



## Lt. Col. J. Michael McWhirter

May 26, 1941 - July 25, 2020

J. Michael (Mike) McWhirter was born in 1941 to James D. and Hazel B. (Jeffries) McWhirter in Big Spring, Texas. The family moved to Portland, Oregon, in 1946. He attended Gilbert Elementary School and David Douglas High School in Southeast Portland, graduating in 1959. Mike graduated from the University of Portland in 1963 with a degree in business administration, followed by an immediate commission in the United States Air Force. He married his high school sweetheart, Linda M. Radke, on November 16, 1963, at St. Rita's Catholic Church in Portland. The couple moved to Sacramento, California, near Mather Air Force Base, where Mike was assigned to the agency auditing Aerojet General Corporation.

After a short tour as an auditor, Mike escaped to pilot training at Laredo Air Force Base, Texas, bringing his wife and two babies with him, graduating in December 1967, UPT Class 68-D. He was assigned to Strategic Air Command at Offutt Air Force Base near Omaha, Nebraska, flying the EC-135, airborne command post, with Operation Looking Glass.

In 1971, Mike volunteered to fly the C-130 and was assigned to the 374th Tactical Airlift Wing at CCK Air Base in Taichung, Taiwan. He flew transport missions into Southeast Asia during the Vietnam War, and he earned the Distinguished Flying Cross, which is awarded for extraordinary heroism while engaged in action against an enemy of the United States.

After Vietnam, he was stationed at Hickam Air Force Base, Hawaii, and flew the EC-135 in Operation Blue Eagle, the airborne command post for the U.S. Pacific Command, until 1977. He then returned to Strategic Air Command and was assigned to the 1st Combat Evaluation Group at Barksdale Air Force Base near Shreveport, Louisiana, providing command level standardization and evaluation for all aircrews.

In 1980, Mike accepted positions in airfield management, including Chief of Operations and Training at Ellsworth Air Force Base near Rapid City, South Dakota, in the 28th Operations Support Squadron. After an unaccompanied remote tour of duty in Honduras, he returned to Ellsworth Air Force Base and retired in July 1989, after 26 years of service.

Mike and Linda moved back to Oregon and started a home construction business and Christmas tree farm in Sherwood. He was a member of St. Francis Catholic Church and active in the Knights of Columbus. He was preceded in death by his parents J.D. and Hazel McWhirter, and by his son David Michael McWhirter. He is survived by his wife Linda Radke McWhirter, his daughter Susan McWhirter Myhre (David Myhre, Jr.), his grandsons Justin David McWhirter Myhre and Colton Michael McWhirter Myhre, and his brother James Jeffries McWhirter (Mary C. Plasker) and family.

Following a funeral mass at St. Francis Catholic Church in Sherwood, Oregon, Mike will be interred at Willamette National Cemetery in Portland, Oregon.

# Cemetery Details

## **Willamette National Cemetery**

11800 SE Mt. Scott Blvd.  
Portland, OR 97086

# Tribute Wall



“ *Attrell's Funeral Chapel created a Livestream of Lt. Col. J. Mike McWhirter's Funeral Mass in memory of Lt. Col. J. Michael McWhirter*



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**Attrell's Newberg Funeral Chapel** - July 30, 2020 at 04:00 PM

DS

“ *I have known Mike professionally for nearly 20 years. His top priority has always been the love of his life Linda. He will be greatly missed. The world is a lesser place with his lose.*

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**Dave Studer** - August 05, 2020 at 12:41 PM

TK

“ *Toni Maes Krummenacker sent a virtual gift in memory of Lt. Col. J. Michael McWhirter*



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**Toni Maes Krummenacker** - July 31, 2020 at 03:53 AM

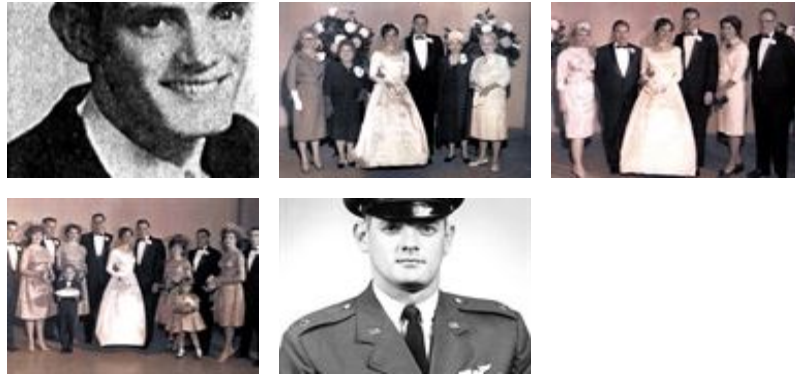
JO

“ Mike and I lived about a mile apart and went all through grade and high school together. We went to Catechism classes and were confirmed together at the old St. Joseph Catholic Church on Powell Blvd., across from (then) Meadowland Dairy. I would see Mike in recent years at our David Douglas class reunions. I will miss those times, Mike. You are a very special person. Rest in peace and God bless. Joanne Von Allmen Odermott

Joanne Odermott - July 30, 2020 at 01:36 AM



“ 115 files added to the album Life Tributes



Attrell's Newberg Funeral Chapel - July 29, 2020 at 08:10 PM