



## Michael Leon Flake

June 4, 1965 - February 7, 2025

Michael Leon Flake was born smack dab in the middle of Dean and Nerita's family of eleven children on June 4, 1965. This may be one reason for what would become his remarkably peaceful nature.

Childhood years on the F-Bar ranch in Snowflake were ideal for an active boy who loved the natural world. Surrounded by brothers and a minority of sisters, he learned to work hard alongside his Dad, whom he revered.

There was also time for fun, riding horses and three-wheelers, playing kick the can with a passel of cousins, swimming in the freezing well water of Far Tank, shooting guns and hunting arrowheads. Mikey became legendary in family lore for sitting down on a red ant hill as a toddler and surviving dozens of bites. Another day while exploring a small mound in back of the big red barn he saw a few strays and tore frantically into the house breathlessly sounding the alarm, "Bad dogs on Lizard Hill!" A natural athlete, Mike ran track as well as playing with lifelong friends on Lobo baseball, basketball and football teams that all won State championships.

Mike always had a deep and abiding love of Jesus Christ and His gospel. It filled him with faith and hope that he carried throughout his life. A secret wish came true as he served in the South African Mission, combining adventure with sharing his religious convictions during two marvelous years. He spoke often and with great affection about those he served with and taught.

Playing football in Rexburg, Idaho brought him a more valuable benefit than free tuition. Falling in love with his beautiful blonde, blue-eyed Sozelle began their eternal partnership. A marriage that was both dynamic and tender, they each combined talents that blessed their family. Their children Brayden (Alyssa), Caitlin (Dallin), Morgann (Landon) and Shannan (Porter) would come along over the years, fulfilling their dream of being parents and bringing them their greatest joys.

Living in Tucson meant Mike's family could spend a lot of time outdoors. He bought an old boat which he kept running so they could enjoy the water as only desert dwellers can. They explored Sabino Canyon and hiked miles of trails. Sharing cookouts with friends made many sweet memories.

Dreaming of flying since he was a boy, Mike became a full-time Reservist in the Air Force as a flight engineer on Pavehawk helicopters. He would eventually log an astounding 7,600+ hours and serve 15 deployments, several in Afghanistan. Known as a legend in the rescue community, he found great satisfaction in saving lives and bringing loved ones home. With the rank of Chief Master Sergeant, Mike embodied the role of patriot. Fellow servicemen and women, church associates, friends and family all describe him with similar attributes like; compassion, unselfishness, humor, integrity, gentleness and just plain goodness.

In the past decade Mike became Pop Pop to eight beautiful and engaging grandchildren. They clamored to FaceTime, fish, hike, climb all over him and hear his stories. All of them in turn wore a tiny flight suit that Sozelle created, posing with handsome Pop Pop wearing his.

Mike's family has lots of practice with both tearful goodbyes and joyous reunions, but the diagnosis of ALS just five short months ago brought them all to their knees. Since then they have used every precious day to spend time together and express love. In typical fashion, without dramatics Mike slipped away after celebrating his 38th Anniversary with Sozelle.

In a coming day Mike will be there standing tall and waiting for us, blue eyes shining. His strong arms will reach out, gathering each one in his big warm hug. It will be a homecoming with no more goodbyes

# Previous Events

## Funeral Service

FEB 14. 10:00 AM (MT)

The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints  
1430 North Grand Street  
Mesa, AZ 85201

## Burial

FEB 14. 2:15 PM (MT)

National Memorial Cemetery of Arizona  
2929 E Pinnacle Peak Road  
Phoenix, AZ 85024

# Tribute Wall

JK

“ One of my favorite memories was when I was assisting ACC during an ASEV, remember those, and I was to give Mike an evaluation. Needless to say we just enjoyed the flight and after at the out brief he was the only member of the squadron that scored and EQ! Mike was all the things everyone speaks of and more. He was a good aviator, the best grandpa, father and husband, but most of all a great friend.

John Krulder - February 14, 2025 at 09:57 AM



“ Enchanted Cottage was purchased for the family of Michael Leon Flake.



February 13, 2025 at 06:57 PM



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

February 13, 2025 at 06:57 PM



“ Beautiful Dreams was purchased for the family of Michael Leon Flake.



February 13, 2025 at 06:31 PM

TF

“ *The Fusselman Family purchased the Emerald Garden Basket for the family of Michael Leon Flake.*



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**The Fusselman Family** - February 13, 2025 at 03:09 PM

MF

“ *Montagno family purchased the Country Basket Blooms for the family of Michael Leon Flake.*



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**Montagno family** - February 13, 2025 at 11:13 AM



“ *Sacred Duty Spray was purchased for the family of Michael Leon Flake.*



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February 13, 2025 at 11:02 AM

TF

“ *The Elmer Family purchased the Serene Retreat for the family of Michael Leon Flake.*



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**The Elmer Family** - February 13, 2025 at 10:36 AM