



## Michael Allen Shafer

August 12, 1953 - May 8, 2023

CASA GRANDE, Ariz.—Michael Allen Shafer, 69, died at his winter home in Casa Grande, Arizona, on May 8, 2023, after a 6-year battle with thyroid cancer.

Everyone is invited to a celebration of Mike's life on August 12, 2023, at Moonlight Ridge Winery, 8150 US Hwy 281. The Celebration Service will be 4:15 - 5:00 pm, an Open House will follow from 5 - 8 pm.

Memorial donations can be made to: Michael Shafer Scholarship Fund, Five Points Bank, 2015 N. Broadwell, Grand Island, NE, 68803.

He was born in Grand Island, Nebraska, on August 12, 1953, to Harold and Twyla (Stoddard) Shafer. Mike attended school in Grand Island, graduating in 1971 from Northwest High School. While enrolled at Kearney State College (now the University of Nebraska at Kearney) for one year, he played college football.

The next chapter of Mike's life took him to Lincoln, Nebraska, working for his father as an iron worker on the Bob Devaney Sports Center. He returned to Grand Island to raise his daughter, Jennifer. During these exciting and challenging years Mike built race cars, drove sprint cars, worked at Railcar, and Larry's Steel and Welding.

Mike's lifelong interest in history and politics led him to serve on the Grand Island City Council from 1990-1994. He had always dreamed of becoming a history teacher and coach, and returned to UNK to complete his studies. Mike also attended classes at Hastings College while an assistant coach to their

football team, winning a national championship.

Mike graduated from UNK in 1995, returning to his alma mater, Northwest High School, as a history teacher and coach. During his time as a teacher and coach, Mike had an impact on hundreds of his students, sharing his personal life story and challenging them to pursue their dreams and to never give up. He was extremely proud that his daughter, Jenny became a teacher.

Mike married Debra Mettenbrink on July 6, 1998, on the beach in Cape Cod, Massachusetts. Together they settled into country life in Grand Island while sharing time with their family and friends. Mike opened his slot car shop in the old V&M building spending many evenings racing with his dear friends. He was an avid golfer, racquetball and pickleball player, motorcyclist, car enthusiast, and collector of memorabilia. Mike's love of history took them on many adventures as they traveled.

Mike took every opportunity to honor veterans and their causes. He made several motorcycle trips to Washington, D.C., with honor guard for military funerals.

After retiring in 2016, Deb and Mike spent their winters in Arizona. Mike continued to live his dream until the very end, sharing his love with family and friends, old and new. Summers were spent enjoying camping trips, attending concerts, returning to Cape Cod, and staying connected with dear friends and family. Mike also served on the NWHS school board after retirement.

Mike is survived by his wife, Debbi; a daughter, Jennifer, and her husband, Mike Ehlers, who was his forever racing budding. He is also survived by his stepson, Dusten Larson (Anai) of Santa Cruz, Bolivia; and granddaughter, Paris Alexa Larsen; brothers, Mark (Cindy) and Matt States; and several nieces and nephews.

He was preceded in death by his parents, Harold Shafer, and Twyla and Frosty States; his sister, Michele Larsen; and his in-laws, Norma and Elmer Mettenbrink.

# Tribute Wall



“ *Michael Allen Shafer*

October 08, 2023 at 11:02 PM



“ A [Memorial Tree](/store/Product.aspx?ProductId=4518) was planted in honor of Michael Allen Shafer.

August 11, 2023 at 01:05 PM



“ *Florist Choice Bouquet was purchased for the family of Michael Allen Shafer.*



August 11, 2023 at 01:05 PM



“ *We met again in 2006 I-believe and every Wednesday before we raced Slotcars at the raceway we had supper together and talked about the old racing stories I used to be on the pit crew of Chuck Bosselman Late Model stock car and Mike drove five or six sprint cars I believe so we had a lot of stories to share in that respect and raced slot cars together. He was a Great Racer and friend in every respect.*

*When we were racing together he would do anything for you he was like a brother to me and I love him as one , until we meet again one day I will miss you tremendously, but my friend you will never be forgotten. Rest in peace.*

**Mike Pittz** - August 08, 2023 at 09:13 AM

DE

“ I met Mike at the railcar shop where we had worked together. He was good at everything he did.  
We played fast pitch softball on a league one year. (Trying to keep up with the younger guys.)  
I watched him wire tie rebar like a pro when he was working on the foundation for the brake and shear that had been installed at the railcar shop.  
I enjoyed racing slot cars with Mike at Shafer's Speedway.  
He was well liked, and he never shirked a task. He will be missed.  
My deepest condolences to Jennifer and Mike.



---

Denny - August 05, 2023 at 10:38 PM