



Sheldon J. Michaelson

February 2, 1953 - November 25, 2018

Sheldon John “Mike” Michaelson passed away peacefully on Sunday, November 25, 2018 after a lengthy illness. His family was with him.

Sheldon was born February 2, 1953 in Philadelphia to the late Isadore and Helen (nee Smith) Michaelson, the fourth of five children. He was raised in South Philadelphia, and graduated from Central High School, Class #229, in 1970. Sheldon went on to Drexel University, and graduated from their co-op program in 1975 with a BSBA. He spent his co-op year at Touche Ross, now Deloitte, and he joined the firm’s tax department upon graduation. When he was first introduced around to his new colleagues, he was asked, “What do you go by? Mike?” Sheldon said yes, and that is how he became Mike Michaelson.

In his early years, Mike served area clients, and developed a specialization in state and local taxation. One of his projects from those days was to help develop The Guidebook to Pennsylvania Taxes, which is still published annually, and still bears his name as co-author.

He was elevated to partner in 1983, and served as the lead federal tax partner on a number of significant public companies. He was active in several professional associations, and spoke and published frequently on federal and state tax topics. Later, Mike joined Deloitte’s multistate tax practice area. He consulted on state tax topics for a broad range of Fortune 1000 clients across industries. Beyond his professional expertise, Mike is perhaps most fondly remembered at Deloitte for his mentorship, sage advice, and contribution to

the careers of many tax professionals who came after him.

Mike loved Deloitte, and retired in 2013 after 38 years only because his health had begun to fail. He never had and never wanted another job.

Mike married Susan Pimentel in 1991, and they raised their two sons, Jeffrey and Daniel, in Radnor. In breaks from his significant travel schedule, Mike coached the boys' Radnor-Wayne Little League and Radnor Rec Basketball teams, and cheered them on in lacrosse. He particularly enjoyed contemplating, researching, and planning travel, and took the family on many memorable vacations around the world. A Philadelphia sports fan, he also reveled in watching and attending as many games with his sons as he could. Mike was delighted when Jeff married Maria Helena Fernandez in 2016, and thrilled with the birth of his first grandchild, Gabrielle, in March. In addition to his immediate family, Mike is survived by his sister, Irene Birnbaum, his brother, Allen, his niece April Birnbaum Mackoff, and nephews Marc and Scott Klasky. He was predeceased by his sister Mary Klasky, and brother Marvin. He loved and was loved by his many in-laws.

Mike, always proudly Jewish, preferred secular expressions of his heritage. Although the family recognized both Jewish and Christian holidays, he supported Susan in raising their sons as Christians. Over time, however, surrounded by the Christian faith of his wife and sons, Mike gradually began to move toward it as well. By the end of his life, he, too, formally accepted Jesus as his Messiah.

There will be a Memorial Service for Mike on Monday, December 10th at 2:00 p.m. at Ardmore Presbyterian Church, with time to greet the family thereafter. Memorial contributions may be made to The Radnor ABC House; The Paoli Hospital Foundation Nursing Excellence Fund; or the Gary Sinise Foundation.

Previous Events

Memorial Service

DEC 10. 2:00 PM (ET)

Ardmore Presbyterian Church
5 West Montgomery Avenue
Ardmore, PA

Tribute Wall

DS

“ I knew him as Sheldon in our youth. He was a good friend and we spent many hours playing sports. Years later my son worked with him at Deloitte and Touche. I have fond memories of him and wish to express my condolences.

Daniel Sullivan - February 20, 2025 at 12:55 PM

KC

“ Mike was a true mentor and friend. I still share some of his quotes with younger staff and seniors, so his advice and influence will continue for a long time. Mike was always willing to help, share a story and give advice. While on the road, he spoke often of his family who he deeply loved. I appreciated being invited to his retirement dinner and listening to all the stories from others. He was a good man. May you find comfort in your faith. God bless Mike and his family!

Kent Clay - December 07, 2018 at 04:27 PM

AY

“ As a Partner in the firm, Mike was a standard bearer and always did things the right way. He was very generous with his time, always patient, thorough and professorial with our people and our clients. It was a pleasure and an honor to work with him over the years.

In my first year with Deloitte over 20 years ago, having come from a small local firm I had no idea what to expect. Early on I had a lead on some state tax work with a potential client in Miami and went to my local Multistate leader Andy. His first thought was, "let's get Mike" to work with us. I didn't know who Mike was at the time, and he didn't know me, but within 5 minutes he was on the phone and making arrangements to fly down as soon as we could get a meeting. My friend at the client asked if we could do it 2 days later and naturally Mike said "sure, no problem". It was incredible watching Mike interact with a client he was just meeting for the first time and immediately adding value. My contact at the client was so impressed he brought in the CFO to sit in. Mike won him over very quickly by patiently explaining the opportunity and telling him what the EPS impact would be if they considered his strategy. Talk about speaking the right language. Needless to say we won the work and it led to many other projects with the Company. I was able to see first hand what a Partner could do who exhibited the right combination of technical skill, listening ability while being very responsive.

Three years later I was working at a different client a year after I had been promoted. I discovered a potential state tax issue that could have serious implications on a planned transaction. The first person I thought of was Mike and again he immediately took my call and spent many days working with myself and the client to arrive at an approach to the issue. It took months to get this resolved with probably 10 different states and quite a bit of back and forth correspondence. Mike was always willing to take a read on the response letters I had to write and tweak things just a little to make it that much better.

I realize now that not everyone is like Mike. He was a true Partner and someone that taught so many of us the right way to do things. He was our EF Hutton. Whenever he spoke, people listened. He will be missed.

Adam Yalowich - December 03, 2018 at 10:35 AM



Thank you so much, Adam, for taking time to share this. It means so much to me and our family. Susan M.

Susan Michaelson - December 04, 2018 at 12:46 PM

EK

“ I saw Mike as my mentor and wished I could have been there more for him in the last years since he retired. As I work to develop young staff and managers I think of one story that has always stuck with me. We were in at a client in Houston and I was a new manager at Deloitte on my first project. Mike being a well tenured partner at the time was not deep in the numbers, but he could do a 20,000 foot fly-over and poke holes in my logic or, at least, force me to defend them in a coherent way. Mike and I worked late into the night and I had to continually revise the numbers and walk through them with Mike. As happens, it got to that point where I had the numbers right, but just needed to be able to articulate them in ways that Mike could be confident without having to get deep into the work they were paying me to do. While I began to get somewhat frustrated, Mike looks at me and says; "Don't worry, this comes with experience you just need more." Since I was new to the firm and did not know Mike very well, I took a little offence to the statement as I thought I was pretty smart and that it was he why was not seeing that the numbers were correct. But we kept working and Mike showed that he was making me better. Not much of a story, but every time I can sense frustration in manager's or staff voices that they are not getting me to agree to their perspective, I think of Mike saying "Don't worry, this comes with experience."

I only hope that some day I can have enough experience to be half as good of a partner as Mike was.

Ed Kenawell - November 30, 2018 at 04:28 PM



We very much appreciate seeing how Mike's mentorship mattered, and lives on. What a great story! Thank you, Ed. Susan

Susan Michaelson - December 04, 2018 at 01:47 PM

AK

“ I worked with Mike for a number of years at Deloitte. We were both Multistate Tax partners, and I had moved to DC in 2004-- so spent time physically in Philly (!!) as well as who knows how many hundreds of hours on phone calls together. Loved his approachability, the fact that he always had time for anyone-- technical or personal, and that he was truly just genuinely fun to work with. He was unflappable when it came to serving clients. Funny Mike story-- he and I were teaching ethics together and he wasn't able to be there live. So he was on a phone dialing in. They set it up literally as a phone in the middle of a stage on a chair. Truly the out of town expert at that point. Sort of God-like-- just the voice-- speaking with love and conviction. That's how I remember Mike-- I'd work with him for the next 100 years if I could. Truly loved working with him. I am so sorry for your (and our) loss. Thanks for sharing him for so many years.

Ann Kamasky

Ann Kamasky - November 30, 2018 at 01:24 PM



Thanks, Ann. Mike loved Deloitte, and I love hearing these stories. He never talked much about things like this, so it's wonderful for me and our sons and the rest of the family to know. Susan

Susan Michaelson - December 04, 2018 at 12:50 PM

TP

“ 1 file added to the album Memories Album



The Pimentels - November 30, 2018 at 11:56 AM



“ *Magnificent Life Spray was purchased for the family of Sheldon J. Michaelson.*



November 29, 2018 at 05:56 PM



“ *Peaceful White Lilies Basket was purchased for the family of Sheldon J. Michaelson.*



November 29, 2018 at 10:06 AM