Michael James Bennett



AUGUST 30, 2023

Michael James Bennett (April 19, 1937- August 30, 2023)

It is with sadness that we announce the passing of Michael James Bennett on August 30, 2023 in Aldergrove, BC. He is survived by his loving and devoted partner and wife of 60 years, Helen Colleen Bennett. The light that shone from their love for each other and their family brought many young hearts into the fold of each household they called home. Their children's friends would call them "mom and dad" or "Mr. and Mrs. B", a true endearment and acknowledgement of the love (and food) they shared with those who walked through their door.

Michael's family includes his siblings and their spouses: Ann Cameron and Monica Petrie (Paul); his children and their spouses: Patrick Bennett (from his first marriage), Judy Hayward (Brock), Michael Bennett Jr (Anita), and Christine Campbell (Cameron); and his grandchildren: Chelsy Campbell, James Bennett, Crystal Campbell, Melanie Boyle, Dustin Hayward, and Annabelle Hayward. He is predeceased by his parents Gertrude and Patrick Bennett and his siblings Sandy Rodgers, Joan Haftner, and Neil Rodgers.

On April 19, 1937, in Victoria, BC, Michael came into the world as the middle child of a bustling household. His father, a dedicated member of the Army, instilled in him the significance of donning a uniform. Inspired by this, Michael decided to embark on a journey by enrolling in The Royal Canadian Sea Cadet Program, thus starting his lifetime love of the water.

When Michael met Helen (nee Sutton) in 1963, he was working as a photographer, taking family portraits in Victoria, BC. Shortly after that they moved to Squamish, BC and added to the Bennett family, starting a family. His desire for the water and all it had to offer led him to work on tugboats, learning all aspects of navigation and ocean dynamics (treachery). He then worked as a mechanic in the railroad carshop for the next 10 years. He finished his career doing long haul transportation - belonging to the million-mile club by travelling all over the country.

Michael was the family's all round handy-man, electrician, plumber, roofer, builder, and mechanic. If you were ever heading on a trip, he was sure to offer help navigating a safe route. In his free time, he carved cedar fish floats, went fishing, worked on cars, and dabbled with his cooking skills (until he almost burnt down the kitchen). Michael loved his family foremost and would do anything he could for those he loved. He would truly give his shirt off his back to any one of his family.

Michael requested that he be cremated with his ashes being disbursed in the ocean. His son, Michael, will complete this request during a fishing trip in the spring of 2024. His spirit has always been with the open sea. He is now able to spend his time doing what he loved with his ancestors and those that have passed before him.

To support the family as they navigate the next phase of celebrating Micheal's life, the family kindly asks that instead of sending flowers or expressions of sorrow, you share your fondest memories and stories of Michael James Bennett for everyone to cherish. The family hopes to plan a celebration of life in due time.

Messages of Condolence

R.I.P. Mr. B. I'm so happy I got to see him a short time ago and give him all my appreciation for all he did for me as a young man. He was the best of the best. My condolences to the entire family, he will be missed.

— Mike

Thank you for a wonderful Memorial to Uncle Mike.
I’ve fished with Mike and roofed with Mike and I’ve eaten great food in Mike and Hellen's home.
It was Uncle Mike who taught me to drive stick and who lent me his pickup truck when I first moved out of my parents house in Coquitlam to my
own basement suite in James Bay, Victoria.
God speed uncle Mike and May you always have a hot meal and a soft bed at journey’s end.

— Kit Petrie

Gently Down

There is a time in every life
When a newborn begins one’s flight
With the promise of a life fulfilled
Embraced in a ray of loving light.

There came a time in Mike’s young life
When two hearts became aligned,
When love enchanted each other’s heart
And two hearts were intertwined.

There came a time in Mike’s full life
When children came along,
And the interwoven moments
Played a sacred family song.

There came a time in Mike’s late life
When life’s song skipped a beat.
A sudden twist of fate
That made life incomplete.

There comes a time in every life
When time and time is done.
When darkness fills the shadows
And the moon eclipse the sun.

Still, that ray of loving light

Always comes around
When a life fulfilled is laid to rest
And the dust settles gently down.

September 7, 2023

— Paul Petrie

Mike was my big brother, 5 years older. I remember some of the things we did together, well me tagging along really. Any thing outdoors - going down the steep trails through the woods to the Inlet, hiking on Burnaby Mountain.
We used to sit on the back porch and read the Saturday comics together.
He was so proud of his Navy Cadet uniform, and taught me the special words like lanyard and spats.
We were all happy when Helen came into Mike's life, she was and is strong and steady and made a loving home for them and their children. Mike adored his children and grandkids and was affectionate with all the young ones in the family.
He loved having a project to work on like the boat in the back yard.
Every birthday I would get a call from him "Hi Sis, happy birthday", and I would have a catch up chat with him and Helen. I will miss those times.
I send my love to Helen, and deep appreciation for all her care of Mike when he needed it most.
Monica (sometimes Nicky)

— Monica Petrie

I was lucky enough to be their letter carrier in Chilliwack. I changed how I did my route so I could finish my day spending time visiting with these beautiful people and their sweet little dog Scruffy. Everyday for over 5 years I got to see those smiling , happy faces. I'm so lucky to have got to spend time with them.

— Sandra Hansen

My first memory of Mike was when he was about 6 months old with a head of golden curls just like Mum's. I was told I was to look after him for a few hours while went mother shoppng. Panic! What was I to do as I had promised my girlfriend we would go roller skating. ??? A solution! My girlfriend and I decided we would go skating and give the little guy a thrill. We harnessed him into his buggy, put on our skates and headed for our favorite hill. When we got to the top, we turned the buggy around and let him take us, free-wheeling, down Hampshire Road to the bottom, all three of us laughing all the way.

So Mike, I hope you are still free-wheeling it wherever you are. Love you and all our big family.

— Anne Cameron

Mr and Mrs B are the best souls. They helped mold many young peoples lives, I’m sure, but their impact to ours is immeasurable.
Their open door to those of us who just needed a calm happy place, and a hot meal , meant more than words could ever say.
This helped mold us as human beings. They love unconditionally.
And Mike and I will always be thankful for their generosity.

My fondest memories are of the two boys..Mike Jr and Mikey H (my hubby of 32 years) working on their cars in the driveway, and Mike Sr always being there to help them, give advice, and lend a hand. It was always awesome to be part of.
I even learned a thing or two myself. Many funny weekends.
You were an amazing man Mr B.
You will be missed and loved always in our hearts

— Lisa Hewer

I remember Uncle Mike taking my sisters and I out for ice cream, which would have been about 1958 and what a treat that was! He was a caring person and a kind uncle and he will be missed. My sincere condolences to Helen and family.

— Carol Hall

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https://www.myalternatives.ca/obituaries/bennett-michael-james

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