



## Hon. Mikal "Mike" Jerome Simonson

November 18, 1947 - August 5, 2016

The Hon. Mikal Jerome "Mike" Simonson, 68, of Valley City, N.D. died in the early morning hours of Aug. 5, at Mercy Hospital in Valley City. Mike was born Nov. 18, 1947 in Portland, Ore. to his parents, Elton Jerome "Jerry" and Alice Barbara (Tollefson) Simonson and was the oldest of four children. Mike wed Mary Elizabeth Paulson on May 30, 1970 in Bismarck, N.D.

Shortly after his birth, Mike moved with his parents to a farm in rural Watford City, N.D. where he grew up and attended Watford City High School, serving as class president his senior year and participating in many sports. After high school he attended one year of college at Dickinson State University before transferring to Valley City State University, where he met his future wife and graduated with a bachelor's degree in social studies education. For three years, Mike taught history and social studies in Ashley and Fort Yates, N.D. before attending the University of North Dakota School of Law in Grand Forks. Following Law School, Mike entered private practice before taking on the role of Barnes County State's Attorney. He would be elected County Judge in 1987 and would assume the role of District Judge a few years thereafter, serving his community from the bench for nearly 25 years.

Mike was an avid golfer in his prime, playing in many summer men's leagues at the Valley City Town & Country Club and in later years could be easily convinced to join his boys in the boat fishing or out in the field hunting grouse

and pheasants behind their labs, Jake and Gunnar who both held a special place in Mike's heart along with his black lab mix, Shunka. He was quick with a pun and had a wry sense of humor that spilled over into all aspects of his life, including his love of fantasy sports and his creative team nicknames. He especially enjoyed baseball, attending numerous Twins games each summer in Minneapolis and visiting various other MLB parks around the country on trips with family and friends.

He is survived by his wife, his sons Nicholas Simonson (Angela Sersha) of Marshall, Minn., and Benjamin Simonson of Valley City. He is also survived by two grandchildren, A.J. Simonson, and Jackson Simonson of Marshall and his sisters Karen (Daniel) Christ of Northfield, Minn., and Margaret (Denton) Zubke of Watford City and nine nieces and nephews. Mike was preceded in death by his parents and his brother Kenneth Simonson.

Visitation, prayer and celebration of life services for Mike will be held at 7 p.m., Monday, Aug. 8 at Oliver-Nathan Chapel in Valley City; funeral services will be held at 11:30 a.m., Tuesday, Aug.9, at All Saints Episcopal Church in Valley City. In lieu of flowers, the family requests that memorials be made in his honor to the VCSU Foundation, the Open Door Center of Valley City or a charity of your choice.

An online guestbook for Mike is available at [www.oliver-nathanchapel.com](http://www.oliver-nathanchapel.com)

# Cemetery Details

## Woodbine Cemetery

Valley City, ND

# Previous Events

## Prayer Service

AUG 8. 7:00 PM (CT)

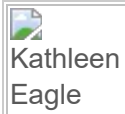
Oliver-Nathan Funeral Chapel  
251 Central Ave. S.  
Valley City, ND

## Celebration of Life

AUG 9. 11:30 AM (CT)

All Saints Episcopal Church  
516 Central Ave. N.  
Valley City, ND

# Tribute Wall



“ *Mary, my deepest sympathy. It's been such a long time since we shared those "salad years" in Fort Yates, but I have vivid memories of you and Mike. What a lovely couple! I was a young, well-intentioned, terribly naive teacher, and Mike was a role model for me. He was a wonderful teacher. His students adored him. I attended the Class of '71 reunion in June, and we reminisced. Mike was one we all remembered affectionately and with great respect. The sad news of his death came today through Claudia Netterville. You, my dear friend, are in my thought and prayers.*

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**Kathleen Eagle** - August 12, 2016 at 05:05 PM

A square profile picture with the initials "TS" in white on a grey background.

“ *Dear Mary, Nick, Ben and Families,*

*While it is true that Mikal is our wise cousin, it is also true we know him to be someone whose heart is as deep as the ocean. This provides a great capacity to invest in family and appreciate even the most subtle forms of leisure and the comfort that comes with just being together. We fondly recall a time when Mary and Mikal drove hundreds of miles to meet us and others at the ranch to build and launch things from a trebuchet, to play world championship Frisbee golf, and to top it all off with an epic ice cold water fight before enjoying a sunset on the porch. We hold these experiences with Mikal in our hearts and hold you now in our thoughts and prayers.*

*With love,*

*Tom, Kim, Ellie and Julia Simonson*

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**Tom Simonson** - August 10, 2016 at 04:58 PM

DZ

“ At this difficult time in your life we pray that God will grant you and your family the strength and peace that you need to get through this. You will be remembered in our thoughts and prayers.  
Dev & Sheila Zubke

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Dev Zubke - August 10, 2016 at 02:28 PM

GH

“ My extended condolences Mike's family and his siblings.  
My last conversation with Mike was at one of our class reunions. He was greeting people as they would come into the gathering. My short time with him was filled with a recounting of school days gone by and his profession as District Judge.

While attending high school in Watford City, one of our classmates had corrective surgery on his feet and was confined to a wheel chair. The school had two floors and only stairs to get us from one floor to another. The first day back in school the classmate was sitting in his wheel chair at the bottom of the stairs, Mike came upon the situation and without hesitation rounded up two additional classmates along with himself and we carried our class mate wheel chair and all up the stairs. Mike asked us if we would be available again. I said count on us Mike.

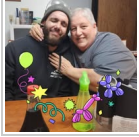
At a school reunion, Mike came up and said hi and we recounted those days in school together. He shared some about the rigors and rewards of being a district judge. He said his crowning achievement that none of his decisions as a judge had ever been overturned on appeal.

A great professional, leader, classmate and someone to know.

Gary Hoffmann

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Gary Hoffmann - August 10, 2016 at 08:36 AM



“ *Claudia Hoyt lit a candle in memory of Hon. Mikal "Mike" Jerome Simonson*



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**Claudia Hoyt** - August 09, 2016 at 10:40 AM



“ *My sincerest condolences to the family of Mr. Simonson. I was a student of his in 1971 at Fort Yates. He was an amazing teacher and wonderful person. He made Problems of Democracy fun and interesting. He would hold court, and debates. Once in class we had court, my twin brother and I were the lawyers, and we got into an argument, and Mr. Simonson fined us each a nickel!!!! I also had the pleasure of sitting on a jury that he presided over. What was so cool, he remember me!! After the trial was over, we had lunch at Perkins, I very much enjoyed visiting with him. I wish I would of known sooner of his walking on, I would of liked to attend his funeral. It sounds like he would of liked us all to have a celebration of life for him. Again my condolences, thoughts and prayers to the family.*

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**Claudia Hoyt** - August 09, 2016 at 10:39 AM



“ *Gloriann Gaarder lit a candle in memory of Hon. Mikal "Mike" Jerome Simonson*



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**Gloriann Gaarder** - August 09, 2016 at 08:43 AM

RM

“ Ray And Luella Schulz Mikes lit a candle in memory of Hon. Mikal "Mike" Jerome Simonson



Ray and Luella Schulz Mikes - August 08, 2016 at 10:13 PM

DO

“ Mikal Simonson was my friend,  
I knew he'd be so until the end.  
But I thought that I would go before,  
The hand would knock on Mikal's door,  
So I wasn't ready....  
He was a Judge, yet he wasn't judgmental,  
I knew him most as kind and gentle,  
and generous, and smart, and witty, and thoughtful,  
and as a man who put back more than he took.  
I shall miss him greatly.  
Doug Okland  
Mary, out thoughts are with you and Nick and Ben

Doug Okland - August 08, 2016 at 08:09 PM

DS

“ Karen and Margaret and your wonderful families - I pray in Jesus name for healing and sweet memories to always linger within you. My deepest and sincere sympathy goes out to all of you. May the glory of God have mercy on all of you. All our love, Jim and DeNae Schmit 🙏🌹



DeNae and Jim Schmit - August 08, 2016 at 07:18 PM

JS

*I was so sorry to hear of Mikal's death. He was such a positive and important person in the class of 1965. He will be missed. Know we are thinking of and care about you and your families. Julie Claire Schwartz*

Julie Claire Schwartz - August 08, 2016 at 07:59 PM

VR

“ *Vicky Royse lit a candle in memory of Hon. Mikal "Mike" Jerome Simonson*



Vicky Royse - August 08, 2016 at 05:16 PM

VR

“ *I am so sorry for your loss of Mike. I will miss seeing him every Friday. He fought a hard battle. Thinking of you and God Bless.*

Vicky Royse - August 08, 2016 at 05:15 PM



“ *Beautiful in Blue was purchased for the family of Hon. Mikal "Mike" Jerome Simonson.*



August 08, 2016 at 03:28 PM

HP

“ Dear Mary and family,  
My sincere condolences. I always appreciated Judge Simonson's fair and thoughtful ways through out my years at Barnes County Social Services. Peace be with you all. Sincerely,  
Heather Pautz

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**Heather M. Pautz** - August 08, 2016 at 02:32 PM

GP

“ I am so sad and sorry to learn of Mike's passing. Mike gave me my first job out of law school, and immediately became not just a mentor but also a dear friend. Funny, organized beyond belief (I will never forget the legal pad upon which he kept a neatly numbered list of things he needed to do), and very, very smart - Mike was patient and kind to me, and incredibly supportive. God Bless the Simonson family. Rest in Peace, Mike.

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**Glenn Pomeroy** - August 08, 2016 at 02:19 PM

LI

“ Mary, I am so sorry for your loss. In His Love, Linda Kinzler

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**Linda** - August 08, 2016 at 01:54 PM

RM

“ Judge Simonson was one of the very first judges before whom I had the privilege of practicing law. He was always a consummate legal scholar and fair on the bench, approachable and respectful to the attorneys who appeared in front of him. "Blessed are those who mourn, for they shall be comforted."

*My thoughts and prayers are with you during this time of mourning, and if I may do anything please do not hesitate to contact me.*

*Robert Wade Martin*

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**Robert W Martin** - August 08, 2016 at 01:40 PM

DR

“ I mourn the passing of Mikal, a special friend and classmate! May you, the friends and family, be blessed and uplifted by many special memories of this great person!

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**Darrell Rud** - August 08, 2016 at 12:09 PM

SP

“ Severson, Wogsland & Liebl, PC purchased the *Beautiful in Blue* for the family of Hon. Mikal "Mike" Jerome Simonson.




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**Severson, Wogsland & Liebl, PC** - August 08, 2016 at 10:49 AM

CS

“ I am sorry for your loss. I appeared many times in front of Mike. He was a hard working conscientious judge and I enjoyed his quirky sense of humor. He laughed as hard as anyone at a skit we had upon Judge Hoberg's re-retirement when "Judge Mike" couldn't help out at Stutsman County because he was too busy checking out all the deals he could now get as an AARP member.

Cynthia Schaar - August 08, 2016 at 09:43 AM

 Trish Mohr

“ Mary, I too treasure memories shared with Shea's. Mike will be missed and always loved. I pray for all of you, his family and friends. May he rest in peace.

Trish Mohr - August 08, 2016 at 09:38 AM

TC

“ The Schwan Food Company purchased the Basket Full of Wishes for the family of Hon. Mikal "Mike" Jerome Simonson.



The Schwan Food Company - August 08, 2016 at 08:53 AM

TS

“ Mikal was my pinochle partner for 45 yrs. Mike kept score always and he and I always carried a lead in games won over our competition! The baseball trip we took in 2014 will always be a special memory, amongst many! Tim Shea

tim shea - August 07, 2016 at 11:08 PM

LR

“ *Mary, Nick, Ben and family*  
*God be with you all in this time of sorrow. Mikal was a great friend from the time we met in Bismarck around 1968. I will treasure the many happy times we spent together. Your loss is also our loss.*  
*Love*  
*Larry and Sharon*

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**Larry Rosenow** - August 07, 2016 at 10:33 PM

BM

“ *Mary:*

*I just learned of Mike's passing via the ND Supreme Court website, and, needless to say, am very saddened by this occurrence. As fellow Watford City residents, law school classmates, county judges, district judges, baseball fans and golfers, we obviously shared a lot in common, and made some great memories, dating all the way back to 1973.*

*It is a compliment of the highest order that Mike earned the lasting respect of all who came in contact with him during his many years of distinguished service as a member of the North Dakota Judiciary. He was a consummate professional, a genuine "salt of the earth" type guy who was well-liked by all who knew him.*

*May God be with you and your family during this difficult time.*

*Bill and Kim McLees*  
*Highlands Ranch, CO 80126*

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**Bill McLees** - August 07, 2016 at 08:16 PM

LA

“ Laurie Anderson lit a candle in memory of  
Hon. Mikal "Mike" Jerome Simonson



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**Laurie Anderson** - August 07, 2016 at 08:14 PM

GW

“ Mary and Family,

*I was shocked and saddened to read that Mike has passed away. I remember him his first year at Dickinson State when I also was a freshman. We became friends in law school (we also started law school in the same year) and I saw him from time to time after he went on the bench. He was always a kind and outgoing person who treated everybody in his courtroom with respect. He had a good sense of humor.*

*We will keep you and your family in our thoughts and prayers.*

*Gary and Cynthia Wolberg  
Spearfish, SD*

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**Gary Wolberg** - August 07, 2016 at 07:56 PM

RO

“ *Mary:*  
*We know how deeply your sorrow must run. You and Mike are two dynamic and successful leaders. Mike's contributions will be missed. A great team has been temporarily split but we know you'll continue to be the driving force as always. You are very much needed to continue your work.*

*Your loving friends,*

*Rich and Doris Ott*

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**Rich and Doris Ott** - August 07, 2016 at 01:22 PM

KM

“ *Mary, Nick, Ben.... I'm not sure what to say. My deepest heartfelt condolences. I know just from conversations and often times references that he filled your world. Knowing that he's resting safely in God's arms will hopefully bring some Relief to the heart break of your loss.*

*Kathy Meagher*



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**Kathy Meagher** - August 07, 2016 at 12:18 PM

JN

“ *So sad for your loss Mary,Nick and Ben and families. Many wonderful memories to cherish forever. God bless all of you J Dennis Nelson.*

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**J Dennis Nelson** - August 07, 2016 at 11:09 AM

 Julie  
McClure

“ *Mary,Nick and Ben Just want to let you know how sorry i am for your loss and let you know i'm keeping you all in my prayers!*

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**Julie McClure** - August 06, 2016 at 10:54 PM

Julie McClure

“ Julie McClure lit a candle in memory of Hon. Mikal "Mike" Jerome Simonson



Julie McClure - August 06, 2016 at 10:50 PM

KN

“ Mikal was a great husband and a awesome father. May god be with all of you during this triumph time of sorrow.My prayers go out to all of you .I knew Mikal when i was a valley city resident.I worked for mary through the open door center. Mikal will be missed by many patrons and by many that knew him including myself. May he rest in peace and may the lord be with you all.



karen newman - August 06, 2016 at 09:23 PM

CM

“ God Bless You All and cherish all the Memories. HE was a Great Guy. Carrie Maresh

carrie maresh - August 06, 2016 at 01:32 PM

SH

“ Our heart goes out to this.very special family in Mikes passing. May Gods peace & comfort be with you & may you hold Dear to the many fond & precious memories. Prayers to you all.  
Mavis Stearns  
Rollie & Sharissa Hochstetler

sharissa hochstetler - August 06, 2016 at 12:01 PM

DK

“ *Mary, Nick, Ben and extended family, So sorry to hear this! You are in our thoughts and prayers, Our Love is enclosed, Larry, Diane, and the Kouba family*

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**Diane Kouba** - August 06, 2016 at 11:49 AM