



Michael Novakovic

May 31, 1932 - September 1, 2022

Michael Novakovic, age 90, died peacefully on September 1, 2022 at his home in Villanova with family by his side. Born on May 31, 1932 in the former Yugoslavia (Croatia), Mike immigrated to the United States in 1949 as a post-WW II refugee at the age of 17 with his mother, father, and siblings.

Mike graduated from Bronx High School and matriculated to Syracuse University where he met and married his surviving wife of 66 years, Phebe Sharp Baner Novakovic. After Mike and Phebe graduated from Syracuse, he was commissioned as an officer in the U.S. Air Force in which he served until retiring as a Lieutenant Colonel in 1978. Fluent in multiple languages, he served as an intelligence officer in Europe for over eight years at the height of the Cold War and had a tour in Vietnam in 1969, where he earned a Bronze Star with Valor. Following retirement from the Air Force, he started a small manufacturing company with facilities in two underserved areas in Pennsylvania and Mississippi. For nearly 25 years, he provided employment opportunities to members of these communities, especially veterans and those with disabilities. Mike chronicled his journey in a 2016 published memoir, *A Pilgrim for Freedom*, which received a Kirkus Starred Review. His childhood and wartime experiences of the tyranny of totalitarianism fueled a life-long gratitude for the protection and promise of the United States. Mike's love of country manifested itself in his military service and active support of veterans' causes locally and nationally. Both his Air Force and small business careers represented different, but important ways he could give back to the

nation he so loved.

Mike's love and devotion to his family was total and steadfast. There was no stauncher ally and no greater defender of those he loved than Mike. Memories of his hearty laugh, quick wit and demonstrative affection will endure with all those who knew and loved him.

In addition to his wife Phebe, Mike is survived by their daughter Phebe Nevenka Novakovic (David) and son Michael Branko Novakovic (MaryBeth); grandchildren Alexandra Graves (Stephen), Natasha Jack (David), Sophia Chesnut (Benjamin), Michaela Novakovic (fiancé Anthony) and Nikolas Novakovic, as well as six great-grandchildren: David Jack, William Jack, Phebe Graves, Elizabeth Jack, Samuel Graves and Luke Chesnut. He is also survived by his brother Paul (Julie).

Mike imparted his love of country and devotion to family to all who knew and loved him.

Memorial services will be held on September 10 at 2:00 pm at Ardmore United Methodist Church, 200 Argyle Road, Ardmore, PA 19003. An interment service will be held on a future date at Haleyville Cemetery, 998-1098 Steep Run Road, Millville, NJ 08332

In lieu of flowers, the family requests that donations be made in memory of Michael Novakovic to the Veterans Legacy Fund at Syracuse University. Donations may be sent to Syracuse University, 640 Skytop Road 2nd Floor, Syracuse NY 13244 or <https://secure.syr.edu/s/1632/17/form/form.aspx?sid=1632&gid=2&pgid=1830&cid=3490&bledit=1&sort=1&dids=2538&sort=1>

Previous Events

Funeral Service

SEP **10**. 2:00 PM (ET)

Ardmore United Methodist Church
200 Argyle Road
Ardmore, PA 19003

Tribute Wall

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“ I am so sorry for your loss. I go back to 1985 when Phebe helped me apply for military assistance to become Classmate of Daughter Phebe at Wharton. I met Mike many times and admired him for his qualities as a Military Officer and business man. Mike left behind one impressive family who have made an important legacy for America! Charlie Shields

Charles Shields - September 11, 2022 at 09:55 PM



“ Beautiful in Blue was purchased for the family of Michael Novakovic.



September 10, 2022 at 08:38 AM



“ Peaceful White Lilies Basket was purchased for the family of Michael Novakovic.



September 09, 2022 at 08:37 AM

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“ As friends, we knew Mike as a loving and sweet man who had a great love for his family. He also had a love for America that could not be challenged. We shared a dear and special relationship with Mike and will always remember him with so much love and respect. To know more about Mike and his incredible and heroic life, read his book, "A Pilgram for Freedom"
Gail and Ray Parker

Gail Parker - September 05, 2022 at 12:58 PM