



Michael Steele Bright Churchman

March 9, 1929 - August 16, 2022

Michael Steele Bright Churchman died August 16, 2022 in Bryn Mawr, Pennsylvania, at age 93, from the complications of old age. There will be a private graveside service at a later date.

Mike was born March 9, 1929 in Indianapolis, the elder son of M. Steele Churchman and Luita Curtis Churchman. He graduated in 1950 from Wesleyan University (B.A., history), and later earned degrees from the University of Missouri-Kansas City (M.A., economics) and Harvard University (Ed.M., education).

He was married April 28, 1951 in The Hague to Jean Virginia Wood, daughter of Richard Armit Wood and Helen Virginia Conklin Wood, of Kansas City, Missouri. Mike and Jean continued to live in The Hague where Mike worked for the Netherlands Mission of the Marshall Plan.

They came in 1952 to Kansas City, where Mike began teaching history at The Barstow School, gradually adding some administrative duties. They spent the year 1958-1959 on a Fulbright teaching exchange with a school in London. In 1964 Mike, Jean and their three daughters moved to Denver, where Mike became head of The Kent School, and the Churchman family lived very happily for ten years. He then became headmaster of St. Catherine's School, Richmond, Virginia. The Churchmans returned to Kansas City in 1979, when Mike became head of The Barstow School.

Mike changed professions in 1985 when he was appointed director of development at The Nelson-Atkins Museum of Art, where he worked with the

staff and trustees to develop the Museum's long-range plan and helped to raise more than \$200 million to implement the plan's building expansion and programs. After he retired in 2004, he continued to serve as a consultant and volunteer.

In 2012 Mike and Jean moved to Beaumont, a retirement community in Bryn Mawr, Pennsylvania, to be near family.

He was the author of two institutional histories, "The Kent School 1922-1972" and "High Ideals and Aspirations: The Nelson-Atkins Museum of Art 1933-1993" (with Scott Erbes); and a memoir of the building where Mike and Jean lived, "Storied Halls: The Brookside Hotel, Treadway Hall and the Crestwood Condominiums." He also edited various Museum publications, including "Laurence Sickman: A Tribute;" and compiled several family histories. He was a member of the Carolyn Benton Cockefair Committee, UMKC. Mike was a lifelong Democrat. He was a member for 56 years of the Kansas City Country Club.

Michael Churchman is survived by his wife of 71 years, Jean Virginia Wood Churchman; and three daughters, the Reverend Jean Wood Churchman (the late Dr. Leo Martin Eisel), Denver, Colorado; Julia Brooke Churchman McCue (William Allen McCue), South Portland, Maine; and Diana Armit Churchman Mason (Samuel Mason), Bryn Mawr, Pennsylvania. He is also survived by six grandchildren: Mary Claire Churchman Eisel, Michael Steele Bright Eisel, William Appleton McCue (and his wife Cara Chebuske), Brooke Churchman McCue (and his wife Alexandra Paloma Kalinowski), Diana Helen Virginia McCue (and her husband Edward Roman), and Jean Wood Mason (and her spouse Anamika Goyal); great-grandsons John Churchman McCue and Amos Hewey McCue; brother-in-law Richard Edgar Wood, Denver; five nephews and one niece. His brother David Curtis Churchman, Indianapolis, died in 2015.

Memorial gifts to the Spencer Art Reference Library, Nelson-Atkins Museum of Art, will be gratefully appreciated, or to other charities of the donor's choice.

Tribute Wall

BH

“*Rarer that a Gutenberg Bible. You were terribly kind indeed." When I think of Mike Churchman, his two famous phrases come to mind. He was "indeed" both.*

When I arrived in Kansas City in 1990 to become development director at The Barstow School (or School as he would call it), his legacy resonated throughout the hallways---even though he had left to help steer the Nelson.

We became friends, and as fellow wordsmiths would lament about nouns being used as verbs. Jean and I became friends as well, and in later years closed down "many a dance floor".

Mike had the perspicacity to keep alive the spirit and insight of Mr. and Mrs. Sears, Gertrude Congdon and certainly Susan McClelland. May his spirit continue to guide us all.

"Volvo always".

Bill Hathorne

Bill Hathorne - August 25, 2022 at 12:22 PM