

Mitchell Jurasevich

Mitchell became the man we knew and loved by influences and decisions in his past but he was a man who lived his life in the present and for the future.

So his story begins:

Mitchell Jurasevich was born in Globe, Arizona on May 11, 1924 to Samuel and Stane (pronounced Stanie) Jurasevich. Mitchell had one brother, William, and two sisters, Vera and Delsie. His parents immigrated to the United States through Ellis Island from Montenegro which was formerly known as Yugoslavia, a beautiful country along the Adriatic Sea.

Mitchell's father Samuel worked in the Globe Arizona copper mines and his mother Stane was a master homemaker, gardener and wine maker. Samuel passed away in 1928 at an early age from typhoid fever linked to contaminated drinking water in the mines, leaving Stane to raise the four children alone. Stane lived in Globe and died there in 1950.

I'm sure as most of you who knew Mitch realized, he was extremely proud of his rich Serbian heritage; having had the opportunity to visit and stay with family and friends in this homeland as recently as 2002. Mitar, as he was known in Serbia, always shared his love and respect for his parents and their background with everyone giving us all a greater respect, understanding and admiration for our Serbian heritage.

During his youth Mitch helped support his family with a paper route and a job in a family friends grocery store while attending public school in Globe Arizona, eventually graduating from Globe High School in 1943.

After high school he was drafted into the United States Army and deployed to the Philippines, serving as a Military Policeman in the

Dutch East Indies and the Halmaheras, Indonesia. Mitch served his country proudly.

Following his honorable discharge in 1945, he trained and received his Aircraft and Aircraft Engine Mechanics license. At about this point Mitch was faced with an important decision; East or West? He was offered a job as an aircraft mechanic in Greenland while at the same time his lifelong friend Lazo Kentera was trying to convince Mitch to come on back to Arizona and go to Arizona State with him.

Luckily for all of us, Mitch choose West and went back to Arizona, graduating in 1952 from Arizona State with a Bachelor's of Arts in Education. During his time at Arizona State, Mitch again continued to serve his country by joining the National Guard.

During Mitch's senior year at Arizona State University he was introduced to his best friend, partner and the love of his life Shiela McKean Braton. Shiela and Mitch met on a blind date and were married six months later in Phoenix on May 19, 1952.

Packing up their Studebaker convertible Mitch and Shiela took their honeymoon road trip up to the McKean family farm in Dickson Alberta to introduce Mitch to the McKean-Braton family. During this trip Mitch was inspired by the incredibly majestic landscape and fell in love with the beautiful prairies, rugged Canadian Rocky Mountains, and the Parkland region of Alberta.

After returning from their honeymoon Mitch began teaching Industrial Arts at the Santa Ana High School in Santa Ana, California. Being only 28, he was the youngest member of the staff and was very well liked by both students and staff. It's no surprise really, Mitch used his creativity teaching woodwork and metal fabrication during the early days of home barbecuing creating school projects like barbecues from recycled boiler ends! What student wouldn't love that project?

During this time Shiela and Mitch's two oldest children were born in Orange, California. Mark Lee in 1953 and Janet Lynn in 1954.

Mitch had dreams of moving up to Canada since their honeymoon visit and he felt Clarice McKean, Shiela's mother, needed help with the Canadian farming enterprise. During the first week of July in 1954 Shiela, Mark and Janet flew to Alberta while Mitch loaded up all the family belongings in his blue Chevrolet pickup and headed north.

Shiela and Mitch began a new life together in Dickson, Alberta. For Shiela it was going back home and for Mitch it was a new beginning, and together over the next 17 years they built a home, raised a family and made life long friendships.

Shiela and Mitch were as busy as ever while they lived in Alberta. They farmed 800 acres of mixed cereal enterprise and a herd of 400 cattle. It was during this period they had three more children, Keith Mitchell in 1956, Robert Craig in 1960 and Virginia Rene in 1962. Mitch was an active member of the Dickson community staying involved with the Church, Boy Scouts and always helping friends and neighbors. Mitch had a very strong connection to the land that lasted all of his life and a deep love for the lifelong friends he made in this Alberta community.

In 1971 Mitch and Shiela moved to Eugene because of greater educational opportunities for their children. Well, it didn't take long for the Jurasevich family to root themselves in Eugene. Mitch began teaching for the 4-J school district and soon thereafter he went into partnership as a building contractor for Timberland Homes, while Shiela became an active member of the church and worked at Sacred Heart Hospital as a registered nurse.

Having never really retired – Mitch was always involved in some grand scheme, whether it was helping to design one of his

children's homes, building flying toys with his grandchildren or creating a masterful holiday light display that had people driving by the house from Thanksgiving through New Years every year.

A true extrovert, Mitch loved people and never met a stranger in his life, so as you'd imagine he had countless friends. One of his many gifts was the innate ability to make everyone feel special when they were in his presence. If you were down he would lift you up and if you were up he would help celebrate your good fortune with you, he was always there with a helping hand and a good joke to keep things light.

In the past 12 years, Mitch had five major illnesses, each life threatening and he persevered through all of them with the help of his family, his physicians, and his faith.

Mitchell loved his wife and children, adored his grandchildren and loved his children's spouses. He was a man of faith and his marching song was found in Joshua 1:9 – a copy of this verse was found on a prayer card tucked into his shirt pocket the night he passed away, it read, “Be strong and of good courage; be not frightened, neither be dismayed; for the Lord your God is with you wherever you go.”