

Mike's Eulogy

Michael James Flanigan was always a leader as befitting the first born of our family.

He led his two brothers at school. He once said to me, "I paved the way with the teachers for you." On the first day of school in seventh grade, I recall Mrs. Russell, our mutual Introduction to Biology teacher, asking me, "Are you related to Michael Flanigan?", and after an affirmative response she quipped, "I hope you're as good a student as he was." Later that school year she wrote in large letters across the board, "Platyhelminthes", and asked the rhetorical question, "Does anyone know what that word means?" I shouted from the back row, "Flatworm!" I knew this because Mike had tipped me off that she had done this with his class to introduce dissection of these worms. The class and she were duly impressed. She did regain class control with, "Mr. Flanigan, please raise your hand the next time you have an answer to share with the class." My friends and I still considered it a great "win". Thanks to you, Mike.

He led in Boy Scouts at St. Therese Catholic Church Troop 186. First he was our Buffalo Patrol Leader. We always won the signaling contests because of Mike. He felt that semaphore was faster and more accurate than Morse code when used for short distance visual transmission of messages with flags, and he was right. He later led the troop as Senior Patrol Leader, Eagle Scout with Silver and Gold Palms, and finally Order of the Arrow. Over achiever? Sometimes.

He led as the first to go to college at the Colorado School of Mines in Golden, Colorado. There he led at his SAE fraternity, developing lifelong relationships with another set of "brothers".

He led by developing a new personal relationship with Jesus Christ through Campus Crusade for Christ during his first post-graduate job in California, and subsequently helping me find that personal relationship too.

He led in marriage with Martha in 1975 and had Mick, the first child of the next generation in 1978.

He led in climbing. My brother and I climbed all of the Colorado fourteeners, most of them together. He always led there too. We would often rope together for "safety" on some of the steeper slopes. Mike would advance up the rocky incline, then stop and belay me in case I should fall. I'd get up to him, he'd undo the belay and start up again. Mick used to say we shouldn't do that because if one fell we'd just kill the other. But I felt I was a little less anxious roped to Mike, so that mitigated the risk that concerned Mick. And if the worst happened, that was OK too. We'd go together.

And now he has led in death, and showed us how it should be done. We

are sad to be without him, but glad to know where he is.

And where is he? Where is my brother, Mike? He is gone, but gone where? I believe that he now resides in the same place as the man who died on his own cross next to Jesus, resides. That man acknowledged that he deserved his punishment for his sin, but Jesus had done nothing wrong. Then he turned and asked, "Jesus, remember me when you come into your kingdom." Jesus responded, "Truly, I say to you, today you will be with me in Paradise."

Mike is in "Paradise" because Jesus Christ suffered on a cross and died for his sins so he could enter a pure heaven in a blameless state. This is a tough concept for many. Not so tough is, "All have sinned and fallen short of the Glory of God." We all know this is truth. Even the most egotistical of us know this in their heart. And there is only one solution for that fact. That solution is Jesus Christ. Jesus, who was the first-born of the dead so that Mike could be the first-born of our family's generation to be with him.

I want to ask all you first-borns to take up that leadership role that God has given you, and that Mike fulfilled. I'm speaking to you, Mick, Jim and Kallie. And you Waylon, Mason, Colton, Samantha, Declan and Cypher. Remember. You are the first-borns. The leaders of your respective generations. Lead well, like your Dad and your Uncle. Your brothers and sisters have you as an example. Make it a good one. Your reward will be great.

My Uncle Tom, the patriarch of my father's family, drove from Nebraska for his brother Jim's funeral even though he was not in the best of health. I stood by my father's casket and heard his brother say, "I'll be along soon, Jim." Mike, three hours ago I stood by your casket, on a beautiful hillside at the feet of the Rocky Mountains in Golden, Colorado, and said those same words. Yes, Mike, we will all be along soon. But until that time, I'll follow your lead. "As for me and my house, we will serve the Lord."