



Michael Neil Wilkerson

October 12, 1955 - January 17, 2020

BLOOMINGTON -- Michael Neil Wilkerson passed away Friday, January 17, 2020, surrounded by loving family and friends at Hospice House in Bloomington, Indiana.

Michael was a professor of Arts Administration in the IU Bloomington O'Neill School of Public and Environmental Affairs, where he deeply loved teaching arts management and cultural policy. Previously, he was a professor of Arts Management in the Performing Arts Department at American University in Washington, D.C.

Michael earned his bachelor's degree from Indiana University Bloomington, pursuing wide-ranging interests in literature, politics, history, theatre, and journalism. As an undergraduate at IU, he lived at Collins Living Learning Center among a vibrant community of talented students who inspired his love of the arts. In 1979 he received an M.F.A. from the Writing Seminars at Johns Hopkins University, where he studied with the experimental novelist John Barth. A gifted writer, editor, and speaker, Michael's fiction was published in numerous literary journals.

From the mid-80s to the early 90s, Michael was director of Ragdale Foundation in Lake Forest, Illinois, one of the nation's preeminent artists' communities for working visual artists, writers, musicians and composers. In

the mid-90s he served as director of the Provincetown Work Center in Provincetown, Massachusetts.

Throughout his life and career, Michael was a passionate advocate for artists. He worked on national issues as a board member of the Alliance of Artists Communities and the Association of Arts Administration Educators, and also served as a review panelist for the National Endowment for the Arts. Locally, he felt privileged to serve as a member of the Bloomington Arts Council, as a board member of the Buskirk-Chumley Theater, and as a founding board member of the Cardinal Stage Company.

Michael loved family life and adored his two sons, Dylan and Liam, and his wife, Deborah. He was beloved in the family for his patience and kindness, his exhaustive knowledge of politics, his strange obsession with cooking competition shows, and his gift for transforming mundane errands into memorable adventures.

Michael was born on October 12, 1955, in Franklin, Indiana, to Anne and William Wilkerson. He will be forever loved and remembered by his wife of 39 years, Deborah Galyan; his two sons, Dylan Wilkerson of Louisville, Kentucky, and Liam Wilkerson, currently a sophomore at Earlham College in Richmond, Indiana; his mother, Anne Wilkerson; his brother, Rick Wilkerson; his nieces, Laura and Christie Wilkerson; his sister- and brother-in-law, Leah and Dan Siddons of Lafayette, and their children, Daniel and Noah Siddons.

Visitation hours will be held at Allen Funeral Home, 4155 S. Old State Road 37, Bloomington, on Friday, January 24 from 3 to 6 pm. Family and friends are welcome. Online condolences, photos and memories may be shared with family and friends at www.allencares.com

Previous Events

Visitation

JAN **24**. 3:00 PM - 6:00 PM (ET)

Allen Funeral Home and Crematory
4155 S. Old State Road 37
Bloomington, IN 47401
(812) 824-5905
<http://www.allencares.com>

Tribute Wall

SR

“ Dear Deb,
I am so sorry to hear of Mike’s passing. It has been so long since I worked with the two of you in Carlisle, but I’ve always remembered his extreme wit. Somewhere I still have a card on which he wrote a couple of lines from a song by the Breedens.
My deep sympathy,
Susannah (Susie) Ringel

susannah ringel - September 25, 2020 at 11:38 PM

TD

“ Deb, Dylan & Liam,

So very sorry for the loss of Mike, a friend, father, husband (and director at the Ragdale Foundation). Please know our family fondly looks back on caring for Dylan and getting to know your family. Wishing you all the best, Theresa, Dale, Laura & Brian Dobroth

(We were reminiscing about Lake Forest, Ragdale Foundation and wonderful people and fond memories.)

Theresa Dobroth - February 09, 2020 at 09:26 AM

MP

“ Dear Deb, Anne, and family -- I was so saddened to hear of Mike's passing. He and I were close friends all the way through high school and college, and we even roomed together our junior year at IU in MRC/LLC. I will cherish our many discussions on life, philosophy, music, and literature, and I am still amazed at his talents as a writer. He had a definite influence on my life outlook, and I am a better person for having known him. I am so sorry for your loss.

Mark Pellerite
Woodbury, Minnesota

Mark J Pellerite - January 23, 2020 at 10:01 PM

LM

“ Laurie and Mark Pellerite -- Woodbury, Minnesota purchased the Healing Tears - Blue and White for the family of Michael Neil Wilkerson.



Laurie and Mark Pellerite -- Woodbury, Minnesota - January 23, 2020 at 09:49 PM

MP

“ Dear Deb, Anne and family -- I was so saddened to hear of Mike's passing. He was my best friend during high school and college, and we roomed together in MRC at IU. I will always cherish his easygoing manner and his wonderful wry humor, as well as our many discussions about life, philosophy, music, and literature. I could only stand off to the side and admire his abilities as a writer. He had a definite influence on me and my outlook, and I am better for having known him. Such a loss.

Mark Pellerite
Woodbury, Minnesota

Mark J Pellerite - January 23, 2020 at 09:34 PM



“ We have so many fond memories from Bryan Hall to the present...witty remarks, funny stories, enjoyable company. Mike always knew how to make old speeches new again. You were such a great friend and colleague to mom and dad...and wonderful friend of the family.

Julie Gros-Louis - January 23, 2020 at 11:32 AM

WF

“ With much love, The Gros-Louis family purchased the European Sympathy Dish Garden for the family of Michael Neil Wilkerson.



With much love, The Gros-Louis family - January 23, 2020 at 11:26 AM

EB

“ Dear Mrs. Wilkerson:

I am deeply shocked and saddened to learn of Michael's passing. I knew him when he was a resident and R.A. at Collins (then still MRC) Living Learning Center and I was beginning my job as director of the Center. I loved his competence, his gaiety and ready wit and was always delighted to run into him occasionally thereafter. At the LLC he was also one of the "RKO Poets," as they called themselves, who wrote poems for people on specific occasions on the spur of the moment, for fifty cents or a dollar a poem. I still have one of these, written for me when my wife was gone for a few days. It goes like this:

*perhaps the light / dimmer in the living room / some taste in the food
/ not there / breathing her scent / on the pillow / only half of the heart
/ seems to beat / when love is away / for the weekend*

I will cherish the poem all the more now that both my dear wife and he are gone.

I will come to the visitation on on Friday and hope to meet you there.

With deepest sympathy,

*Ernest Bernhardt-Kabisch
Professor Emeritus of English*

Ernest Bernhardt-MKabisch - January 22, 2020 at 03:49 PM



“ *Classic Sympathy Dish Garden was purchased for the family of Michael Neil Wilkerson.*



January 22, 2020 at 01:36 PM



“ *Healing Tears - All White was purchased for the family of Michael Neil Wilkerson.*



January 21, 2020 at 01:38 PM