

# Dear Family & Friends of Mike McGill

It is with a bit of sadness, but far greater joy, that I think of my friend Mike McGill today.

I first met Mike sometime back in 1973. I can't quite recall the first time we met, but it was probably while playing basketball for the high school we both attended.

Mike was a gifted athlete. He had natural talent, physical strength, and amazing leaping ability for a white Irish kid from Queens. I often told him I thought he could have gone pro or certainly could have played for college had he chose too. He would just shrug his shoulders and in his modest, innocent way reply, "Nahh"

I think the thing I enjoyed most about Mike is his sense of humor.

Some of the best laughs I have ever had, were provided to me by Mike's crazy shenanigans. Back around 1974 a bunch of us somehow scored tickets to a New York Knicks game. Don't remember how we got them, but they were very good seats. Rick Barry from The Golden State Warriors put on a basketball clinic that nite, and lit up the Knicks for 40 plus points.

But that was not the highlight of the evening...

Former New York Knicks star and legend Willis Reed was in attendance and we spied him from across the arena with reverent admiration. "Look there's Willis, can you believe it?" Suddenly

Mike got up from his seat and said “I’ll be right back”. Where you going, we asked? “I’m going to talk to Willis”, replied Mike...

No amount of reasoning would stop him and we watched as he slowly made his way around the arena toward Mr. Reed. He managed to get to within about 10 feet of him, before two burly, blue coated security guys, stopped him. We watched in shock as they talked briefly, and then proceeded to escort him away. We wondered if we would see Mike for the remainder of the game.

About 10 mins later Mike appeared with an armful of beers and hotdogs and happily sat down. Staring in amazement, I asked him what happened.

“Oh, security stopped me”, he replied nonchalantly...

“What did they say to you” I asked.

“They said, where you going, and I told them I was going to talk to Willis”, he said.

“And...?” I asked.

“They asked me if I knew him” he replied.

“And what did you say” I asked.

After a pause, and in Mike’s perfect innocent, deadpan delivery, he said...

“I told them he was my father”...

Well, we all fell out of our seats laughing hysterically. 40 plus years later it still makes me laugh.

Mike always had a child like innocence about him that enabled him to see his way out of the craziest situations, and belied his thoughtful intelligence, and sublime, subtle sense of humor.

Over the years he continued to amaze me. Growing up as two wild eyed screwups, it was hard to imagine he would go on to succeed the way he did both personally and professionally. Yet, he did.

He managed to get married to a beautiful wife and raise 5 wonderful kids. I would often kid him about it over the years, asking him who's wife and kids are those, and how they can't really be yours, and how in the world did you do that? And, just like with his basketball talents, he would shrug his shoulder's and say, "I know, I know, it's hard to believe, it's crazy". He loved his family dearly and did what needed to be done.

We spoke often on the phone for the last 10 years or so, and if Mike's kids are wondering about what Daddy talked about to his old high school friend, I'll tell you... He mostly talked about you! How you guys were doing, what you were up to, and how he and your Mom could help make your lives better...

Then it was on to politics, how much the NBA has changed for the worse, and what was the latest imported beer he was cherishing from Germany.

(The later of which he became quite a connoisseur of, and took great pleasure in educating me on. For the record, Weihenstephaner Hefeweissbier beats the pants off of Budweiser.)

Mike taught me many things and not just about family and beer. In later years he developed a deep political consciousness. It's an understatement to say we did not see things eye to eye politically on many an occasion, and would engage in heated debates. I would often tell him, "Mike I don't know how we can be so far apart politically and still be friends, when I've lost so many friends, over far lesser arguments...". Again Mike would shrug his shoulders and sheepishly reply, "I know, it's crazy..."

give it a chance, let's see what happens." What happened was a lesson in gentle tolerance for the thoughts and opinions of others. Thank you my friend.

When it came to friendship Mike was always there. Willing to listen, share his thoughts and be of support with his innocent, kind, gentle manner. Like his politics his take and advice on life's challenges was the same...

"Ok, take it easy, we'll see how it goes, and we'll talk more, down the road" ..

Mike became deeply interested with spiritual concerns, especially the teachings of the Catholic church, of which he was a devoted member. He would call me up to tell me of the latest reading he was doing that week. It would run the gamete from The Life of St Augustine, to the books of Eckart Tolle.

Like all of us he sought answers to life's profound spiritual questions.

It brings a warmth to my heart and a smile to my face thinking that now he undoubtedly has them!

So open the gates St. Peter, set up the basketball court, divide the Angels into teams, and raise a glass of fine German import.

Mike McGill is in the House and he's ready to play ball!

**Oh, and one last thing...**



He grilled one Hell of a Flap Steak!

*A loved one is never further away than your own heart*

**With Grateful Love and Respect**

*Ron Porembski*

