

A difficult life for a lone wolf ends with friends

It's been almost three years since Michael "Mike" Lund died in a Fargo hospital.

His death at age 60 ended what his brother-in-law terms "a complicated life in many ways."

A few years earlier, when Mike was dealing with life-threatening physical problems, he predicted only two or three people would attend his funeral, whenever it happened. He wasn't far off.

Difficult times

Heartaches were common in Mike's family. Mike's brother-in-law **Dick Bernard**, Woodbury, Minn., was married to Mike's sister **Barbara**. She had been ill with a kidney disease for almost all of her and Dick's brief married life before she died in 1965 when she was 22. Ten years later, Mike's



**BOB
LIND**
Neighbors

brother and only other sibling, **David**, 18, was killed in a car accident.

Dick tells of all this both to explain Mike's behavior and to thank those who cared for him as his life wound down, including the personnel of **Innovis Health** (now **Essentia Health**), **Manorcare**, **Hospice**, **Triumph Hospital**, **New Horizons Assisted Living** and the veterans center, all in Fargo.

Mike, born in 1947, lived most of his life in Valley City, N.D.

He couldn't remember his father - his parents,

Phillip and Ruth Lund, divorced when he was a child.

His graduation from Valley City High School in 1965 was not a festive occasion because his sister was admitted to the hospital at the same time to await a kidney transplant.

Mike went to what was then called Valley City State Teacher's College and graduated in 1969 with a B average. He got a job building metal grain bins on North Dakota farms, taught high school, and then was drafted into the Army, earning several medals by the time he was discharged in 1973.

Dick says Mike made the first of many visits to a VA hospital in 1977, when he was diagnosed as being mentally ill, and spent his remaining years totally disabled.

"His illness did not manifest itself in dramatic ways," Dick says. "Mostly he might have appeared odd and even suspicious, in line with his psychiatric diagnosis. But his illness was real; I witnessed it."

Mike never married. But he was "a good uncle to our son Tom," Dick writes.

Tom was given "Michael" as his middle name.

Finding Dad

Mike had aneurysm surgeries at the VA Hospital in Minneapolis. After the second one, he became paralyzed from the waist down.

He spent some time at New Horizons and Manorcare in Fargo and then became ill and entered **Innovis** (**Essentia**) **Health**.

One day he told Dick he wondered about the father he never knew.

Dick decided to find out for him. He wrote to every Lund in the Fargo phone book and tracked down possible leads, but nothing clicked. Then, via an Internet search, Dick found the death certificate of Mike's dad.

Dick read it to Mike at his hospital bedside. It showed that Mike's father was 47 when he died of cancer in a Hancock (Minn.) nursing home.

Mike apparently was his only child.

'Fulfilling hour'

As per his wishes, Mike's ashes were buried between the graves of his mother and his brother in Woodbine Cemetery, Valley City.

Mike had predicted two or three would attend his funeral. Dick says there were six, not counting the minister and funeral director.

But the next day, a memorial service was held for him at New Horizons. About 15 attended, many of them in wheelchairs.

A minister preached, some who knew Mike talked about him, "and it was the most incredibly powerful and fulfilling hour I've experienced in quite some time," Dick says.

And it was all about a man who didn't make headlines, a man who was virtually unnoticed during his life and when he left that life.

"I guess," Mike Lund once said, as a sort of sad epitaph to his troubled life, "I am kind of a lone wolf."

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