



Michael Anthony DeBetta

May 18, 1946 - February 16, 2025

Michael Anthony DeBetta, 78, former area resident, passed away on Sunday, February 16, 2025 at his home in New Buffalo, Michigan with his loving family present at his bedside. Born on May 18, 1946, in Chicago, Illinois, the son of Anthony & Caroline (Lecato) DeBetta.

Michael grew up in Kankakee with a strong sense of dedication and service. He attended St. Patrick's High School in Kankakee, Illinois, before continuing his education at Western Michigan University in Kalamazoo, Michigan, where he went on a football scholarship. His commitment to learning and leadership led him to a fulfilling career as a business administrator, educator, and coach at Bishop McNamara High School. After retiring from Bishop McNamara, he continued to share his knowledge and passion for education at the Kankakee Area Career Center. Michael also had assisted with the operation of the family business, The Rainbow Inn.

Michael was a veteran of the U.S. Army, serving his country with honor. His faith was an important part of his life, and he was an active member of St. Mary's of the Lake Catholic Church in New Buffalo, Michigan.

He also had been on the JC Little League team that went to Williamsport, PA for the the Little League World Series in 1958.

Beyond his professional and military service, Michael found joy in simple pleasures—gambling, taking walks, watching television and movies—but above all else, he cherished time spent with his grandchildren and caring for his family. His selfless nature was evident in every aspect of his life.

Michael is survived by his beloved wife, Paula DeBetta of New Buffalo, MI; his children, Jessica Nichols of Chicago, IL, Thomas (Megan) DeBetta of Normal, IL, and Elisabeth (Blake) Dankovich of Chicago, IL; his sister Marietta (John) Pergi of Manhattan, IL; and his grandchildren Lauren Nichols, Samantha Nichols, David Nichols, Leonardo DeBetta, Olive DeBetta, Louie DeBetta, Vince DeBetta, Blakeley Dankovich, and Andrew Dankovich. He was preceded in death by his parents, Anthony and Caroline DeBetta.

Visitation will be held from 9 a.m. until the time of the Noon funeral service on Thursday, February 20, 2025 at Clancy-Gernon Funeral Home in Bourbonnais (295 Main St. NW Bourbonnais, IL 60914). Interment will follow at Abraham Lincoln National Cemetery in Elwood, IL.

Michael's legacy of dedication and love will live on through those who knew him. May his memory bring comfort to all who mourn his passing.

Memorials may be made to the Juvenile Diabetes Research Foundation.

Cemetery Details

Abraham Lincoln National Cemetery

20953 Hoff Road
Elwood, IL 60421

Previous Events

Visitation

FEB 20. 9:00 AM - 12:00 PM (CT)

Bourbonnais - Clancy-Gernon Funeral Homes, Inc.
295 Main St., NW
Bourbonnais, IL 60914
(815) 932-1214
cgfuneral@gmail.com

Funeral Service

FEB 20. 12:00 PM (CT)

Bourbonnais - Clancy-Gernon Funeral Homes, Inc.
295 Main St., NW
Bourbonnais, IL 60914
(815) 932-1214
cgfuneral@gmail.com

Tribute Wall

AP

“ *Angela Adamo Petersen lit a candle in memory of Michael Anthony DeBetta*



Angela Adamo Petersen - March 05, 2025 at 03:11 PM

RG

“ *My fondest memory of Mike comes from when I first started at Bishop McNamara. Mike and I traveled to collect books from a library that was discarding them. He thought we would come back with two or three boxes, but we filled the school van to the top. Mac's library grew by thousands of books that day. He was a good friend, a wonderful colleague, a devoted husband, and a very proud and and loving parent. With deepest sympathy to his family,*
Rebecca Gonski

Rebecca Gonski - February 28, 2025 at 05:35 PM

SM

“ *So sorry to hear of the passing of Mike. He and I were good friends. Over the years, we played basketball, football and baseball together. His kindness and caring for others is second to none!!!! Rest in PEACE old friend!!*
Steve Meredith

Steve Meredith - February 20, 2025 at 12:59 PM

SC

“ *Condolences to Paula & Family, so sorry to hear of Mike's death, thoughts & prayers are sent to you all at this time of grief 🙏.*

Stu & Jerri Cann - February 20, 2025 at 12:31 PM

KW

“ *Kay Wilder lit a candle in memory of Michael Anthony DeBetta*



Kay Wilder - February 19, 2025 at 04:29 PM

KW

Mike was an all around good guy. Everyone who knew Mike, would know that. I enjoyed his friendship as kids and I wish his family my deepest condolences. I'm quite sure, Mike will be missed, but also leaves so many beautiful memories for his family and friends.

Kay Wilder - February 19, 2025 at 04:31 PM

JB

“ *To a great man with a wonderful family.....condolences to all. I have many memories of the times we shared together on various sport teams at good old St Patrick Central HS. What a great friend and competitor! Rest in peace Michaelyou have created many memories for all of us to remember you by! God Speed!*

Joe Breault - February 19, 2025 at 02:59 PM

MB

“ *I knew Mike since I was a kid. I was two years behind him in school (and Little League) but always found him to be a really nice kid and man. He left a positive legacy in the Kankakee area and I'm sure will be missed by all of his family and friends. -Max Brigham*

Max S Brigham - February 19, 2025 at 01:23 PM

DL

“ Mike was my very first friend growing up. I remember and cherish playing baseball in the backyard and stopping by his house in the morning on the way to school at St Patrick grade school. Frequently I would have to wait as Mrs DeBetta made sure Mike finished his toast and COFFEE. There are many other memories. Thanks Mike. May you rest in peace.
Don LoBue

Don LoBue - February 19, 2025 at 11:58 AM

PH

“ Patti Hall lit a candle in memory of Michael Anthony DeBetta



Patti hall - February 19, 2025 at 09:11 AM

PH



Patti hall - February 19, 2025 at 09:12 AM

PH

(((Paula))) i'll be thinking of you and your family. Hugs of love and comfort

Patti hall - February 19, 2025 at 09:15 AM

GH

“ I was so sorry to learn of Mike's passing. I always enjoyed time with him at Sammy's, The Rainbow, Knights of Columbus, Tiny Tap, Turkey Bowl and going to ND games or taking stats at Bishop Mac football games. He was one of the funniest and kindest people I knew. I still share funny stories about him. God Bless you Mike and Blessings to your family.

Greg Hanold - February 19, 2025 at 08:02 AM

BB

“ My deepest condolences to Mike's wife and his family at this difficult time. Prayers for your family!

Bob Bertrand - February 18, 2025 at 10:28 PM

MS

“ Mike was an extremely kind and unique individual. His life was filled with amazing experiences and through his relating stories Mike brought them to life as if one was there. A gifted former athlete and outstanding coach Mike certainly will be remembered for his professionalism and dedication to all those he touched. My prayers and condolences to his family.

Mark Sutton - February 18, 2025 at 05:19 PM

ET

“ So sorry to hear of Mike's passing. Enjoyed reminiscing at our 50th class reunion.

Ed Taylor - February 18, 2025 at 04:36 PM

MB

“ *My deepest sympathy to the DeBetta Family! Michael played HS football with my brother and their friendship meant so much!* ”



MaryPat Taylor Barney - February 18, 2025 at 11:24 AM

CS

“ *Carla Scheppler lit a candle in memory of Michael Anthony DeBetta* ”



Carla Scheppler - February 18, 2025 at 11:15 AM

JL

“ *Who can forget faculty Christmas parties at Bishop Mac, when after enjoying turkey dinner in the cafeteria, teachers and administrators retired to the library to make their own entertainment and merriment: Pat Hickey with his banjo, poetry from Sondra Patchette, more music from "The Men of Little Height," and finally jokes and reflections from Mike DeBetta, who could not let an empty platform go to waste?* ”

Joan Linneman - February 18, 2025 at 11:14 AM

DC

“ *Dear Paula, sorry to hear about the loss of your husband Michael. May God wrap his loving arms around you and comfort you in the days ahead. So sorry, Donna (Palmer) Casino* ”

Donna Casino - February 18, 2025 at 10:55 AM

KG

“ *My condolences Paula. So sorry.*

Kathy Goers - February 18, 2025 at 08:46 AM

MM

“ *MR MRS sent a virtual gift in memory of Michael Anthony DeBetta*



MR MRS - February 18, 2025 at 08:38 AM

JG

“ *Joseph Giacchino lit a candle in memory of Michael Anthony DeBetta*



Joseph Giacchino - February 18, 2025 at 06:40 AM

MM

“ *Marilyn Mulcahy lit a candle in memory of Michael Anthony DeBetta*



Marilyn Mulcahy - February 17, 2025 at 10:28 PM

BA

“ *Paula and family, I am so sorry to hear of Michael's passing. You all are in my thoughts and prayers.*

Becky Arseneau - February 17, 2025 at 04:36 PM



“ *The Chief! Mike Debetta! Athlete, Teacher, Coach, Businessman, Knight of Columbus, Philosopher, Wit and Peace-maker has gone home to Christ. I could not be more sad to see our world lose such a delightful man. Then again, heaven is getting a great citizen.*

Pat Hickey - February 17, 2025 at 03:10 PM

JD

“ *The world lost a very good man over the weekend. Mike was a truly special and magnetic person who lived a life of integrity. I have very fond memories of him. His secret power was engaging with people. He had the special knack of easily making conversation with anyone he crossed paths with. Mike was genuinely interested in getting to know newcomers in the family and making them feel comfortable. We humans are not always the kindest to one another, but Mike has his own special brand of kindness. That kindness and generosity touched everyone he met, and his death leaves a substantial void in our family.*

Julie Dankovich - February 17, 2025 at 02:28 PM

DR

My condolences to Mikes family on the death of their beloved Michael. I grew up with Mike on Greenwood Ave and we shared many paths and experiences in school, sports and careers. I coached with Mike and enjoyed every minute of it. Having been a talented athlete himself, Mike was a dedicated coach and mentor to the young people he taught and coached.

Mike was always fun to be around. A great sense of humor was just one of his many gifts.. Although I know he will be missed by his family ,I also know that he had a rich and full life the memories of which they can cherish til they meet again in their eternal heavenly home.

Dave Raiche - February 17, 2025 at 04:21 PM

JD

Dave, Mike always talked fondly about you and Madonna. He really enjoyed working with you at Bishop Mac. We just talked about you at Christmas, in fact.

Julie Dankovich - February 17, 2025 at 05:10 PM

SC

So sorry to hear of Mike's death. Sympathy & prayers to Paula & his family 🙏. Stu has fond & fun memories competing against Mike in Basketball & Baseball in High School and I was a classmate for 12 years at St Patrick Grade School & High School. Enjoyed visiting with him at St Joseph Church. We won't be able to attend his services as we are out of town, but remember him as a great athlete, kind, warm friend & classmate.

Jerri & Stu Cann

Stu & Jerri Cann - February 20, 2025 at 12:15 PM

JN

“ *I was saddened to learn of Coach DeBetta's passing. I attended Bishop McNamara High School from 1980-1984. He coached the Women's Basketball Team where he mentored and inspired me/the team to be our best selves in and off the court. As I reflect on my formative and educational years, Mr. DeBetta is the first to come to my mind. My heart and sympathy are with his loving family during your profound loss. He made an impact on my life! 🙏*

Jill Norgaard-Roberts, Class of 1984 BMHS

Jill Norgaard-Roberts - February 17, 2025 at 02:22 PM

JG

Paula & Family: So sorry to hear of Mike's passing. All through grade school & high school, everyone liked Mike. I enjoyed catching up with Mike when he came into the Hospice office. He was truly a nice guy!
JoAn (Holz) Giroux

JoAn Giroux - February 20, 2025 at 01:45 PM

JK

Paula & Family, I was deeply saddened to hear about Mike! I had the pleasure of meeting and knowing a good friend through our high school years at St Patrick Central H.S.

He always went out of his way to acknowledge me at St Joesphs Church!

He will be missed by us all who knew him! Hold on tight to your family and all the beautiful memories you shared!

Jay & Donna Karr

Jay & Donna Karr - February 20, 2025 at 09:26 PM