



Michael Richard Cross

December 28, 1944 - January 22, 2024

Michael Richard Cross (79), a third generation Visalian, passed away peacefully in his home on January 22, 2024. A graduate of Redwood High School (Class of 1963), Mike attended UC Berkeley before enlisting in the Army and serving in Korea during the Vietnam War. Mike returned from serving his country and graduated from UC Santa Barbara with a degree in sociology in 1971.

Mike found two true callings in life: One was his loving commitment to family and the other was his unwavering pursuit of social justice. He married Betsy Gaudette-Cross on July 19, 1986, his wife of 37 years, and was the proud father of four children: Grant Gaudette, Megan Lo (Gaudette), Katherine Cross, and Kevin Cross. Known affectionately as "PopPop" to his five granddaughters, Ellie (12), Coral (11), Abby (9), Kaia (5), and Finley (5). Mike relished in the joy of sharing each new milestone with his children and

grandchildren. Mike loved sports, playing golf, being outdoors with his family, and traveling the world with his wife, Betsy. Still, his dream day was any day spent with his family, sitting on the deck of his Morro Bay home reading a good book, or going on a drive to Sequoia National Park, followed by some ice cream in Three Rivers.

In the legal community, Mike was best known for his professional calling as a criminal defense attorney in Tulare County. His life's work was nothing short of heroic. He quite literally advocated for life over death for his clients. Mike fought for their dignity, fought for grace and humanity to be granted to the too often dehumanized, despised, or forgotten in our society. With such quiet grace and dignity, he faced headlong the injustices of his own community with an iron stomach, a brilliant mind, an upright spine, and unflinching eyes on reason and compassion. Mike truly believed that the death penalty should be abolished, and he made it his professional pursuit to make that happen.

It is extraordinary and admirable beyond compare how Mike Cross managed to align his moral and professional compass so completely. His family and his community have lost a quiet giant.

Michael Richard Cross is survived by his wife, Betsy Gaudette-Cross, his four children, his five grandchildren, and his brother, John Cross.

A Celebration of Life will be held on March 9th. Contact betsygcross@gmail.com if you want more information.

If you would like to share stories, photos, and stay connected, please go to <https://www.caringbridge.org/visit/michaelcross>. In lieu of flowers, Mike's family requests donations be made in Mike's memory to the Innocence Project (<https://innocenceproject.org/donate/>) and/or to Youth on Course (<https://youthoncourse.org/donate>).

Services have been entrusted to Salser & Dillard Funeral Chapel. Memorial Tributes and condolences may be offered by logging onto www.salseranddillard.com.

Previous Events

Celebration of Life

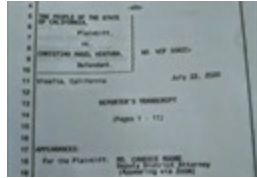
MAR 9 (PT)

Salser & Dillard Funeral Chapel
127 E. Caldwell Ave
Visalia, CA 93277
(559) 635-1144
info@salseranddillard.com
<https://www.salseranddillard.com>

Tribute Wall

CV

“ *Michael Cross read our case and believed in us. Soon we'll be free. Thank You Michael Cross.* ”



Christian Ventura and Omar Ventura - February 08, 2024 at 08:31 PM

PB

“ *My condolences to the family. Mike was a great lawyer and worked hard for his clients. He had a great dry sense of humor that always made me laugh.* ”

Phil Bourdette - January 31, 2024 at 07:35 PM