



Michael Andrew Petlow

July 4, 1922 - June 27, 2014

91 years young, passed away peacefully and surrounded by his family at his home on June 27, 2014.

Mike lived the American Dream. He was a man of many talents and many interests. He was a charismatic man with a genuine personality and unbelievable intellect. He was tenacious and a self-taught man with a desire to conquer the unknown; he valued the pursuit of knowledge. He was an entrepreneur, a restaurateur, a philanthropist, but above all else, he was a family man. He was proud of his family and his family meant the world to him; not a day went by that he didn't make that known. Mike's love for his family coupled with his warm and kind-hearted nature gave him the ability to touch people, near and far, and it's this love that stemmed from his family that made everyone feel welcomed and a part of his family.

He was born July 4, 1922 in Fort William, Ontario, Canada to Catharyna and Andrew Petlow. Mike left high school after the 10th grade and worked as a deckhand on the SS Canadian and the Lethbridge, canal ships that plied the Great Lakes from Fort William to Montreal. From 1942 to 1945, Mike served in the Royal Canadian Army stationed on Prince Rupert Island in British Columbia. He returned to his hometown after his military service and earned an Ontario Provincial Certificate in Accounting. On June 7, 1947 Mike married the love of his life, Jennie Clara Syroid, and they were blessed with three sons: Gary, Brian, and Andrew. Together they opened the Columbia Grill on a cold, snowy winter's day in 1953 and continued its operation until finally

selling it in 1974. Being the entrepreneur that he was, he also opened The Millionaire Drive-In, a drive-in restaurant that served delicious hamburgers, Sno-Cap Root Beer, and had parking for sixty cars where his niece, Cathie, worked as one of the car hops. While Mike ran the restaurants, he was a member of the Canadian Restaurant Association of Canada and served as its director for five years.

To escape the extreme winters in Canada, Mike and Jennie "wintered" for six weeks in Desert Hot Springs each year and travelled extensively throughout Southern California. They planted their roots in beautiful Santa Barbara during "Fiesta Week" in 1964. In the late sixties, Mike and Jennie opened Toby's Restaurant in two locations, Long Beach and Palm Springs. Bitten by the "real estate bug" Mike began investing in rental properties in the greater Santa Barbara area in the late sixties. In the early seventies, Mike joined the distinguished company of Pitts and Bachmann, Realtors, as a real estate agent and later became a loan officer for Great Western Savings and Loan, helping many Santa Barbara families buy their first home. Mike's love for real estate eventually evolved into the founding of his own business, Columbia Property Management, where he purchased rental properties for single-family residences. His youngest son, Andrew, continues to run and grow his business to this day.

During his initial years as a California resident, Mike developed a deep sense of patriotism for America which led to him and his wife becoming naturalized citizens on December 15, 1977. In turn, this led to a new passion for politics. He was a major fundraiser for the Republican Party in Santa Barbara County starting with the "Reagan Roundup" at Monty Robert's "Flag is up Farms" in Santa Ynez. He was also part of the welcoming committee at the airport hanger when Queen Elizabeth visited Santa Barbara to meet with President Reagan and tour "Rancho del Cielo" (his California ranch dubbed the Western White House). He worked on campaigns for President Reagan, President George H. W. Bush, and President George W. Bush and Governors Pete Wilson, George Deukmejian, and Arnold Schwarzenegger. He also rallied for

candidates in other statewide races and local elections. He served as an Alternate Delegate to the National Republican Conventions in Philadelphia and San Diego. He served as President of the Lincoln Club of Santa Barbara for seven years where his dear friend, Brooks Firestone, affectionately referred him to as "Captain America." He was appointed by Governor Pete Wilson to serve on the 19th District Agricultural Association Board at Earl Warren Showgrounds and he graciously accepted the appointment. From 1992 to 1993, he served as President of the Santa Barbara-Puerto Vallarta Sister Cities Committee, and for over 25 years, he and his wife Jennie traveled to Puerto Vallarta once a year; he was even presented the "Key to the City" in the Puerto Vallarta News Paper. Soon Puerto Vallarta became another hometown for Mike and his Puerto Vallarta friends became part of his family.

Mike was a generous man and he loved being involved. He was a Shriner for 58 years and an Ancient, Free, and Accepted 32nd Degree Mason of the Scottish Rite for 59 years. In 1963 he served as President of the Lakehead Shrine Club and directed the Shrine Circus for three years when it came to town. He also was a charter member of the Lakehead Shrine Motor Patrol and took part in many Shrine parades and conventions. He was also a member of the Santa Barbara Elks Lodge #613 for 32 years. Mike's love for helping everyone in need led to his involvement in various other community organizations including the Santa Barbara Transition House, Friends of the Lobero, and Music Academy of the West. Mike's love for politics and philanthropic causes was only rivaled by his love for his native Canada and hockey. He loved the two so much that when Wayne Gretzky joined the Los Angeles Kings in 1988 he was by far their biggest fan.

Mike was preceded in death by his parents and sister, Anne Martin. He is survived by his loving wife of 67 years, Jennie and sons: Gary (Debra), Brian (Stephanie), and Andrew (Carolyn). He also leaves behind seven grandchildren: Sam (Kim), Stefani (James), Louanne (Michael), Michael,

Michelle, Carter, and Justin; and six great-grandchildren: Nadia, Logan, Amelie, Verity, Ashtyn, and Danielle; and his dear niece Cathie Martin and grand-niece Bonnie Aguiar.

Mike's love of dancing and Big Band Jazz music, and his zest for life touched us all. He was a proud, honorable, and wise man and he would light up any room he walked into. He was an extraordinary individual and he will be greatly missed by his family and friends. We will remember him fondly and cherish the impact he has had on all of us. Above all, we will always remember what Mike always said: "The best is yet to come!"

In lieu of flowers, you may make a donation to Visiting Nurse and Hospice Care of Santa Barbara. His family will hold a private memorial service with arrangements entrusted to Welch-Ryce-Haider Funeral Chapels.