



# Michael Philip Rushing

July 24, 1956 - June 2, 2023

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"We are confident, I say, and willing rather to be absent from the body,  
and to be present with the Lord... 2nd Corinthians 5:8

Michael Phillip Rushing, age 66, passed away peacefully on Friday morning, June 2, 2023, at HCA Florida Ocala Hospital. He was a recent resident of a skilled nursing facility in Ocala. Michael was born to Joe and Margaret Rushing at Alachua General Hospital while his father attended the University of Florida School of Pharmacy.

Mike's early years were in Gainesville, Fort Myers, and later, in Ocoee, where he attended Spring Lake Elementary School and Starke Lake Baptist Church. There he came to faith in Christ and was baptized at age 5. He grew up in Winter Garden, attending Winter Garden and Dillard Street Elementary schools. He was also a member of Calvary Baptist Church, where he was active in Boys Stockades, Sunday School, and Vacation Bible Schools.

At Lakeview High School in the Class of 1974, Mike joined the Interact service club, and enjoyed pick-up baseball and basketball games with neighborhood friends. Like many Winter Garden teen boys, he often worked during freezing winter nights, firing the orange groves all night to prevent damage to the fruit, then getting permission to stay home from school the next day.

After early admission to Valencia Community College, Mike earned an Associate of Arts degree. He attended Florida Technological University (FTU) while he considered different majors but ended further studies to work full time. He worked for Cumberland Farms in Winter Garden, Service Merchandise and Montgomery Ward in Orlando and as a night auditor at the Orlando Sheraton Twin Towers. After moving to Orlando, he spent his remaining working years with The Southland Corporation before retiring on disability in 1989.

Mike lived in Orlando for over 30 years, often riding his bike around downtown before becoming physically disabled. He was active in the Libertarian Party for some time before moving further right politically in later years. In the late 1990s, he wrote for the Orlando Weekly under the pen name Mike Hunter for a page called "Getting It Right with Downtown Mike." He also volunteered with GOALS, Greater Orlando Area Legal Services, an organization helping low-income people with legal needs. When Mike could no longer live alone, he returned to Ocoee, living at Sleepy Harbor Condominiums until he required more specialized nursing care.

Mike struggled with painful challenges much of his life, but found peace in his faith, in the Scriptures, in worship services and fellowship with friends. He enjoyed classic hymns, early 1970's rock and "outlaw" country music, James Bond and Travis Magee novels, the beach, his salt-water aquarium, and nautical memorabilia. He loved cowboys and westerns and looked up to his Grandpa Driggers and Uncle Earl Driggers as tough working cattlemen. Spiritual leaders and teachers he most admired were Martin Luther, Reverend Vernon McGee and Dr. Jeffrey Moore, former pastor at Trinity Lutheran Church in downtown Orlando.

Michael is preceded in death by his father, Joe Rushing, his paternal grandparents Dan, Clydell and Ann Rushing, his maternal grandparents Claude and Velma Driggers, his aunt Nadine and uncle Richard Kannon, his uncles Don Driggers and Leon Terry, his cousins Jeff, Roger and Paul Driggers, his second cousins Macie Smith, Haley Rushing and Logan Wagner, and his aunt Irma Driggers, who passed away in infancy.

He is survived by his mother, Margaret Rushing, his siblings, Beth, Ken (Gina), Van (Marie) Rushing and Kim (Mike) Mitchell; his uncles Earl and Adrian (Josh) Driggers, his aunt Sue and uncle Bill Jordan, his aunts Dorothy, Julie and Margueritte Driggers and his aunt Debbie Terry.

He is also survived by his ten nieces and nephews; Ben, Thomas, Jenna and Paige Rushing, Shannon and Thomas Ballew and Nathan Weaver, Chris and Alex Mitchell, Skyler Teal and Samantha and Jeff Shapiro, and his cousins: Greg, Brett, Ron, Ray, Valerie and Lauren Driggers, Nikki MacFarland, Julie Cannon, Krystal Way, Martha Ann Hall, Connie Day, Adrienne Riveros, Charles Wagner Jr., Laurie Zaleski, Leon II and Amanda Terry, Mary Himes, and a larger extended family.

Michael's favorite Bible verse was Isaiah 40:31. Now free from life's pain and struggle in the prison of his body, he can soar in freedom in the presence of Jesus Christ his Savior.

“But they that wait upon the Lord shall renew their strength;  
they shall mount up with wings as eagles; they shall run, and  
not be weary; and they shall walk, and not faint.” Isaiah 40:31

Celebration of Life Memorial Service  
Marie H. Williams Memorial Prayer Chapel  
11 a.m. on June 17, 2023  
Reception following in Faith Hall

First Baptist Church Orlando  
3000 South John Young Parkway  
Orlando, FL 32805

In lieu of flowers, memorial gifts can be made in Mike’s memory to  
The Myasthenia Gravis Foundation of America to fund research for a cure.

MGFA National Office Address: 290 Turnpike Road, Suite #5-315, Westborough, MA  
01581

To donate by phone: 1-800-541-5454 To donate online: [myasthenia.org](http://myasthenia.org)

A donation in Mike’s memory can also be made to your favorite ministry if you prefer.

# Previous Events

## Celebration of Life

JUN 17. 11:00 AM (ET)

First Baptist Church of Orlando  
3000 S. John Young Parkway  
Orlando, FL 32805