

Epilogue

Myron LeRoy (Mike) Mehl

July 28, 1931 - February 8, 2017 (85 years old)



The Early Years

Myron (Mike) was born in Pretty Rock, North Dakota. His parents, Walt and Gertrude (Bakker) Mehl inherited his grandpa's homestead and had 6 children. Mike's family lost the farm to the government in the Dust Bowl days due to seed loans (which they eventually paid back in full!). They went to Washington State and then Ohio looking for work, eventually settling in Fowler, Ohio. During WWII General Fireproofing had switched from making desks to making airplane parts and offered Mike's dad a good job. Mike was about 12 then and quite industrious. He picked strawberries, milked cows, mowed cemetery lots and even got a degree from the "chicken plucking" school. He was a great basketball player and tried out for baseball with the Cleveland Indians but didn't make the cut. His teachers said he was too smart for his own good but they loved him anyway for his handsome physique, warm smile and sharp wit.

And then came Ornetta...

It all started with a wink at choir practice when they were 15 years old. The flames of romance began! Ornetta Harned was a shy, pony-riding, softball-playing gal from Cortland, Ohio. Most of their courtship took place at the roller rink. In 1950, Mike joined the Navy as a Photographer's Mate stationed at Guantanamo Bay, Cuba on an aircraft carrier. They were married in 1952 when they turned 21 (well...almost...Mike's mom had to sign for him since he wasn't quite old enough to marry that cougar!) The kids came along eventually (Karen Monique (Duncan) and Kim Randall). Mike put that charming personality to work as a salesman at Alwine Brick Company. He

worked his way up in the brick business living much of his young married life in Gettysburg, PA. The family spent vacations fishing in Canada or floating down the Potomac River in a rubber raft. It was always an adventure.

The next move was to Minneapolis, MN where the mosquitos really are like birds and your nostrils freeze shut with every breath. But the fishing was great and they learned to cross-country ski.

In 1983, Mike and Ornetta bought a miniature golf course in Houghton Lake Michigan. They loved being their own boss and played lots of “big kid” golf as well.

Kim, his son, now lives in Oxford, MI with his wife, Heidi. Karen, his daughter, has retired to St. Petersburg, FL. Mike has 3 beautiful grandchildren and a couple of grandchildren-in-laws. Tanya and Zog Vulaj live in Bloomfield Hills MI. Tyler and Jessica Mehl live in Milford, MI. Addison Carvajal lives in Portland, ME. Mike’s brothers, Floyd (formerly a Fun-N-Sun resident on Poinsettia) and Richard and two of his sisters, Vicky Herbst and Orlean O’Connell have passed away. His sister, Marlys Johnson lives in Vienna Ohio.

The Finale

Mike and Ornetta spent 15 years traveling around the United States in an RV after they retired and sold the golf course. They started with a tiny little trailer, moved up to a 5th wheel and, eventually, a full sized motorhome. It was a fabulous, free lifestyle that included “work-camping” (one year here at Fun-N-Sun), visiting family, enjoying the country (including Alaska) and eventually getting off the road and back to Fun-N-Sun in 2010. Many friends have been gathered along the way and enriched their lives. Many of those friends now live here and will continue to swim, ride bikes and play cards with Ornetta.

Mike’s last RV trip was to spend Christmas in Florida with his family. He had a full and wonderful life with his wife of 65 years and died peacefully here in Harlingen, TX on February 8, 2017.