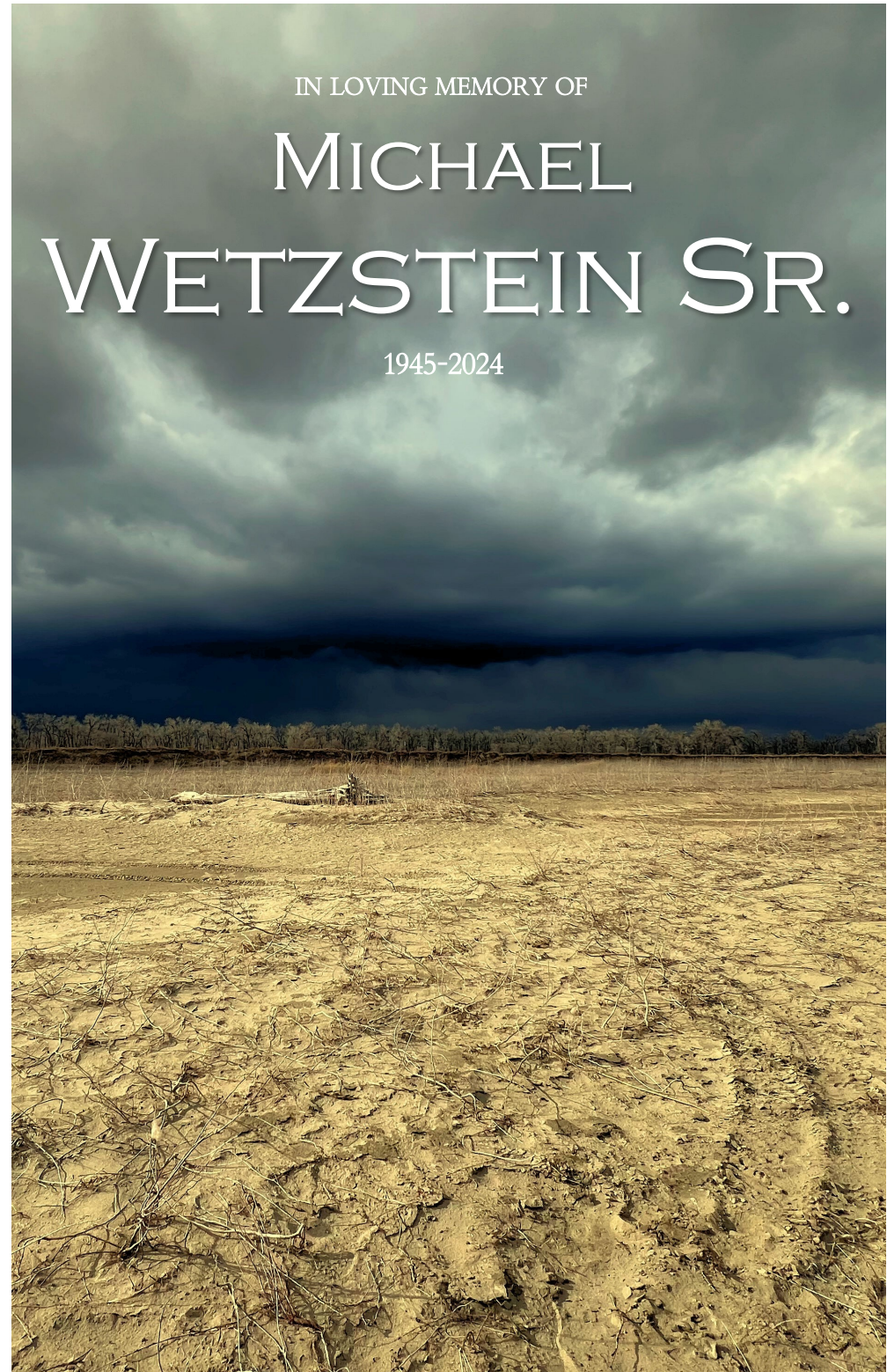


When tomorrow starts without me  
And I'm not here to see  
If the sun should rise and find your eyes  
Are filled with tears for me  
I wish so much you wouldn't cry  
The way you did today  
While thinking of the many things  
We didn't get to say  
I know how much you love me  
As much as I love you  
And each time you think of me  
I know you'll miss me too  
But when tomorrow starts without me  
Please try to understand  
That an angel came and called my name  
And took me by the hand  
And said my place was ready  
In heaven far above  
And that I'd have to leave behind  
All those I dearly love  
But when I walked through Heaven's gate  
I felt so much at home  
When God looked down and smiled at me  
From His great golden throne  
He said this is eternity  
And all I promised you  
Today your life on earth is past  
But here it starts anew  
I promise no tomorrow  
For today will always last  
And since each day's the same way  
There's no longing for the past  
So when tomorrow starts without me  
Don't think we're far apart  
For every time you think of me  
I'm right here in your heart

IN LOVING MEMORY OF

# MICHAEL WETZSTEIN SR.

1945-2024







**Mike Wetzstein Sr.**, 79, a lifelong Mandan resident, passed away peacefully with his family by his side on May 18, 2024, at Sanford Health, Bismarck.

Mike was born in Mandan on May 10, 1945, the youngest of four children to Adam and Stella (Zwarych) Wetzstein. Raised and educated in Mandan, he attended St. Joseph School and graduated from Mandan High School. Mike enlisted in the Army Reserve and was honorable discharged, never speaking much of his service but holding a great love for his country. He learned the importance and value of hard work from a young age. His uncle, Frank Wetzstein, was a Mandan business man and rancher who taught Mike many skills and trades. Mike attended Bismarck Junior College to learn how to do the bookwork for the businesses. From the bus garage where Mike drove and repaired buses, to managing an apartment building,

and the local movie theater and drive-in. Mike's greatest passion and favorite work was at the family ranch in rural Oliver County where he enjoyed calving and haying.

In grade school, Mike met a younger girl from his neighborhood, Karen Schmautz. Their first interactions were typical boy picks on girl that led to Karen's parents calling Mike's parents. This went back and forth for years throughout school. Eventually both worked at the Mandan movie theater and their relationship grew, although they could never recall who started things. Mike and Karen dated for five years when one day at the movies, he asked her to marry him. They were married on February 9, 1974 and lived above the bus garage where Mike worked for awhile before buying a home in north Mandan, in the same neighborhood they both grew up in. Here they raised their four children and made many wonderful memories. Mike was not like other dads. He was a fun loving, good time father and taught his kids all the good things life has to give. He showed them that you only have one life to live and should live it to the fullest, leaving nothing unsaid, undone, and no stone left unturned. Treat people the way you want to be treated and if someone offers you something for free, take it and figure out what to do later. He passed on his work ethic and love for the family ranch, taught them how to cook (even his secret recipes he learned from his mother), how to drive, and most importantly shared his faith in God. He taught them to pray, trust in God, and no matter what was going on or if someone had other plans, their family attended Mass every single Saturday. While Mike knew how to work hard and pray hard, he also knew how to play hard! There was never a dull moment in their house from heated games of Uno, (Mike's favorite game), to spirited discussions, and so much laughter. Sundays in the summer were spent on the river near the ranch and deer hunting was a family tradition. His ability to throw a great party escalated into hosting Mandan's Party on the Prairie, an iconic Mandan tradition he organized for 15 years on Mandan's Crying Hill. A longstanding family tradition was being a member of the Elk's Club where Mike held numerous offices and was a past Exalted Ruler. Mike's midlife crisis came in the form of a 1997 Chevy Corvette and he loved to cruise with the top down. His family meant everything to him and when his greatest blessings of grandchildren came into the picture, the sky was the limit as Mike loved to spoil them.

Mike understood that before he was born, God already had a plan for his life. This plan could not be changed or interrupted. Mike understood his assignment and purpose in life. He worked hard, played hard, and loved hard. "Life should not be a journey to the grave with the intention of arriving safely in a pretty and well-preserved body, but rather to skid in broadside in a cloud of smoke, thoroughly used up, totally worn out, and loudly proclaiming "Wow! What a Ride!" - Hunter S. Thompson.

Not all angels have wings, some have cowboy hats. Know that this is not goodbye, but we will see you later. Go rest easy cowboy and fly high. Go give heaven some hell and make them wonder how you got in.

Mike had many amazing titles from son, brother, nephew, uncle, husband, father, father-in-law, grandfather, and a friend to many. He will be remembered as a hardworking, rugged, fun, loveable family man. Mike will be deeply missed by those who knew and loved him including his wife of 50 years, Karen Wetzstein, Mandan; four children, Michael Wetzstein Jr. (Sarah Kadrmaz), Chris Wetzstein, Sarah (Jesse) Wetzstein-Paul, all of Mandan, and Angela (Justin) Miller, Bismarck; grandchildren, Reese and Adam Wetzstein and Greyson Miller; three siblings, Ann Augustin, Baltimore, MA, Francis "Buck" (Sandy) Wetzstein, and Adam Steve "Duke" (Penny) Wetzstein, all of Mandan; and his beloved bulldog, Tug.

Mike was preceded in death by his parents, Adam and Stella Wetzstein; in-laws, Leonard and Caroline Schmautz; brother-in-law, Ken Augustin; sister-in-law, Mary Kay Yager; and bulldog, Chumley.

The family thanks Tara Haberlock, Pulmonary Nurse Practitioner at Sanford Health, for her years of caring for Mike.

**Funeral Liturgy**

Friday | May 24, 2024 | 10:30 AM

St. Joseph Catholic Church

Fr. Josh Waltz

Deacon Randy Frohlich

Regina McLain & Zachary King

Shawna Helbling

**Celebrant**

**Assistant**

**Musicians**

**Lector**

Prelude

"All Is Well With My Soul"

Opening Song

"Here I Am Lord"

**Liturgy of the Word**

Old Testament Reading

Sirach 3:2-6, 12, 14

Responsorial Psalm

Psalm 103

*"The Lord is kind and merciful."*

New Testament Reading

Thessalonians 4:13-18

Gospel Reading

John 14:1-6

Homily

**Liturgy of the Eucharist**

Preparation of Gifts Song

"You Are Near"

Presentation of Gifts

Sarah Wetzstein-Paul

Angela Miller

Reese Wetzstein

Eucharistic Prayer

Communion Songs

"Be Not Afraid"

"The Summons"

Communion Meditation

"On Eagle's Wings"

Final Commendation

"Song Of Farewell"

Closing Song

"Lead Me Lord"

**Casket Bearers**

Michael Wetzstein Jr. ~ Christopher Wetzstein ~ Justin Miller

Jesse Paul ~ Adam Wetzstein ~ Greyson Miller

**Honorary Casket Bearers**

*Augustin Brothers*

Michael ~ KP ~ Donald ~ Tom

Steven ~ Billy ~ Matt

**Graveside Service**

North Dakota Veterans Cemetery

Mandan, ND

