



## Michael "Mike" J. Wachniak

May 23, 2025

Michael "Mike" J. Wachniak

"We can be heroes, just for one day." – David Bowie

But Michael Wachniak was a hero every day—to those he loved, and to all who had the gift of knowing him.

Michael Wachniak, a devoted biomedical engineer, father, brother, and friend, passed away peacefully on the afternoon of May 23, 2025, age 66. He leaves behind a legacy of strength, love, and quiet courage.

He was the proud and loving father of Kimberly, and the guiding light and adoptive father of Katie and Rachel—each of whom carry his wisdom, humor, and kindness forward. He was the beloved brother of the late Sharon (Jim), Roseann, and Len (Kelly), and the cherished uncle of Kelly, Tim (Ryan), Joe (Janice), Jim, and Ben (Lylu).

To his friends, he was a loyal constant. To his granddogs, Fred and Apollo, he was "Grandpa"—the keeper of treats and calm moments. He was always there: reliable, steady, strong.

Michael's kindness ran deep. He gave his time, energy, and skills freely, without ever needing to be asked or thanked. Whether mentoring someone at

work or helping a neighbor with a repair, he showed up with tools in hand and heart wide open.

Despite a long journey through medical conditions and surgeries—including living with the rare metabolic disorder alkaptonuria—he never once complained. He met every challenge with quiet strength, fighting with every ounce of determination he had. Even in pain, he carried on with humor, grit, and an unshakable resilience. To his daughter, he wasn't just a hero for one day—he was a hero, every single day.

His hands were always at work. At home or at his beloved cabin, he built, repaired, and created. He took down trees, hauled water from the river, split logs, framed walls, caulked corners, and kindled fires that warmed both body and soul. The cabin wasn't just a retreat—it was a labor of love, a living testament to his skill and devotion.

Yard work, too, was never a chore—it was a meditation. Whether on a mower or heavy equipment, clearing brush or hand-trimming a stubborn edge of grass with scissors, he brought care and precision to every task. His attention to detail was legendary, often hilarious, and always heartfelt.

He found joy in traveling, handball, softball, volleyball, bicycling, swimming, snowmobiling, and camping under the stars. Packers Sundays, TV crime dramas, and the voice of David Bowie were part of his soundtrack, and through it all, he showed us that real heroes don't need capes. They just need heart. He believed in quiet heroism. In showing up. In doing what needed to be done, even when no one was looking.

His kitchen smelled of garlic, cookies, and laughter. His sidewalk was always cleared of snow—often the whole block and alley, too. He canned red sauce & apples, dominated rummy 500, and found meaning in simple, honest work.

And now, like a Starman waiting in the sky, he leaves us with stars in our eyes, calluses on our hands, and deep gratitude in our hearts.

Though he's no longer in our sight, his legacy lives on—in the love he gave, the walls he built, and the example he set.

Rest gently, Dad. Thank you—for everything.

In lieu of flowers, donations in Michael's memory may be made to:

The AKU Society of North America  
6352 Corte del Abeto, Ste B  
Carlsbad, CA 92011

Celebration of Life Gathering will be held Friday, May 30 from 1:00 – 4:00 PM at ROZGA FUNERAL & CREMATION SERVICES – ROZGA-WALLOCH CHAPEL with a Time of Remembrance from 3:00 – 3:30 PM.

Rozga Funeral & Cremation Services  
Rozga-Walloch Chapel  
4309 South 20th Street  
Milwaukee, WI 53221

# Previous Events

## Celebration of Life Gathering

MAY 30. 1:00 PM - 4:00 PM (CT)

Rozga Funeral & Cremation Services - Rozga-Walloch Chapel  
4309 South 20th Street  
Milwaukee, WI 53221  
(414) 281-7145  
<https://www.rozgafuneral.com/>

## Time of Remembrance

MAY 30. 3:00 PM - 3:30 PM (CT)

Rozga Funeral & Cremation Services - Rozga-Walloch Chapel  
4309 South 20th Street  
Milwaukee, WI 53221  
(414) 281-7145  
<https://www.rozgafuneral.com/>

# Tribute Wall

MS

“ Michael Schwartz planted a [Memorial Tree](/store/Product.aspx?ProductId=4518) in honor of Michael "Mike" J. Wachniak.

Michael Schwartz - May 31, 2025 at 12:13 PM

MS

“ Michael Schwartz purchased the Peaceful White Lilies Basket for the family of Michael "Mike" J. Wachniak.



Michael Schwartz - May 31, 2025 at 12:13 PM

DS

“ Dennis S. planted a [Memorial Tree](/store/Product.aspx?ProductId=4518) in honor of Michael "Mike" J. Wachniak.

Dennis S. - May 30, 2025 at 04:57 PM

JA

“ Health issues are preventing me from bidding a final Farewell to my colleague.  
He was a pleasure to work alongside.  
John Albers - Clinical Engineering

John Albers - May 30, 2025 at 12:14 PM

SM

“ Sue M. planted a [Memorial Tree](/store/Product.aspx?ProductId=4518) in honor of Michael "Mike" J. Wachniak.

Sue M. - May 29, 2025 at 04:54 PM

CV

“ Colleen Hansen & Herb Vella planted a [Memorial Tree](/store/Product.aspx?ProductId=4518) in honor of Michael "Mike" J. Wachniak.

Colleen Hansen & Herb Vella - May 28, 2025 at 11:07 AM

SR

“ Steve Rooney planted a [Memorial Tree](/store/Product.aspx?ProductId=4518) in honor of Michael "Mike" J. Wachniak.

Steve Rooney - May 27, 2025 at 10:01 PM

SR

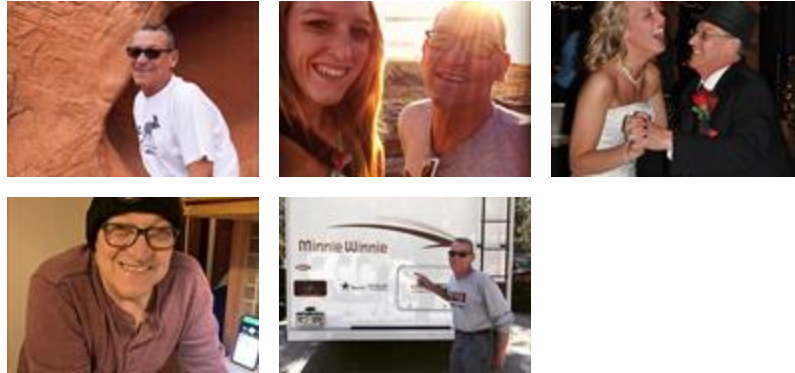
“ Steve Rooney purchased the Enchanted Cottage for the family of Michael "Mike" J. Wachniak.



Steve Rooney - May 27, 2025 at 10:01 PM

KW

“ 16 files added to the album Main



Kimberly Woods - May 27, 2025 at 12:19 PM

MS

*Beautiful pics, Kimberly. My deepest condolences to you and the family. I knew Mike at Ascension Wauwatosa. He was definitely a hero and that's an understatement. May he rest in peace. Mary Sweet*

Mary Sweet - May 27, 2025 at 12:39 PM

DM

*So sorry to hear of the passing of Mike. A gentleman and inspiration to be around and work with.*

Dana Martin - May 30, 2025 at 06:01 PM