



## John Michael "Mike" Smith

January 24, 1947 - December 31, 2018

John Michael "Mike" Smith was born in Santa Barbara, California, on January 24, 1947, and passed away at his home in Sutter, California on December 31, 2018. He is survived by his son, Michael Dustin Smith; daughter, Julie Marie Rogers; and his sisters, Vicki Breck; Patricia Ellis; and Rosalee Patalzick.

He was born into a hardworking farm family, the youngest child of Evelyn Maxine Smith (nee Mull) and John Smith, Jr. in Santa Barbara, California. Maxine and John raised their three daughters, Vicki, Patty, and Rosalee and son Mike in the Santa Ynez Valley before moving to Red Bluff in 1955. There, Mike attended elementary school at Reeds Creek School, a one room school house on the outskirts of Red Bluff.

Shortly thereafter, the family moved to Corning, and he attended 4th through 8th grade at the Independent School near Corning. It was during this time that his path first crossed with Marilee Miller when his school played coed football against her school, the nearby Flournoy School. But it was not until they attended Corning High School and sat together on the bus ride to and from school that they became sweethearts.

They courted through high school, graduated in 1964, and married in August 1966, after their second year of college. It was then that they moved to Sacramento where their son Michael Dustin was born followed by their daughter Julie Marie four years later. Both Mike and Marilee were still just kids when they started their family and they didn't have much, but they worked hard to build a better life.

Mike held jobs like encyclopedia salesman, garbage collector, busboy and other odd jobs while earning his Bachelor's degree in Civil Engineering from Sacramento State University. Mike and Marilee grew and developed their close bond during this time through their hard work, mutual support of one another, and a sense of adventure and fun that would carry on throughout their over 50 years marriage.

In 1971, immediately after receiving his degree, Mike started work as an engineer for MHM Engineering in Marysville, so with a newborn baby girl and a 4-year-old son, Mike and Marilee moved to Yuba City to start a new journey together. He was destined for leadership, and in 1983 he took over as president of the company. During his time with MHM, he was considered an authority on rivers and flood control. He played a key role in guiding the Yuba Sutter area through the major floods of 1986 and 1997. During his 47-

year career he achieved much and was a respected member of the community.

Mike was a hardworking man, but that didn't stop him from finding adventure now and then. He and Marilee traveled often with friends to places like Italy, Mexico, China, Alaska and Hawaii. Mike's travels also took him on safari in Africa and to Tonga where he applied his engineering skills in supporting locals build churches. Some of his best adventures were closer to home on the Mendocino coast and the Lake Tahoe area where they vacationed regularly. He and Marilee enjoyed river rafting, hunting and fishing with their family and friends. Camping trips with his family were frequent and much enjoyed.

Although travel gave them much pleasure, their most treasured adventure came when they became grandparents. In 2004, Marilee and Mike became Grammie and Grandpa with the arrival of their three beloved grand-children. Elizabeth was born to Julie and her husband Tony in October and less than two months later twins Storm and Jack were born to Michael Dustin and his wife Bridget.

Mike and Marilee were a fantastic grand-parenting team who would get on a plane or drive great distances just to babysit or go to a birthday party. In 2005, they moved to their beautiful home in the Sutter Buttes where they enthusiastically hosted Christmas and summer time stays at their ranch where the grandkids got to ride a horse, drive off road vehicles, hike mountains and run free in the beautiful country setting. They loved sharing the ranch with their grandkids.

The Yuba-Sutter area has been their home for the past 47 years. It was in this rural landscape which they loved so much that they both built successful careers, developed lifelong friendships, raised two successful and happy children, enjoyed three beautiful grandchildren, built a dream home, and lived many happy and rewarding years sharing their life and love with those for whom they loved and cared. They never took what they had for granted.

Above all else, Mike's shining star and guiding light was his wife Marilee. He made sure to support her in everything she did and help make her dreams come true and in doing so made his own dreams a reality. She was passionate about horses, her house, her job, her family and being a grandmother, but most of all she was passionate about Mike. She passed away in December of 2016. Altogether too soon. But now he has found his way back to her.

Mike was a dedicated and faithful friend, husband, father and grandfather. He was a great cook, and he loved to share his culinary creations with friends and family. He had a quick wit and great sense of humor. He was a practical joker and the stories about his jokes are legendary. He was sentimental and a romantic; he kept nearly every card Marilee ever gave him and over their life together he gave her thousands of roses. He treasured special mementos made by his kids and grandkids. He took care to show kindness and respect to everyone he knew. He was a loving and generous father. He strived to give more than he received according to his principle that giving more than the other person was the key to

any good relationship. He loved and enjoyed life and shared that love with his family and friends. His love and spirit now live on in us and for that, we are thankful and blessed. Please join us on Monday, January 14th, 2019, at 11:00, at St. Andrews Presbyterian Church, 1390 Franklin Rd., Yuba City, CA. 95993, for a "Celebration of Life" service.