



Michael T. Rapcavage, Jr.

May 17, 1936 - February 25, 2025

In Loving Memory of Michael Thomas "Mike" Rapcavage Jr.

Mike departed from us on 2/25/2025 and a private family service was held. A celebration of life memorial gathering will be held this Spring !

We celebrate the life and legacy of Michael "Mike" Rapcavage Jr., born on May 17, 1936, in New Brighton, Staten Island, New York. Mike was the cherished son of Michael and Estelle Rapcavage and the eldest sibling to Jeanette, Thomas, and Diane. Growing up in the post-Depression era, he and his family faced numerous challenges, navigating hardships on the path to World War II.

By 1946, the Rapcavage family had become a single-parent household, with Estelle at the helm.

With unwavering grit and determination, she worked tirelessly as a healthcare aide at Sailors

Snug Harbor in Staten Island, raising her children in "The Markham Homes" in West Brighton.

Her resilience and work ethic became the foundation upon which Mike built his life's principles.

Educated at Sacred Heart Grammar School and Port Richmond High School, Mike excelled as

a baseball pitcher—a talent that caught the eye of his future wife, May June Strandberg. Four

years his junior, May June was perched in a tree watching a summer practice, captivated by his

athleticism and charm. This serendipitous moment marked the beginning of a lifelong love story.

Before and after high school graduation, Mike took on various jobs to support his family,

including working at a uniform factory, laboring as a day worker, and caddying at a golf

course—his first introduction to the sport that would later become his passion.

In 1954, he

enlisted in the United States Air Force, serving in Florida, Greenland, and Massachusetts. In

1958, Mike and May June married, beginning a beautiful journey together that would span a

lifetime.

During his time in the Air Force, Mike became an air traffic controller, a role he greatly enjoyed.

Upon his honorable discharge, he faced a career-defining choice: becoming an air traffic

controller at Idlewild Airport (now JFK) or joining the ranks of the New York City Fire

Department. Ultimately, he chose the latter, beginning his firefighting career in 1962—a career

that would span 27 years.

Settling back in Staten Island, Mike and May welcomed four wonderful children: Michael, James, Raymond, and Victoria. As a proud member of the FDNY, he was first stationed at Hook and Ladder 8 in the East Village, skillfully navigating the narrow streets of lower Manhattan as the truck's chauffeur. Later, he transferred to Ladder 84 in Staten Island while also pursuing a B.A. degree in nursing at night at the former Richmond College. He became a Registered Nurse specializing in mental health.

Mike's dedication to public service extended beyond the firehouse. He spent countless hours "moonlighting" at South Beach Psychiatric Center, bringing his medical expertise to fire and rescue situations and saving lives both in and out of uniform. Even after retiring from the FDNY,

he continued his nursing career for over 30 years. Somewhere along the way, he even became

a short-order cook at his cousin's sports bar, W's in Tottenville!

Golf was Mike's lifelong passion. Inspired by watching legends like Arnold Palmer and Jack

Nicklaus, he honed his skills at a mosquito-infested driving range near the Goethals Bridge. A

founding member of the "Early Bird Golf Club," he played at sunrise alongside fellow NYC

firemen and policemen, achieving a 7 handicap and multiple interclub

victories. Despite his success, Mike remained humble, never boasting about his achievements on the course.

As he approached retirement, Mike embraced new hobbies, including classic cars, cooking, gardening, landscaping, traveling, and, of course, more golf. His culinary skills, developed in the firehouse, became a cherished part of his home life. Upon full retirement, he and May embarked on a cross-country road trip, creating priceless memories together.

The Rapcavage family home was a haven for gatherings, celebrations, and a source of unwavering love and support. Mike's legacy is one of hard work, quick wit, one-liners, splashes of sarcasm, and a kindness that earned him the affectionate nickname "Mr. Wonderful." His resilience, humility, dedication, and love for his family were unparalleled. He loved animals and pets and his Mom mentioned that he would bring home stray dogs and cats from time to time! Mike leaves behind his beloved wife, May June, their four children, six grandchildren, three great-grandchildren, and an enduring legacy of love, humor, and integrity. He will be remembered fondly by all who knew him. As we celebrate his life, we find comfort in the memories and the profound impact he had on everyone around him.

Rest in peace, Michael "Mike" Rapcavage Jr. Your spirit will forever live in the hearts of those

who loved you.

(As a side note, Mike often read obituaries with a mix of respect and curiosity, sometimes

questioning just how "wonderful and interesting" the person truly was. We can honestly say that

Mike would probably agree with most of this tribute—though he'd likely chuckle and say:)

"Was I really that wonderful and interesting?"

Tribute Wall

RT

“ Mike was the most caring, loving family man, not to mention a man whose life was filled with helping in his professions as a FireFighter and a Nurse!
His sense of humor was wonderful as he as always into helping me with pranks! He was also a man who could conquer any task, as he proved by building stairs in my backyard that an atom bomb couldn't move!
My heart is sad that the world no longer has you, but I know you are with me in my heart! You were a blessing! RIP

Rosemary Torretta - March 12, 2025 at 03:40 PM

DH

I remember Mike when he was a nurse at the Crisis Residence at SBPC. There was a homeless guy that used to sleep out back of the building. Mike used to sneak him food. Mike was a very kind man. I'm glad I had the privilege to know him.

Dean Hogarth - October 07, 2025 at 11:03 PM



“ It is with fondness that I remember Mr. Rapcavage. He was this tall, smiling and handsome presence who would attend events at Trinity. My condolences to all the Rapcavages. I am so pleased to "know" him better through this tribute. MaryLee Montalvo

MaryLee Loffredo - March 11, 2025 at 08:41 PM

RR

Thank you Marylee ! Hope you are well !

Raymond Rapcavage - March 16, 2025 at 06:47 PM