highly trained wrestler, a hiker, canoer and skier. Attaining the rank of Eagle Scout, he became a member of the Order of the Arrow. Then, as a young man gifted with such resolve, he faced and traveled a course of progressive MS for nearly half a century. His steady determination to live in an inclusive world made him a champion of equal access for all, regardless of ability. He focused especially on housing within community and on universal accessibility to outdoor spaces, buildings and transportation. It became his life's work to identify and remove structures that exclude and inhibit people from these necessities. He volunteered steadily and lobbied relentlessly on their behalf, to agencies at both local and state levels. Mike got things changed. He got things done. And his accomplishments and long

service did not go unnoticed. He received numerous recognitions and distinguished awards, including the Scott Lay Memorial Award, Eugene Organ Lifetime Achievement Award, Lee Hazelwood Advocacy Award, and an award presented by the Governor's Commission on Senior Services in appreciation for his "tireless and caring advocacy."

But throughout his years of civic activism, Mike also savored a full life beyond that work, letting his health challenges direct him without defining him. He regularly traveled to see family and friends and to attend reunions. He was briefly married to his dear friend, Glenna. He enjoyed evenings sharing historical books or movies with friends (and chowing down on pizza, with Chocolate Anything for dessert). He loved going to live music concerts, many in the local Corvallis folk scene. He followed a spectrum of sports (but especially the Packers and White Sox), recalling an amazing volume of statistics—both well-known and obscure. He danced to the Beatles and blissed to the Moody Blues. He enjoyed the works of many folk musicians, including Fred Small and Eva Cassidy, John Doan and John McCutcheon. And his infectious grin was at its fullest when recounting tales of youthful mishaps and thoroughly ill-advised feats of derring-do: college goldfish, cheap beer, Columbian jails.

Mike's heart, though, was always in the natural world and the longer view. He followed and supported kinder politics and sustainable environmental paths. He knew and bonded with the Oregon Coast, with Opal Creek and Mt. Rainier, and with the Boundary Waters of Minnesota. And he surrounded his every home with a garden, complete with trees, in quiet testimony. By empowering other causes and voices, Mike found his own, and it spoke volumes. His favorite access into community, preservation and progress was by sharing authentic stories. Through the hearing and telling of such stories—intimate or mundane, serious or silly, gut-busting humorous or acutely emotional—he sowed patient understanding and nurtured perennial friendships. Now the very

best story is his own life, fully lived, on a path he pioneered. And it was the privilege of many to walk along with him to the next bend.

Mike is survived by his mother Doris Volpe, his sister Peg Posnick (Rick) of Longmont Colorado, niece Rachel Posnick of Salem Oregon, and nephew Sam Posnick of Denver Colorado. Mike's father, Sam, preceded him in death. A celebration of Mike's life will be held on Sunday, August 7, 2:00-4:00 p.m., at Avery Park (Lions Shelter), in Corvallis. Online condolences may be left at www.mchenryfuneralhome.com. Memoria in Mike's name are also welcomed by any of the following. A believer in their work, he was grateful for their support.

AHIC - www.AHomeInCommunity.org

CoHo EcoVillage - <https://www.cohoecovillage.org/>

Salem Public Library - <https://www.cityofsalem.net/community/library>
(or any public library offering books on tape or alternate formats)

Human Brain and Spinal Fluid Resource Center (HBSFRC) <http://brainbank.ucla.edu/>

. Please share your thoughts and memories for the family at www.mchenryfuneralhome.com

Previous Events

Celebration of Life

AUG 7. 2:00 PM - 4:00 PM (PT)

Avery Park Lion's Shelter
1396 SW Avery Park Rd
Corvallis, OR 97333

Tribute Wall

DL

“ I first met Mike when we both attended St. Olaf college. We again crossed paths during my summers working for the US Forest Service in the Boundary Waters Canoe Country in MN. Our paths crossed when I met his canoeing group while checking his travel permit. I remember his care and commitment to wilderness travel. During our visit he told me about his MS. I have been living in Corvallis since 2007 and regret not knowing he was here. A good person with a good heart.

David Leding - December 14, 2022 at 04:46 PM

SS

“ I had the privilege of advocating with Mike for 4-years with the MS Society. I will miss him, the disability community will miss him, the MS community will miss him. Thank you Mike.



Seth Greiner, MS Society - August 08, 2022 at 01:38 PM

TW

“ Theodore E Wenk lit a candle in memory of Michael Robert Volpe



Theodore E Wenk - July 28, 2022 at 09:32 AM

JC

“ I came to know Mike through his tireless advocacy efforts on behalf of people with disabilities. He was an amazing man. His beautiful obituary shared much I never knew about Mike. He will be missed by many and admired by all who had the pleasure of knowing and working with him.

Jim Carlson

Jim Carlson - July 26, 2022 at 05:45 PM

RM

“ I met Mike in 2015 when I was first starting in government service. He made me feel welcome personally and charmed everyone around him with his kindness and passion. I was always thankful for and inspired by his dedicated advocacy to keep the needs of the consumer at the heart of every decision. He's a person to model and admire. My condolences to his family.

Rebecca Miller - July 26, 2022 at 05:42 PM

CM

“ I had the gift of being able to meet Mike through my work with Aging and People with Disabilities. Mike was always thoughtful and caring of all in everything he did. I always appreciated his voice and his passion in the work and message he brought to our Agency. He was an inspiration and a leading example of being an advocate and making a positive difference. he will be missed but not forgotten. May your family know he was loved and appreciated by all. Carol Mauser

Carol Mauser - July 26, 2022 at 04:34 PM



“ Mike, May you rest in peace !
You were such an inspiration to all of us, I am thankful to have known you and worked with you on many occasion. You will be missed, thanks for all the love and happiness you shared with everyone.

Curtis Raines - July 11, 2022 at 01:30 PM

SE

“ I first met Mike when he when he served on the State council I work for. I see that others, too, remember Mike for that smile of his! I can't think of him without it and his gracious spirit, even when his wheelchair was dangling precariously off a stair! He has been such a joy to be around during his years of advocacy work. I'm so thankful that he kept at it, even when it was hard. He made such a difference.

Shelly Emery - July 11, 2022 at 12:42 PM

KK

“ I knew Mike from the Unitarian Universalist Fellowship of Corvallis. We both have a Biology Degree. We both loved chocolate, the Beatles, historical books and movies, and the Oregon Coast.

Kristin Komar - July 09, 2022 at 09:08 PM

DH

“ I first met Michael when he was a student in my OSU Spanish class. I, too, had attended college in Minnesota, so we had that in common, and that became a basis for a friendship. Throughout all the years, he always had a smile, even when the news wasn't necessarily good. I'm sorry that I hadn't seen him lately, but even so, I will miss him and always will be encouraged by his indomitable spirit. Dianne Walta Hart

dianne walta hart - July 09, 2022 at 11:11 AM



“ 2 files added to the album Memories Album



McHenry Funeral Home - July 07, 2022 at 01:53 PM

MM

Knowing Mike was one of the greatest honors and privileges of my life. Mike was dedicated to making life better for people with disabilities and accomplished so much in advancing that cause. His history, his knowledge, his compassion, his sense of humor.... All will be missed. Thank you for making Oregon a better place to live Mr. Volpe. You will be missed, but your accomplishments will live on forever. Rest in Peace Mike.

Mike McCormick - July 28, 2022 at 07:01 PM