

Mikaela Barnes

MARCH 7, 2026

Mikaela Barnes, aged 31, passed away on Saturday, March 7th, 2026 after a long and courageous battle with rectal cancer.

Mikaela was the adored wife of Stephen Baker, the beloved daughter of Scott and Lesley Barnes, and the cherished sister of Joshua (Megan) Barnes. Mikaela remains in the hearts of her grandmothers Beth (the late Clifford)

Barnes and Mitch (the late Robert) McEwen. She will be deeply missed by her parents-in-law Paul and Laura Baker, her sister-in-law Alison Baker (Emiliano Re), as well as many aunts, uncles and cousins across both families.

Mikaela grew up in Renfrew, ON. From her earliest days, she was known for her warmth, her commitment to building deep, lifelong friendships, and her unquenchable passion for movement and physical activity. She graduated from Renfrew Collegiate Institute in 2012 and moved to London, ON, to pursue first an undergraduate degree in Kinesiology, followed by a master's degree in Physiotherapy. Mikaela's athletic drive and enthusiasm during these years at Western University saw her excel as a member of both the University's Cross Country and Triathlon teams. During these years at Western, Mikaela met her greatest supporter and husband, Stephen.

Following graduation, the pair moved to Stephen's hometown of Burnaby, BC, to begin their careers as physiotherapists. It was here that they eventually opened their own practice. Mikaela quickly fell in love with the West Coast, spending her



days running, cycling, hiking and rock climbing with Stephen and new friends.

A week before their wedding in 2021, Mikaela was given a diagnosis of rectal cancer. This diagnosis fundamentally altered her world and that of those around her. Nonetheless, even from the outset Mikaela's determination, endurance, and fierce drive to achieve her goals pushed her forward to take this devastating news in stride. In her own words, "it is true that pain runs deep, but I believe that joy runs even deeper."

Despite the many rounds of chemotherapy, radiation and 2 major surgeries that were to come, she continued to embrace new challenges. 2023 would see her jumping into a new role as a lecturer in the Department of Kinesiology at Langara College in Vancouver. During this time, she also adapted her physiotherapy practice to better support clients living with an ostomy.

Mikaela had dreamed of qualifying for the iconic Boston Marathon from her early days in high school cross country where she first learned to "get comfortable being uncomfortable" under the demands of running. Despite already qualifying in 2019, she had to requalify after Boston was cancelled due to COVID19. She prioritized her training, with one of her favourite runs being the 15km run home from BC Cancer on Sundays after being disconnected from chemotherapy. This dedication prepared her for the Ottawa Marathon in 2022 where she ran a Boston qualifier for the second time. In April 2023, just seven months after major surgery, Mikaela ran the Boston Marathon in a personal record time of 3:08. Mikaela's energy was unstoppable, sweeping up everyone around her.

Whether competing in triathlons, running marathons, hiking and climbing with Stephen, or attending pilates classes with good friends, Mikaela was a constant inspiration. She was determined to work through every challenge, and she did so with grace. She invited us all into her journey by sharing deeply personal, introspective and vulnerable reflections on her social media accounts. Through

these posts, she aimed not only to connect with others but also to share her story and message to support those who might be facing similar hardships. She was also driven to improve public understanding of pelvic health and encouraged her followers to be their own health advocate.

She lived life at a high tempo, but she also loved slowing down to enjoy a good meal with family and friends, a long walk with her golden retriever Reese, and many trips to coffee shops both new and well-loved (with a pastry of course!).

In March 2026 after her long-fought battle, Mikaela passed peacefully in her home with her husband Stephen, her mother Lesley, and her beloved dog Reese by her side.

Mikaela's absence is a devastating loss to all of us whom she leaves behind. We will remember the strength of her love, and her belief in the power of community and resilience of the human spirit. In her words, "I am not alone in the process". We are not alone in our grief. We will hold her in our hearts always, as she held us in hers.

A Celebration of Life will take place in Renfrew, ON, on Saturday, May 9th following a [Move for Mik walk/run event](#). A West Coast Celebration of Life will be scheduled in early June with details to follow.

In lieu of flowers, Mikaela's family and friends encourage donations to [Colorectal Cancer Canada](#). Mikaela encouraged everyone in her life to fuel their bodies and stay active for the long run. Her family and friends invite you to take up her mantle and find ways to physically move your body as part of the Move for Mik initiative - a project that Mikaela was deeply passionate about.

Messages of Condolence

Lesley, Scott, Josh and Stephen, Your girl was an inspiration to many. Know that we are keeping you and your families close to our hearts Peter and Cecie Whalen

— Whalen

Several years ago, on Mikaela and Stephen's wedding day, our family had the privilege of bearing witness to a beginning full of joy, promise, and radiant possibility. Little could we have known that this sunshine-filled beginning would be only the first line of a living testament to what real love looks like. In the face of unimaginable hardship that followed, Mikaela and Stephen lived out a partnership marked by courage, faithfulness, fierceness, and extraordinary devotion — the kind of steadfast love that touched countless lives around them and left none of those lives unchanged. Mikaela will be remembered with profound sorrow at an end that came too soon, and with deep gratitude for the witness of a love that endured all things, hoped all things, and never failed. Though she has run on ahead of us, we carry her brave example in our hearts and give thanks for all she leaves behind.

— The Killick Family, Geoff, Wendy, Juliet, Charlotte and Cameron

I am so sorry to hear of your families loss my deepest condolences to all of you during this most difficult time.

— Shelley Fishenden

I was deeply saddened to hear of Mikaela's passing. Such a lovely individual. She will be missed by Stephen, her family, her sweet pup Reese and all those fortunate to have her as their physiotherapist. I was grateful to have known her and valued her support, care and exercises after my own cancer journey. She was passionate about her work, always kind, positive and so encouraging. A real joy with her sunshine smile. ☺ ☺ ☺

— Marlene

I'm so sorry to hear about Mikaelas' passing. My deepest condolences to Steven, Leslie and Scott, may she rest in peace. Peter.

— **Peter Griffin**



<https://www.myalternatives.ca/obituaries/mikaela-barnes>

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