

MICHAEL "MICKEY" JAMES BURKE, SR.



Beloved husband, father and grandfather, Michael (Mickey) James Burke Sr. of Fredericktown, PA died unexpectedly Monday, May 6 at the age of 87 in Florida. He was surrounded by his family. Mickey left behind his wife Sylvia who he adored. The couple would be celebrating their 60th Wedding Anniversary on August 29th. He was born in Uniontown, PA August 11, 1936 to parents David & Anna (Gibbons) Burke. He married the love of his life Sylvia (Skittle) Burke August 29, 1964 in Canonsburg PA. Together they had five children, Michael (Melia McCracken Oddi), Ronald (Diane), Michelle Hill, Melissa Patterson (Brian), and Rebecca Setaro (Sean). Mickey would also proudly tell you he had eight grandsons Derek Hill, Ryan Burke (Marissa), Dylan Hill (Paige), Bradley Burke, Kevin Patterson, Anthony Setaro, Burke Patterson, & Vincent Setaro. He was immensely proud of his family and anyone who had the pleasure of spending time with Mickey would undoubtedly be captivated as he told stories of his children's accomplishments and his lifetime of adventures.

Mickey was preceded in death by his parents David and Anna Burke and three brothers, Regis, Robert, and Jack Burke. Also, a special pet Willy. He is survived by his elder brother, Patrick, who currently resides in MD.

Mickey was a lifelong lover of horses. Beginning with jumping horses as a young teen and owning his first harness horse at the age of 19. Mickey then went on to run a successful car dealership (Mickey Burke Pontiac and Buick, Brownsville, PA). In 1981 Mickey convinced his wife Sylvia to take a leap of faith and turn his hobby into a career and Mickey Burke Stables (currently Burke Racing Stable) was established. Mickey would go on to have an incredibly successful horse racing stable with the entire family being involved in the business. Mickey remained actively involved with the horses up until his death. If asked he would tell you he never worked a day in his life because he loved what he did. He became the first harness horse trainer to surpass 10 million dollars in one year and won the Glen Garnsey Trainer of the Year in 2006. He and his wife were named to the Little Brown Jug Wall of Fame in 2021. Two years earlier, he received the Lifetime Achievement Award from the Monticello-Goshen chapter of the U.S. Harness Writers Association.

Mickey was a very generous man who was always willing to help those in need. He loved to attend racing events and horse sales and he could be found "holding court" with visitors stopping by all day to give him a hug, ask his opinion and probably hear a few stories. These events will continue without him but will never be quite the same.

Mickey held his faith very dear and was a lifelong member of the Roman Catholic church.

Friends will be received Friday, May 10, 2024 from 2 to 8 PM in the **JOHN B. GREENLEE FUNERAL HOME, LTD.**, 2830 Main St. Beallsville, PA 15313. A mass of Christian Burial will be held Sat May 11, 2024 at 12 PM at the St. Katherine Drexel Parish Richeyville campus with Rev. Michael Zavage as Celebrant. Interment will follow in Queen of Heaven Cemetery, McMurray, PA. Mickey patronized multiple charities, in lieu of flowers consider donating to New Vocations Racehorse Adoption Program, your local Food Bank, St Jude's Cancer Hospital or charity of your choice.

An online guestbook is available at www.GreenleeFuneralHome.com where you may express personal condolences to the Burke family.

Send condolences post-gazette.com/gb