



## Michael Ray Whitham

March 1, 1943 - December 8, 2022

Michael Ray Whitham, 79, of Columbus, Ohio died at Kemper House Worthington on December 8th, 2022. A visitation will be held from 4:00 – 6:00pm on December 15th at the Rutherford Corbin Funeral Home, 515 High Street, Worthington, Ohio.

Mike was born March 1, 1943, in Ottumwa, Iowa to Lloyd and Margaret Whitham. He spent his childhood on Whitham Tree Nursery, where he developed his love of trees, nature, and the earth. Mike graduated from Agency High School in 1960 where he was a multi-sport athlete participating in basketball, track & field, and his passion: baseball. He was an Ace pitcher for the Ottumwa American Legion baseball team that won the Iowa State Championship in 1960, and was subsequently drafted by Major League Baseball's Milwaukee Braves. Mike chose to forego baseball to pursue a degree in Landscape Architecture at the premiere program in the country at The Ohio State University, under the tutelage of Professor Charles Sutton. During his time at Ohio State he participated in intramural sports and was a member of the Alpha Sigma Phi fraternity where he made many friends and developed his love of White Castle, with fraternity pledges delivering 200 sliders to the house every Sunday. He graduated from Ohio State in 1965 with a degree in Landscape Architecture.

Mike married his high school sweetheart, Connie Swinney, on June 20, 1964

at the Agency Methodist Church. The love of his life, they were married for 58 years, traveled the world, and had a son, Christopher, together. They made their home in Columbus, Ohio after both graduating from Ohio State. Mike spent the first 15 years of his career at Columbus Recreation and Parks as a Landscape Architect; moving to a position with Columbus & Franklin County Metro Parks as Director of Planning. He then spent several years working for Lorain County Metro Parks as Construction Manager, while caring for his mother in Lakewood, OH. Mike retired from Lorain County Metro Parks in 1996, subsequently returning to Columbus Franklin County Metro Parks part time as Construction Manager for 10+ years. Mike played a significant role in the planning, creation and development of dozens of parks in the Columbus and Cleveland areas that we all still enjoy today.

Mike was in the Army Reserves Medical Corps based in Columbus 1966-1971. During his tenure in the Army he served his country treating amputees at the VA in Denver, and burn victims at the VA in San Antonio throughout the Vietnam conflict.

In his 40's he pursued his lifelong fascination with aeronautics and obtained his pilot's license; he thoroughly loved being an airplane pilot and enjoyed flying his own plane.

Mike coached both Babe Ruth and American Legion baseball teams in Whitehall, Ohio, and later spent time as an assistant coach of the Whetstone High School Softball program. An amazing father and role model, he was a staunch supporter of his son's athletic endeavors, sacrificing many hours of his life in cars, planes, hotels, and the bleachers of swimming pools across the country. He was a charter member of the Reynoldsburg-Pickerington Rotary Club, a member of the Columbus Optimists Club, and an 11-year volunteer at McConnell Heart Health Center.

Mike was a 52-year member of the Masonic Olive Branch Lodge 21 in Agency, Iowa. The "Whitham-Swinney Masonic Scholarship" is being established for Agency area students who attend Cardinal Schools in honor of Mike and his father-in-law, Carl Swinney.

Mike is survived by his wife, Connie Whitham, his son, Christopher (Brandy) Whitham and grandchildren, Stella and Anderson Whitham of Worthington, Ohio; brother, Tom (Kay) Whitham of

Flagstaff, Arizona; sister-in-law, Pat Swinney of Roseville, Minnesota; and many nieces, nephews and cousins.

Mike was preceded in death by his parents, Lloyd and Peg Whitham, step father, Peter Uzon, sister-in-law, Lois Avitt, brother-in-law, Richard Swinney and his father and mother-in-law Carl and Anna Swinney.

The family wishes to give special thanks to the outstanding employees of Kemper House who made Mike's last days comfortable and happy.

In lieu of flowers, donations can be made in Mike's name to: Kemper House Worthington <https://kemperhouseworthington.com/donate/> Columbus & Franklin County Metro Parks <https://www.metroparksfriends.org>

# Previous Events

## Calling Hours

DEC 15. 4:00 PM - 6:00 PM (ET)

Rutherford-Corbin Funeral Home  
515 High Street  
Worthington, OH 43085  
(614) 885-4006  
info@rutherfordfuneralhome.com  
<https://www.rutherfordfuneralhomes.com/>

# Tribute Wall



“ *Michael Ray Whitham*

January 28, 2023 at 10:24 AM



“ *Connie, So very sad to get the news about Mike. Although we drifted apart after our flying days I still often thought of him. Mike was a kind and generous man. He made our flights together an absolute pleasure. I was able to learn a lot from him as he was several ratings ahead of me.*

*I'm sorry I won't be able to attend the visitation as I'm have a bit of a health issue of my own. Please accept my sincerest condolences. My life was better for knowing him.*

*Chris Toops*

Chris Toops - December 15, 2022 at 10:36 AM



“ *Enchanted Cottage was purchased for the family of Michael Ray Whitham.*



December 15, 2022 at 09:14 AM



“ Beautiful in Blue was purchased for the family of Michael Ray Whitham.



December 14, 2022 at 10:14 AM



“ Beautiful in Blue was purchased for the family of Michael Ray Whitham.



December 13, 2022 at 05:29 PM



“ Golden Vineyard Gourmet Wine Gift Basket was purchased for the family of Michael Ray Whitham.



December 13, 2022 at 10:53 AM



“ AT&T Family purchased the Rainbow Of Remembrance Spray for the family of Michael Ray Whitham.



AT&T Family - December 12, 2022 at 04:28 PM

LM

“ Aunt Connie, please accept my deepest condolences. Mike was an amazing person and will be missed by so many. I know the two of you had a wonderful life together with many memories.

Lindsey Moran - December 12, 2022 at 04:03 PM



“ Florist Choice Bouquet was purchased for the family of Michael Ray Whitham.



December 12, 2022 at 10:12 AM



“ Florist Choice Bouquet was purchased for the family of Michael Ray Whitham.



December 12, 2022 at 09:27 AM



“ Enchanted Cottage was purchased for the family of Michael Ray Whitham.



December 11, 2022 at 09:43 PM

JC

“ *John & Audrey Clark purchased the Emerald Garden Basket for the family of Michael Ray Whitham.*



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**John & Audrey Clark** - December 11, 2022 at 10:29 AM



“ *Beautiful in Blue was purchased for the family of Michael Ray Whitham.*



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December 10, 2022 at 05:19 PM