

Oh, What a Ride!

The life of Michael Andrew Bazany

3/6/1940 – 1/12/2016

He was born in Grand Haven, Michigan. Mike was the first of 3 children born to Kate and Andy Bazany, children of Polish and Czech immigrants. Mike's parents were honest to the core and hard working all their lives. Theirs was the American dream -- to see their children be the first to go to college and build for themselves a better life.

Mike was a blonde, barefooted, bike-riding boy who started life on the farm. He spent his days riding his bike to the bayous to fish and catch frogs, walking behind his Dad and Uncle at the age of 6 when they went hunting, staying outside in the woods until dark and going to church with his mother on Sundays.

Always a good student at the one-room school house in Peach Plains near his house, he discovered sports when he entered high school in town (especially baseball!). Never without his baseball mitt on his bicycle (unless it was his fishing pole), his passion was baseball but he also played football and basketball. Mike's cheering section would be his mother sitting all alone in the stands during a snow storm to watch his JV football team play, or pulling the car up to the fence to watch his baseball games with his baby sister.

Mike's mother was his biggest fan, collecting every clipping from the Grand Haven Tribune about her son's baseball career, filling a scrap book with the tales of the left handed pitcher who led the team with his batting average of .345. Life was simple and wonderful.

Mike set his sights on the University of Michigan, funded in part with a scholarship provided by Grand Haven Brass, where his father worked nights. Mike played freshman ball at Michigan and won his numerals. When his freshman team catcher, Bill Freehan, was drafted by the Detroit Tigers at the end of the season, Mike realized he would never be a star in the major leagues. He changed his pathway from Engineering to Physical Education and dreamed of coaching the young high school players; he wanted to help create the next generation of Bill Freehans.

In his Junior year at Michigan, Mike met his wife, Betsy. After graduation, they were married one week before Mike started coaching football, baseball and basketball at a small town outside of Ann Arbor. He taught math, coached, and continued with school to complete his Masters in Phys Ed. A perfect life for a newly married couple.

When Mike was considering relocating for a new coaching position, Betsy's Dad asked him if he had ever thought about industry and Mike decided to interview on campus



Off to Hike in Canyonlands National Park

to see what might lie out there. He accepted a job with IBM in Dearborn, Michigan and started to climb an amazing hill. They moved to Dearborn and stayed for two years; while there, their first child, Michael, Jr, was born, and Mike sold main frame computers in his territory of Ann Arbor.

At this time, several IBMers were looking to start a new company called ComShare. The business plan was to buy one of those big IBM computers they were selling and sell time on it to small companies. Mike was fortunate enough to be invited to become the first salesman. This was the beginning of THE RIDE! Mike was very successful in this adventure. He was paid peanuts and given stock that had no value at that time. We were happy as larks and as poor as church mice. During this time our second child, Sarah, was born. We moved to Minneapolis to start up sales in Minnesota and the company continued to grow. Nine months later back to Ann Arbor, then sent to Toronto for 5 years to start up ComShare, Canada.

As all young companies get to be bigger companies, the thrill and excitement and challenges become the norm. Mike had found his niche. At this time, new opportunities were hatching like Chickens in the computer world, and

Mike's abilities were in demand Exciting times! Datapoint Corporation of San Antonio followed ComShare. Teknekron Infoswitch followed Datapoint. Start ups either going public with their stock or being sold, split, absorbed, etc. From 1964 to 1995, we moved, and moved, met wonderful people, lived in great parts of this country and Canada, watched our kids grow and prosper and this Phys Ed major, who had barely been out of the state of Michigan before graduation, loved to learn new things in the fascinating world of technology, and became a world traveler.

Mike retired at the age of 50 (well, semi-retired ... his skills remained in demand so he continued with a few favored clients for a while). We had our summer home in Rochester, NY, and a winter home in Ocean Springs, MS. When Katrina took our MS home in 2005, Mike, a lover of poker, decided to move to Las Vegas and Sun City where he loved the sports available and the card playing at Red Rock. Golf in the morning ... poker until dinner time... a trip to Europe for a month each year. What a life!!

Mike also enjoyed spending time with his four grandchildren, Andy, Kate, Jim, and Mary Elizabeth. There were frequent hiking trips with the kids and grandkids each year, tramping with the younger generations through the National Parks. There were special trips with the grandchildren: to Europe; fishing trips in Canada; and "coaching" the next generation of poker players. After years of singing The Victors, he even persuaded one grandchild to carry on the tradition, attending the University of Michigan where his grandparents and parents met.

Mike's parents' dream of educating their children became true as all three of their kids graduated from college. His mother used to say, "I don't understand what my son does at work, but I could not be prouder of him". My quote about Mike was, "I used to bring home new friends and Mike would keep them." The qualities that made Mike a great salesman also made him a great husband, father, grandfather, and friend. His honesty, his integrity, his intelligence, and his genuine caring for his friends made him a wonderful colleague and friend.

So for me, Mike, I can only say, What a ride you took me on... Far beyond my wildest expectations. A ride of love and caring, peaceful marriage without rancor, and heights I never expected. What a lucky woman I am. 53 years of marriage to the man of my dreams.

Betsy Bazany

A letter from the Grandchildren:

As children, we were very lucky to know our grandfather from a very young age. Our earliest memories of him were attending Thanksgiving dinners at the Saddle Ridge house in suburban Rochester. Later, we would visit our grandfather in Biloxi, Mississippi and at the house on

Sodus Bay, where he instilled in all of us, and especially Jim, a love of fishing. Our grandfather also joined us for hikes in the Adirondacks. When I climbed my final 46er (46th mountain in the ADKs over 4000 feet), our grandfather climbed his first (at age 69) to celebrate with me. He liked it so well he also climbed the final 46er for Kate and Jim (at age 73). My fondest and strongest memories of the Biloxi condo involve the crab traps that we would set up at the beginning of our visits, and the large crab feast that we would have for our final dinner. After Hurricane Katrina, our grandparents relocated to a house in Las Vegas, which soon became a rendezvous point whenever our family would travel to a National Park in the western U.S. My favorite memories of my grandfather are the hikes we would do and the phenomenal scenery we would see together in these National Parks. In the summer of 2015, our family visited Glacier National Park, which would be the last one we would visit with our grandfather. Even then, at the age of 75, he remained just as active and able a hiker as I had ever known him to be. Now that he has passed, I will always remember my grandfather fondly, as a rugged outdoorsman, but above all as a kind and patient man whose compassion knew no bounds.

With Love,
Michael Andrew Bazany III
Kathryn Elizabeth Bazany
James Marshall Bazany



Farewell