



## Michael William Smithart

January 22, 1950 - April 30, 2026

Michael “Mike” William Smithart passed away April 30, 2026, at home in Greer, South Carolina. He was born on January 22, 1950, to William “Bill” and Vivian Bales Smithart in Ottumwa, Iowa. He graduated from Ottumwa High School in 1968 and entered the Navy in the fall with 2 fellow graduates, Terry Blomgren and Bill Hamm, on the buddy system. They returned to Ottumwa over the Christmas holidays before shipping off to Vietnam.

While in the Navy, when stateside he would get an apartment near base with other shipmates where they lived between tours in the Pacific. Mike learned how to cook after calling home for recipes and instructions. His theory was: if he cooked, the others had to clean. He became a good cook over the years. He spent 4 years in the Navy as fire control (missiles, not the other kind). He then returned to Ottumwa, where he went to work in the local meat packing plant, before entering college for computer maintenance at Iowa Tech, what is now Indian Hills Community College. Somehow, no one is sure how (or if they know are not talking), he got his panel van stuck straddling the median on Ferry Street near Richmond. He also had a Harley Davidson chopper that he had brought back from California. During a weekend “tune-up” with help from friends, there were no two parts together and that tune-up took a couple of months to get back running.

After college, Mike took a position with a computer company that landed him in Montgomery, Alabama. Mike met Deborah Casey while working on a bank computer. They later married and had three children, Jonathan, Leigh and

Tracey. Mike's job took him and family to Marietta, Georgia. During this time period, they had a cocker spaniel named Ben, who was extremely well known in the neighborhood as being overly friendly with the females. From Georgia, the family moved to Fuquay-Varina, North Carolina. The marriage with Deborah ended in divorce.

Mike met Lauri "Nikki", in November of 2004, and the two married on December 15, 2010, at a bed and breakfast in Greer, South Carolina. They both liked the mountains, visiting Gatlinburg, Cherokee, and Maggie Valley. They enjoyed taking cruises and visiting the grandkids. Mike ended his career with Michelin as a Project Manager and had traveled to France and Mexico to visit Michelin tire plants. Mike and Nikki lived in Greer, South Carolina until his passing.

Michael battled heart issues for several years, and cancer the last several years. Mike will be remembered by many for his sense of humor and "house" rules when playing card or board games.

He is survived by his wife, Lauri "Nikki" Smithart; his son, Jonathan Smithart (Victoria "Tori"); daughters, Leigh Warwick (Duncan), and Tracy Lofton; grandchildren, Addison, Duncan III, Elin, Lillie, Killian, and Liam; sister, Julie Smithart; niece, Shannon; and a multitude of friends.

He was preceded in death by his parents, maternal grandparents, Cleo and Carrie Howard Bales, paternal grandparents, William and Pauline Van Buskirk Smithart, and his sister, Rebecca Smithart Peters.

No services are to be held, and he has been cremated at his request. Mike's sister would like to extend a special thank-you to Nikki for her dedication to Mike during their time together, honoring his wish to not go to a hospital or care center, and especially for keeping his privacy in his final days.

Online condolences may be made at [www.thewoodmortuary.com](http://www.thewoodmortuary.com).

# Tribute Wall

DG

“ Mike and I met when we were both on the Ottumwa High School swim team. He swam the back stroke, and I remember he was quite good. In our senior year he recruited me to be a manager on the football team, a position he already held. He wanted to actually play, so he needed a replacement. I hope he enjoyed being on the team as much as I enjoyed being a manager. I remember Mike's amiable disposition, and his infectious laugh.

Denny Gmur - May 02 at 01:24 PM

JS

Denny, he was a swimmer first. At the time he was the youngest certified life guard there in Ottumwa. He was either 12 or 13 when he completed his certification.

Julie Smithart - May 03 at 04:25 PM

HB

Mike and I worked together at Michelin. He was one of the kindest people I knew. In 2018 I had a medical incident at work and ended up in the hospital in Greer. That evening after work Mike came by to check on me and brought me a card. It was so thoughtful. He always had a smile on his face and a funny story to tell. I was saddened to hear of his passing and had hoped he would have many years in retirement to enjoy his family after working so hard for so long. My prayers are with his family.

Harriett Bryant - May 08 at 09:28 AM

JW

I worked with Mike at Michelin in the IT department. Mike was a kind man who was always willing to help others when needed. I'm so very sorry to read of his passing. I pray that the family will be comforted in the days and weeks ahead by all of the wonderful memories shared with Mike.

Joyce Whitaker - May 12 at 10:51 AM