



Mike Watson

June 15, 1959 - January 10, 2020

Mr. Michael Lee "Mike" Watson, of Bowdon, Georgia, passed away on January 10, 2020. He was 60 years old.

Mike was born on June 15, 1959 in Carrollton, Georgia to the late Curtis Ira and Delma Aletha Kent Watson. He was the youngest of five and enjoyed a childhood of outdoor adventures with his cousins and friends and learning about farm life with his Grandmother and PaPa Kent. He began his education at Bowdon schools, from grammar grades through high school, graduating from Bowdon High School in 1977. It was during these formative years that Mike developed his passion for music, starting all the way back when he was six years old. In his own words, Mike described peering out of his bedroom window and watching with disgust as rain began to fall: "I was a kid. I wanted to go outside and play," Instead, he grabbed notebook paper and an Eberhard Faber and scribbled his first blues song about the heartache of a rainy day. "It was like I was born with a guitar." Throughout his school years, Mike continued to hone his skills on the guitar, but he also expanded his musical repertoire, singing, playing trombone in the marching band, and writing his own songs. In high school, Mike and friends formed a band and spent most weekend nights rockin' and rollin' the frat boys and sorority girls of West Georgia College in Carrollton-not far from his hometown of Bowdon. After graduating from Bowdon High, Mike would go on to attend West Georgia College himself, majoring in music. It was in his early twenties that his career in the local music scene began to take off. He became the hit of Hapeville, Ga., crooning country at the Nevada Lounge, but this was just a taste of what was to come. Eventually, he was opening and performing with the likes of the Freddy Fender Band, Allen Frizzell, Confederate Railroad, Janie Frickie, Hamilton, Joe Frank and Reynolds, Cheap Trick, Doyle Grisham (session musician and Jimmy Buffett's steel guitarist), and Darlene Austin, among numerous others and was a favorite performer on the emerging casino circuit. Eventually, he embraced his passion for rhythm and blues. One of Mike's songs, "I've Got A Biscuit On My Mind," quickly became a fan favorite. It was through his signature blues style that Mike garnered individual awards and recognitions such as Slab Music's 1999 People's Choice Award and the runner-up in the 2004 Athen's Flagpole Music Awards as blues artist and songwriter of the year. In 2011,

Mike was inducted into the Atlanta Country Music Association's Hall of Fame.

In 2011, Mike was inducted into the Atlanta Country Music Association's Hall of Fame. Additionally, The Mike Watson Band, highly acclaimed in the Atlanta area, received a multitude of awards, notably: the 2011, 2012, 2013, 2014, 2016, 2017, and most recently the 2018 Blues Band of the Year, as well as the Runner Up 2012 Band of the Year, and Mike, as the 2018 Paul Peek Entertainer of the Year, the 2013 Entertainer of the Year, and the 2016 Director's Award by the Atlanta Society of Entertainers. Despite these successes, Mike was known as a humble man, and he was always willing to play a benefit for a good cause or for an individual in need. His friends in the music industry have described him as one of the greatest people they know.

Although most know Mike for his love of music, he served many other roles, the most important of which was that of a husband and father. Mike deeply loved his family, and although he traveled all over, he never strayed from his roots, making a home on Smithfield Road in Bowdon. As a family man, Mike loved to make jokes, and he could infuse humor into almost any situation. He loved family game nights and backyard badminton matches. He also had high expectations for his daughters and pushed them to achieve their goals and pursue college and create satisfying careers. He especially enjoyed being PawPaw to his grandchildren Kaylee and Alex. Mike was a friend to many. Anyone who really knew Mike was familiar with his ability to tell stories, specifically real-life events, turning even the most mundane of situations into interesting anecdotes and, on the other hand, bringing extraordinary events to life with the sheer enthusiasm and visceral details he included, and let's not forget, his engaging deep voice. At six foot three, Mike was larger than life; his characteristic personality, confidence, talent, winning smile, and robust laugh drew people to him whether it was on stage or in everyday life. Most people wouldn't know that Mike ever struggled with shyness. As a music teacher, Mike shared his knowledge and inspired young, aspiring musicians. Mike was a creative individual, and this was not limited to music. Mike became a nontraditional student when he was accepted into Atlanta Intercontinental University at the age of forty where he completed a bachelor's degree in graphic design. From building websites from the ground up, to designing logos, to creating a yearbook cover with his daughter, Mike had a masterful ability to weave elements of design into technological platforms, and he shined as a website content writer. For the last five years of his life, Mike worked as a graphic designer at Bowhunter's Supply Store in Bowdon. He also owned his own graphic design company, MW Graphic Design, and he continued to play music with the Mike Watson Band in the Atlanta area and throughout north and metro-Georgia.

In addition to his parents, he was preceded in death by his sister, Martha Sue Watson

Jiles, and his nephew, Kent Stewart Watson.

Survivors include his wife, Kathie Watson; his daughters and sons-in-law, Misty and David Hancock and Amanda and Santos De La Rosa; his brothers and sisters-in-law, Curtis Max Watson, James Wendell and Gale Watson, and Wayne Kent and Kanella Watson; his grandchildren, Kaylee Hancock and Alexander Hancock; his mother-in-law, Barbara Ledbetter; his sister-in-law and brothers-in-law, Jana and Dean Shelnett, and Kelly Cochran; and several nieces and nephews.

Funeral services will be held on Monday, January 13, 2020 at 3:00 p.m. at the Chapel of Rainwater Funeral Home. Bro. Kenneth Brown will officiate. Pallbearers will be David Hancock, Santos De La Rosa, Kevin Watson, Paul Arredondo, Lee Jiles, and Tommy Smith. Interment will follow the services at Mountain View Baptist Cemetery.

Prior to the services on Monday, the family will receive friends at the funeral home from 11:00 a.m. till the funeral hour.

Cemetery

Mountain View Cemetery

1928 Highpoint Road

Bowdon, GA, 30108

Events

JAN 13 **Visitation** 11:00AM - 03:00PM

Rainwater Funeral Home

317 North Carroll Street, Bowdon, GA, US, 30108

JAN 13 **Funeral Service** 03:00PM

Rainwater Funeral Home

317 North Carroll Street, Bowdon, GA, US, 30108

Comments



“ Karen Smith Classmate lit a candle in memory of Mike Watson



Karen Smith Classmate - January 13, 2020 at 10:52 PM



“ 1 file added to the album Memories Album



Anita Morris - January 13, 2020 at 10:24 PM



“ Awesome

Karen Smith Classmate - January 13, 2020 at 10:48 PM



“ Patty Akin lit a candle in memory of Mike Watson



Patty Akin - January 13, 2020 at 11:23 AM



“ 51 files added to the album LifeTributes



Rainwater Funeral Home - January 13, 2020 at 08:37 AM



“ I met Mike in Athens GA. in 2003. The first time I saw him play, I was absolutely stunned. I didn't know anyone could do that with a guitar in real life. And he was a great singer. But Mike was also a good person. He played many benefits for people he hardly knew, and he really helped me out a lot over the years. I'm going to miss him.

I know its hard on his family and loved ones right now, but I find a little comfort from the words of a Tom T. Hall song. "I know there's a lot of big preachers that know a lot more than I do, but it could be that the Good Lord likes a little pickin' too."

God Bless

Lee Paul

Lee Paul - January 13, 2020 at 07:49 AM



“ Mike was a really good musician. I enjoyed playing with him for several years in the 2000's. He introduced me to Tommy Crain and we played several wonderful gigs with him. We had many a good time playing around Georgia. As the song "Rock and Roll Heaven" says, you know the got a hell of a band. Peace and love always, Pal.

Charles Sewell - July 09, 2020 at 01:45 PM



“ Dexter Farmer lit a candle in memory of Mike Watson



Dexter Farmer - January 13, 2020 at 07:44 AM



“ My memories of Mike like so many others are of his wit and musical talent. I had the pleasure of working with him weekly at Mudcatz. A beautiful person and so gifted both musically and vocally. Much love and Godspeed my friend... you will be dearly missed.
Thank you for the memories... Shari

Shari Skipper - January 12, 2020 at 10:23 PM



“ I loved and treasured every moment I have ever spent with my precious cousin. I loved him so very much and never dreamed he would leave us without seeing and hugging him one more time. You are all in my prayers.

Gerrie Harman - January 12, 2020 at 08:44 PM



“ Sheila Geter Grimaldi lit a candle in memory of Mike Watson



Sheila Geter Grimaldi - January 12, 2020 at 02:12 PM



“ Mike was a classmate of mine, he was kind and funny and a great musician. Lots of times Judy, Lisa and me and our husbands would venture out to some of Mike's gigs. He always called us his groupies. We loved him and also his music. Praying for his sweet wife and girls and his family. I know he will be missed by his band especially Paul. Love and hugs and prayers for you all. We love you Mike. Even Mike's mailperson Paula loved him too. He was an awesome person and I know he is in God's band now. Can you imagine the beauty of the angels singing with him.

Tresa Gosdin-Morris Hulseley - January 12, 2020 at 12:52 AM



“ You will be in our hearts forever!



Kay Smith - January 12, 2020 at 12:41 AM



“ LeAnna Watson lit a candle in memory of Mike Watson



LeAnna Watson - January 11, 2020 at 10:27 PM



“ Debbie Brook Lashley lit a candle in memory of Mike Watson



Debbie Brook Lashley - January 11, 2020 at 08:00 PM



“ Sheila Inman Oliver lit a candle in memory of Mike Watson



Sheila Inman Oliver - January 11, 2020 at 01:11 PM



“ My sincere condolences to Mike's family He will be missed by many..He was a fine gentleman and a great musician. Jimmy Brock

jimmy leighton brock - January 11, 2020 at 12:46 PM



“ I met Mike in Gainesville several years ago while he was playing in a restaurant, became friends & saw him several times after. Always enjoyed his music & his friendship. I will always remember Mike & wish his family the best through this time & Prayers to ALL.

Greg Moss - January 11, 2020 at 07:45 AM



“ Mike, I enjoyed meeting you through my Mother Pam Van Ahn with Caring Together in Hope and through Vince Zangaro for Alzheimer's Music Fest. Your music was soulful. Thank you for supporting such a great cause. Play a tune for my Mom up in the sky for us!

Andrea Newland

Andrea Newland - January 11, 2020 at 01:48 AM



“ Connie & David Hyatt lit a candle in memory of Mike Watson



connie & david hyatt - January 10, 2020 at 08:15 PM



“ Praying for Mike’s family, band mates and friends. He was not only a great talent- he was also a great man who had an air of humble kindness about him.

Dottie Cavender - January 10, 2020 at 06:37 PM



“ Paula Hall lit a candle in memory of Mike Watson



Paula Hall - January 10, 2020 at 05:54 PM



“ Sharon Morris lit a candle in memory of Mike Watson



Sharon Morris - January 10, 2020 at 05:47 PM



“ R.I.P. Mike, Very sad to hear of your passing. Prayers for your family.

Sharon Morris - January 10, 2020 at 05:50 PM



“ Tommy Smith lit a candle in memory of Mike Watson



Tommy Smith - January 10, 2020 at 03:52 PM



“ RIP to my dear friend Michael. Praying for Kathy and the family.

Tommy Smith - January 10, 2020 at 03:55 PM



“ Fellow Music Majors at West Ga College.
Shared many years playing professionally.
My pleasure to say he influenced my playing
so he lives on thru those his talent inspired.
Keith Thomas, Cumming, Ga

Keith Thomas - January 10, 2020 at 03:48 PM



“ One of the best guitar players
I've ever heard. I will miss him and his music.

Carolyn Sheridan - January 10, 2020 at 04:53 PM



“ I was so very fortunate to work with Mike many times. He was one of the sweetest and
most humble musicians I have ever known. I was extremely blessed to call him "friend".
May God give his family strength and peace. God speed, my dear friend.

Karen Greene - January 10, 2020 at 05:19 PM