



Michael C. "Mike" Wicks, PhD

November 17, 1959 - December 9, 2020

NEW HARTFORD - Michael C. "Mike" Wicks, PhD, age 61, passed away on Wednesday, December 9, 2020 at the Siegenthaler Center. He grew in grace through his adversity and is now home with Christ Jesus.

Born in Utica on November 17, 1959, Michael was the son of the late William C. and Vincentia "Chancy" (DeBrango) Wicks. He earned an Associate degree in Science (Engineering Science) at MVCC; Bachelor degree of Science at Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute (RPI); Master degree in Science/Philosophical Doctorate at Syracuse University (all in electrical engineering); and a Master of Arts in Public Administration at Syracuse University.

Michael's prolific career included a variety of prestigious positions beginning at the Air Force Research Laboratory initially working in radar in Rome, but later in Dayton, Ohio. He developed Sensor Signal Processing Technology for intelligence, surveillance, and reconnaissance systems. He was a Systems Engineer supporting a variety of national security needs inclusive of the Air Force, Army, Navy, and international partners through NATO and beyond. He was an Executive the last 10 years of his Air Force career and was able to solve problems at a very high level which he enjoyed. He then taught graduate students at the Catholic College of the University of Dayton. Beyond his rigorous professional and pedagogical responsibilities and research, he would rest each day with a couple of hours of sleep. Refreshed and revived, he would then spend time on various creative projects including

woodworking and hand crafted religious icons. He followed the logic of basic building principles and revised them to include his own variations and creative ideas. He also held a seat on the Board of the Central Association for the Blind and Visually Impaired (CABVI) as well as on the Mohawk Valley Water Board. A man of deep faith in his Catholic creed, Mike was a parishioner of St. Mary of Mt. Carmel/Blessed Sacrament Parish where he was an Altar server, Reader, Building Committee member, Eucharistic Minister, and volunteer at the annual church bazaars. He firmly believed that Jesus was true God and true man, and Mike knew that Jesus would never leave him nor forsake him. Mike was blessed with wonderful parents. He followed his dad's exemplary work ethic and his mom's compassionate heart, all of which brought to his life a balance of peace and perseverance.

He is survived by his sister and brother-in-law, Mary and John Russo; his niece, Sara Michaela Russo; his nephew, John Michael Russo; his beloved cousins, Robert Ollerenshaw, Gary Ollerenshaw and Brian Thompson, John and Gloria Ollerenshaw, Louis and Lisa Ollerenshaw, Francis and Cynthia Ollerenshaw, and he was preceded by his cousin David Ollerenshaw (2007); Ann Marie Mizgala; as well as many second cousins; special friends who were with Mike throughout his illness; Paul Antonik, Rocco Garro, Joe Robertaccio, Nihad Alfaysale, Hamdi Abdelbagi, Lorenzo LoMonte, Pat Zasa, Terri Panuccio, and best friend Fred Sadallah and his wife Andrea. He was predeceased by his maternal grandparents, Pasquale and Marietta DeBrango; his aunts and uncles, Pasqualina "Lena" and Robert Ollerenshaw, Angeline and Peter Mizgala, and John DeBrango.

Special thanks to Dr. Desai and his medical team for their care and expertise; Dr. Rice – Radiation-Oncology; MVHS @ St. Luke's Acute Rehabilitation staff; and the staff of the Hospice & Palliative Care, Inc. Siegenthaler Center for their care in Mike's final days.

Relatives and friends are respectfully invited to attend Michael's funeral service and Celebration of Life which will commence on Tuesday, December 22nd at 11:30 at St. Mary of Mt. Carmel/Blessed Sacrament Parish where his

Mass of Christian Burial will be offered. Face masks covering your nose and mouth are required, and social distancing and contact tracing will be implemented. In lieu of flowers, memorial contributions in Michael's name may be directed to St. Mary of Mt. Carmel/Blessed Sacrament Parish online at <https://www.mountcarmelblessedsacrament.com> or by mail to 648 Jay St., Utica, NY 13501 or to Hospice & Palliative Care, Inc. online at <https://hospicecareinc.org/donate-online>; envelopes will also be available at the service. His family and friends will escort him to his place of rest at St. Agnes Cemetery. During this time of social distancing that we are all experiencing, please take a moment to connect with Michael's family through the "Memories" section of his obituary. Our prayers go out to all as a sign of our continued support.

Previous Events

Funeral Service

DEC **22**. 11:30 AM (ET)

St. Mary of Mount Carmel / Blessed Sacrament Parish
648 Jay St
Utica, NY 13501
(315) 735-1482

Tribute Wall

SG

“ I first met Mike Wicks over 30 years ago. I was an Air Force Lieutenant working at Rome Air Development Center, which became Rome Laboratory and then a part of the Air Force Research Laboratory. I was working in a different part of the lab from Mike on a different part of what was then Griffiss Air Force Base in Rome, NY. I can remember being told to go meet with Mike and my first impression was that he was brilliant – but it was his boisterous smile, sparkle in his eye and engaging manner that really captured you to want to work with him. I wasn't alone, I met another young lieutenant named Bill Melvin, civilian engineers like Braham Himed and countless other people that are well known in our community – and people that also became lifelong friends. You see, Mike was a mentor, he was a colleague, he was a friend and he was the force that brought together groups of people that would form relationships and do the same for others. Mike spawned multiple threads with other groups of people like the thread that I was a part of. It was always great to meet at conferences or other events when Mike could introduce people and you got to play the relationship game to figure out how you intersected with other groups of people Mike had connected and mentored. This ability was a tribute to how bright and interested he was in so many different areas – a kind of renaissance man. Mike was also a religious person – and one remarkable thing that reflected on his religious beliefs and his leadership is that he never spoke poorly about anyone. It went with his constant smile and that glitter in eyes – he wouldn't waste his time on negativity. I last saw Mike about 18 months ago, and that smile and sparkle and energy was as strong as ever. I spoke to him about 6 months ago while he had accepted what was happening to him – even though I did not – the energy was still there as strong as it was 30 years ago. We lost Mike way too early – he will be missed and remembered by all he touched!

Scott Goldstein - April 25, 2021 at 01:36 PM

DE

“ Mike was a mentor, a supervisor, and a friend. I enjoyed the many opportunities I had to interact with him. He had a deep catholic faith and acted accordingly. He cared about people, his family and friends. His loss is premature and he will be greatly missed. May he rest in peace.

Danilo Erricolo - December 28, 2020 at 05:37 PM

WD

“ So sorry to hear of Mike's passing. He and I were roommates at RPI many years ago. We had many great times there. He was a great student and friend. Mike had a deep faith that was evident even then when we were young. We discussed any topic freely and sincerely. I recall some midnight runs to the supermarket to get sausage and peppers and generic no-name brand beer. We spent many Friday nights getting pizza with Louie, another MVCC transfer student and good friend. In spite of some of these things Mike spoke very highly of his family and spent many hours in the laboratory learning about high speed microcircuits and radio antennas. He stood up with us when my wife, Debbie, and I were married. Rest in peace Mike.

Bill and Debbie Dieffenbacher

William Dieffenbacher - December 21, 2020 at 07:05 PM

MR

*Thank you Bill for your kind words and memories of Mike. You were good friends for many years.
Mary Wicks Russo ❤️*

Mary Russo - December 27, 2020 at 06:58 PM

DZ

“ *The Holy Sacrifice of the Mass will be offered for the repose of the soul of Michael C. Wicks on Tuesday, December 22, 2020 at St. Patrick's Church in Taberg, New York.*

With sincere sympathy, and our deepest appreciation for the gift of Mike's wonderful life,

David and Jacquelyn Zasada

David Zasada - December 21, 2020 at 05:22 PM

FR

“ *Mike was a devout Catholic and steadfast in his faith which was his lifeline. Brilliant, yet humble, I am grateful for his service as a trustee of MC/BISac. Fr. John Rose*

Fr John Rose - December 20, 2020 at 03:06 PM

MR

“ Thank you to all that have shared your memories of my brother Mike. He was very proud of his long career and even more so of all his PhD students he has taught and mentored over the years.

Mike first and foremost always said "FAMILY FIRST" he was with family every Birthday, Holiday, Christmas was his favorite holiday. He would be with my family every Sunday for dinner if he wasn't traveling.

Every summer he would enjoy a long 4th of July weekend at our camp and our friends who also became his friends would love to sit and talk with Mike as he could carry on conversations on just about any topic.

But to us he was just Mike, Uncle Mike , Cousin Mike.

*He will be missed by countless people but mostly his family.
Rest in Glorious Peace dear brother
Mary, John, Sara, John Michael and all his cousins*

Mary Russo - December 20, 2020 at 10:22 AM

CT

May his soul Rest In Peace. Thoughts and prayers to the family.

Cynthia Tamer - December 20, 2020 at 05:56 PM



“ Strength & Solace Spray was purchased for the family of Michael C. "Mike" Wicks, PhD.



December 19, 2020 at 07:18 PM

MA

“ *Mary and entire Family, my deepest sympathy in the loss of Mike. He was such a smart and caring person. God Bless* 💙💙💙



mary jo arcuri - December 19, 2020 at 06:13 PM

MR

Thank you MaryJo.

Mary Russo - December 27, 2020 at 07:01 PM

NL

“ *Nadja and Lorenzo purchased the Graceful Wreath for the family of Michael C. "Mike" Wicks, PhD.*



Nadja and Lorenzo - December 19, 2020 at 09:10 AM

JM

“ *Michael was a “Hawk Tech” alum and Fraternity brother with me over forty years ago...If not for his many hours spent tutoring me in calculus, I'd probably still be working on attaining my Associates Degree...It is no surprise to see how far Michael's success carried him as his potential and determination were unparalleled...that he was a wonderful person is an understatement...I only wished that I could have had the experience to tell him all of this in person and not under these circumstances...God's blessings my friend to you and condolences to all those you have left behind...I'm sorry to have lost you far too soon.*

Joseph Montanaro - December 17, 2020 at 06:29 PM

MR

*Beautiful words Joseph. Thank you for your wonderful memories of Mike.
We are all very sad and sorry we lost him far too soon.
Mary Wicks Russo*

Mary Russo - December 27, 2020 at 07:06 PM

RA

“ *It is hard for me to encapsulate all of my thoughts about Mike Wicks in a few sentences. Mike was a friend, a mentor, my boss, my cheerleader and, in the few times we could go, a great partner for a cannoli and coffee in Utica. I loved how his first two questions, always, were "How are you? How is the family?". My wife loved Mike as much as I did - she knew, as I did, that he genuinely cared. Mike was there to advice me on every key moment in my early career. These last year or so, it was so very hard to know he was in pain and that I couldn't visit. All I can say is, inadequately as always, "Thank you, Mike, thank you!". (Ravi Adve)*

Ravi Adve - December 17, 2020 at 05:38 PM

JS

“ *I met Mike at Mohawk Valley in 1977. He was an engineering student and I was a tech student. I was fortunate enough to get to know him as not only a brilliant person but also as a good and decent person. While he was called Home far too soon, I have no doubt each day with him was a gift. Blessings and Peace be upon you.*

John "buzzard" Schneider, Belleville MI

John Schneider - December 17, 2020 at 10:19 AM

DP

“ I first met Mike when I was a young engineer working for Atlantic Research Corporation in Rome NY in the 1980s. I was very impressed with Mike both as a brilliant scientist and as a person. We also met occasionally at Wright-Patterson AFB after we both transferred there from Rome. I will never forget him.
Donald Pflug, Beavercreek OH

Donald Pflug - December 16, 2020 at 02:12 PM

MR

“ Mike was an outstanding mentor, friend, and colleague. My research greatly benefitted from his constant encouragement, support, and guidance. The unique thing about Mike was his utterly selfless dedication to the field and utmost sincerity in looking out for his proteges without a sense of "what's in it for me". I have fond memories of the numerous walks along the quad at Syracuse University in the late 1980s and early 1990s when we discussed matters pertaining to mathematics of radar signal processing, politics, medicine, and life. Our interactions over a 32 year period are replete with enriching, edifying and elevating moments, which are etched forever in memory. Thank you is too small a word to properly appreciate Mike's contributions to my life. I am forever in gratitude. May his soul rest in peace.

Muralidhar Rangaswamy

MURALIDHAR RANGASWAMY - December 16, 2020 at 11:12 AM

HU

“ *HT Kung, Mike's friend at Harvard University purchased the Florist Choice Bouquet for the family of Michael C. "Mike" Wicks, PhD.*



HT Kung, Mike's friend at Harvard University - December 15, 2020 at 05:32 PM

MR

“ *Muralidhar Rangaswamy purchased the Full Of Love Bouquet for the family of Michael C. "Mike" Wicks, PhD.*



Muralidhar Rangaswamy - December 15, 2020 at 12:50 PM

CB

“ *Mike was always an idea generator. Of ten ideas, six were unworkable with current technology, three were very good and one was outstanding. The only problem was sorting them out as Mike came up with so many.*

Mike was friendly, had an encyclopedic knowledge and was generous with his time. Mike always had time to explain concepts. Unfortunately, he expected you to keep up with him as he raced through ideas- often a challenge.

A friend to all. A mentor. A good Christian man who lived his beliefs. An excellent engineer.

His loss is a blow to the community.

Chuck Berdanier - December 15, 2020 at 10:19 AM

JM

“ Mike was one of those people that made a difference in the people he touched. He was a person who made time for us all. He made you want to be a part of what ever he was working on. From the day he arrived at Sensors from Rome Lab, he attracted many to the science that is at the heart of who we are. I will miss the chats I would have with him in the halls of UD. God bless him and his family. John Malas

John Malas - December 14, 2020 at 03:52 PM

BC

“ I am so sad to hear of Mike's passing. Peace and comfort to his family from the University of Dayton community. With sympathy, Bonnie Crews

Bonnie Crews - December 14, 2020 at 01:28 PM

DH

“ I am incredibly sad to learn of Mike Wicks passing. Mike was one of the nicest and smartest people that I worked with during my career at the Air Force Research Laboratory. His technical skills and knowledge were outstanding. His people skills were just as good. I consulted with him on both technical and workforce issues. I valued our conversations. He was a great mentor to junior members of the Lab's workforce and always had time to meet with them to discuss technical and personal matters. - Don Hanson

Donald Hanson - December 14, 2020 at 12:04 PM

BM

“ My first memory of Mike was when I first visited the Rome Site as a Division Chief and got to meet Mike. He took me into a room and tried to give me a tutorial on Space Time Adaptive Processing. After the third slide I was already lost in the math but that tells the story about Mike. He was a mentor to the young, old and his peers. It is amazing to see how many engineers from the Signal Processing Branch he was in succeeded in life due to his mentorship. Another memory was that when I visited Rome Site, Mike and I would often go out for a beer or two. The discussion was never over sports but other brainstorming ideas he had. He would literally write them out on beer napkins. I wish I kept those napkins. He was always thinking of new sensing ideas. Another attribute of Mike was his positive attitude. Despite the hardships to the Rome Site personnel due to BRAC, Mike tried his best to re-establish a world class radar capability at Wright-Patt. Again, he mentored many more people in the Dayton area and I had the privilege of working with a few of them. Another memory of Mike was his kind heart. He was a generous and gracious person with a big heart. I will certainly miss Mike but I will never forget him. May he rest in peace.

Bill Moore

Bill Moore - December 14, 2020 at 11:32 AM

ER

“ Mike was advising quite a few Ph.D. students at the University of Dayton. The impact of his absence will be felt across the Electrical and Computer Engineering department and the entire School of Engineering. On top of that, he was a very nice person. We will miss him dearly.

*Eddy Rojas
Dean of Engineering
University of Dayton*

Eddy Rojas - December 14, 2020 at 11:23 AM

EL

“ In the summer of 2016, I walked into ISR branch of UDRI to look for some stuff to do related to my research field. A friendly gentleman with a t-short and shorts came up to me. " Are you the guy from our material branch? Ethan, right?", "I am Michael Wicks, and let's do some interesting radar things together!"

Just like that, it started a wonderful 4-year blessing journey with Michael. During these time, we became very close, and my entire family also got to know him. He was not only one of my closest friends but also a great mentor. We have countless breakfast meetings at the Panera Bread, dinner at the City BBQ, and Olive Garde. We shared so many laughs and sorrow with our friends. It was a great time. Michael accompanied me for my two important life milestones: career advancement and marriage. He canceled an important meeting so he could attend my wedding!

Michael was an exceptional engineer and a wonderful mentor. I am truly blessed to know him and hang out with him and our friends. With that, I miss you with all my heart.



Ethan Lin - December 14, 2020 at 10:43 AM

BH

“ Mike was my mentor and my best friend. He believed in me and gave me a chance to grow and mature under his leadership. I will never forget his moto: “bring everyone under the same tent, and let them innovate.” That was his approach to leadership. I will miss my friend, but my family and I are grateful forever for what he has done for me.

May the Lord have mercy on your soul, Mike, and rest in peace.

Braham Himed

Braham Himed - December 14, 2020 at 07:36 AM

JS

“ Mike was a special guy and he will be missed by all who knew him. May he rest in peace.

John F Spina

John F Spina - December 13, 2020 at 11:16 AM

SG

“ 1 file added to the album Memories Album



Sevgi Zubeyde Gurbuz - December 12, 2020 at 01:12 PM

SG

“ Mike was a transformational leader and mentor for me as a young officer when I was in the USAF Sensors Directorate in Rome NY. It was due to his impact and motivation that I pursued a PhD in radar signal processing. He was a warm, kind hearted person, with an infectious smile. I always enjoyed catching up with him at the IEEE Radar Conference, listening to his new ideas and funny stories. He was always optimistic, always looking positive towards the future, and always ready to give great advice, helping in any way he can. Whenever he saw me, he would laugh and give me a big bear hug - his energy instantly uplifting those around him. I will always carry him in my heart, and am forever grateful for having known him...I am a better person for it. May God give him eternal rest, comfort and strength to his family and all who love him.

Sevgi Zubeyde Gurbuz - December 12, 2020 at 01:03 PM

JG

“ Mike was a remarkable engineer and extremely kind human being. He was the most creative and compassionate colleague I have known. Excited by his many ideas, Mike would stop by and ask “Got a minute?”, then patiently explain the concept for an hour. He helped and guided countless engineers in their careers to reach their aspirations. Known internationally for his talents and friendships, Mike felt most comfortable at home with family and friends. He will be deeply missed but not forgotten.
Jerry Genello

Jerry Genello - December 12, 2020 at 11:32 AM

WD

“ I was truly blessed to know and work with Mike. He was an outstanding example of a servant leader.

Walt Downing - December 12, 2020 at 11:23 AM

FW

“ In memory of the Michael I knew; You were always there, you lived down the street from me, MANY years ago, and you were so polite and nice to everyone who came in contact with you. But that was the way you were brought up, from grandparents, to parents, aunt and uncle and your cousins that I got to know very well. You went forward in life to make a very well known and educated man, that never forgot his faith and upbringing. When you were in town, you always made time to stop at our church and remember how you were brought up, and when needed you rolled up those sleeves and always pitched in. You gave in faith, friendship, family and in life. There was a young man that grew up on Blandina Street, cared for all of his family and friends, educated himself to the max, from Utica, to Rome and on to Ohio; and never forgot his ROOTS. You have taken a route to a heavenly and serene place, but you will never be forgotten. In the Air Force they say you have earned your Wings, so Michael when you see all the smiling faces of your family, and I know you will have a long conversation with OUR LORD and HIS BLESSED MOTHER, please pass on your love to all you have left behind, especially the Wicks, DeBrango and Ollerenshaw families.
Fiorinda Wilson



FIORINDA B. WILSON - December 12, 2020 at 11:04 AM

MR

Thank you Fiorinda this is my brother Mike and you said it all so eloquently. God Bless

mary Russo - December 12, 2020 at 03:49 PM

FW

Thank you, and it all came from my heart Fiorinda

FIORINDA B. WILSON - December 13, 2020 at 10:16 AM

JM

“ *Michael worked tirelessly to help everyone he encountered - to make them successful and a better person.*

Thanks Mike.

John McNamara

John McNamara - December 12, 2020 at 08:48 AM

HG

“ *Mike was an inspirational engineer and a kind and generous friend. He had a wonderful ability to make everyone feel special. We shall miss him, but we will never forget him.*

Hugh Griffiths

Hugh Griffiths - December 12, 2020 at 06:28 AM

JS

“ *I had the extreme pleasure of knowing Dr Mike Wicks at the USAF Rome Laboratory. He always treated me with the utmost respect as a woman in the Engineering field as well as a regular person. Our mutual eccentric sense of humor was a good conversational match. I extend my kindest condolences to his family. He is one of the finest persons of quality that I have ever known. Jackie Smith*

Jackie Smith - December 11, 2020 at 09:06 PM

MS

“ *Mike and I truly enjoyed our conversations with Michael. He always knew how to connect with others thru common interests. Our religious and political conversations were always my favorite. Sitting around the Russo campfire with him was an honor. Thanks Mary and John for sharing your brother with us. Rest in Peace Mike*

Mary Squillante - December 11, 2020 at 12:43 PM

MR

Every one of our St. Lawrence River Family knew Mike and looked forward to his yearly visits. Being with his family, a good campfire, a glass (or 2) of wine with John and great conversations with everyone is what Mike enjoyed most when visiting our camp in Clayton celebrating my birthday 4th of July weekend every summer for the past 28 years.

Thank you all for loving my brother.

mary Russo - December 12, 2020 at 03:56 PM

FD

“ It was my honor and privilege to know Mike over his 40 year career .He would always start a conversation with "How are you doing " no matter what the topic was.Thats the way I will always remember him

*.
Fred Demma*

fred demma - December 11, 2020 at 10:50 AM

JS

Hear Hear ! Mike was an original. :)

Jackie Smith - December 11, 2020 at 09:11 PM

JS

“ Mike Wicks was selfless. It did not matter what was going on in his life, his primary interest was who he was talking to. "How are you doing? What can I do for you? I always pray for you." Mike always made people feel like they were the most important person in the room. I am grateful to have been able to work with Mike through IEEE. It was a pleasure to see how respected he was in the radar community. But mostly I am grateful to have known him and count him as my friend. He will be greatly missed.

--Judy Scharmann

Judy Scharmann - December 11, 2020 at 10:04 AM

JD

“ 2 files added to the album Memories Album



Jim Day - December 11, 2020 at 08:56 AM

VR

“ *Mike was a brilliant engineer and a considerate person who cared deeply about his family, his work and colleagues, and his community. I will miss the talks that we had about work, school, family and other issues. His encouragement helped me to study for and complete my Ph.D.*

Virginia Ross - December 11, 2020 at 08:14 AM

GD

“ *Gideon Donato lit a candle in memory of Michael C. "Mike" Wicks, PhD*



Gideon Donato - December 11, 2020 at 06:10 AM

JM

“ *Mike was not only a very smart and dedicated engineer he was always helpful and compassionate. He was always happy to see you and will be missed.*

Jack Mineo

Jack Mineo - December 10, 2020 at 11:14 PM

JS

Hear Hear ! Mike was an original. :)

Jackie Smith - December 11, 2020 at 09:10 PM

BA

Michael was always such a respectful young boy who grew up to be a fine "Gentle-man". My sympathy to Mary and her family.

Betty Arcuri (Michael's Mom)

Betty Arcuri - December 14, 2020 at 11:10 AM

MR

Thank you Mrs. Arcuri, Mike was one of a kind and will be missed by many. Thank you for your kind words. Mary Russo

Mary Russo - December 20, 2020 at 10:10 AM



“ *Magnificent Life Spray was purchased for the family of Michael C. "Mike" Wicks, PhD.*



December 10, 2020 at 10:11 PM



“ *Beautiful in Blue was purchased for the family of Michael C. "Mike" Wicks, PhD.*



December 10, 2020 at 01:10 PM