



## Michael Oliver Dean

December 3, 1970 - May 6, 2026

It is with profound sadness that we announce on May 6, 2026, our beloved Mikey moved on to his next adventure surrounded by the love of his family.

Mikey was a loving husband, devoted father, loyal friend, and one of the gentlest souls anyone could hope to know. He carried kindness quietly but powerfully into every room he entered, offering warmth, patience, and compassion to everyone fortunate enough to cross his path.

He leaves behind his wife, Didi, who was the love of his life and closest companion, and his cherished son, Jacob, of whom he was endlessly proud. His greatest joy came from his family - the simple moments at home, shared laughter, and the deep love they built together.

A man with a generous heart for all living creatures, Mikey could never turn away an animal in need. He lovingly cared for his rescue dog Finn, and stray cat Fiona, a reflection of the compassion that defined his life.

Though he made his home in the United States, his loss is deeply felt across oceans by both his own family in the USA and Didi's family in the United Kingdom, all of whom loved him dearly and will forever carry his memory in their hearts.

As a life long river guide and kayaker, Mikey shared a third, international family of river rafters from a very young age. His love of the outdoors and thrill of the rapids will always live within them.

Mikey will be remembered for his gentle nature, quiet strength, sense of humor, and the unwavering love he gave so freely. While his passing leaves an immeasurable void, the love he created will continue to surround those he leaves behind.

Forever loved, forever missed, forever remembered.

Family will be having a private memorial. In lieu of flowers, contact Didi.

Services have been entrusted to Salser & Dillard Funeral Chapel. Memorial Tributes and condolences may be offered by logging onto [www.salseranddillard.com](http://www.salseranddillard.com).

# Tribute Wall

MB

“ How lucky we were to have had Mikey in our lives.

*There are so many amazing stories about Mikey, but one trip in particular stands out for me. It was a Lower South Fork trip where Mikey was River Manager.*

*A very large gentleman arrived at check-in for his South Fork trip and was told he wouldn't be able to go rafting because a life jacket couldn't fit him properly. The man was devastated. He said he had tried so many companies and had even made a huge effort to lose weight so he could finally follow his dream of going rafting.*

*Mikey overheard the conversation, saw how upset he was, and simply said, "I'll take him down the river."*

*Using his ingenuity, Mikey fitted the man with two life jackets, cam-strapped them together, and asked him to jump into the water at put-in to make sure he could float safely. He then placed him in the middle of the raft so the boat wouldn't take on water.*

*I remember watching Mikey work so hard to make sure they hit all the major parts of the rapids, and I could hear the man's yells of joy echoing down the river.*

*At the end of the trip, the man nearly crushed Mikey with a hug and said, "You have made my life."*

*That's the kind of impact Mikey had on everyone lucky enough to spend time with him.*

*Rest in peace, dear friend.*

*Mitch, Guido and Rees ❤️*

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**Mitch Backhouse** - May 15 at 04:35 AM

DD

*Thank you so much for sharing this story Mitch, I'd completely forgotten it, these memories are so important for Jacob to read and hear about the wonderful person his dad was from a very early age. Love to you all. Didi x*

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**Didi Dean** - May 15 at 09:49 PM

MB

“Michelle ,Rusty and Bubba purchased the Simply Elegant Spathiphyllum for the family of Michael Oliver Dean.



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**Michelle ,Rusty and Bubba** - May 14 at 03:25 PM

PS

“Mikey was a Legend from the get go, of my career, as a white water boatman. Mikey was just through puberty or though it was hard to tell given his stature. The thing was Mikey was he stood out because he was one with the river, so for a rookie with a little talent you noticed, Mikey was the only one who was gifted, who could use the water to do his boats bidding. I ate it up and I followed him every opportunity I got. I remember the only day Mikey ever got in trouble with Jim. We Mikey and the infamous Mike Spiers all ran Ruckachucy because we agreed it was time, and given our research and expertise it was high time do it. Jim fired us for less than 24 hours. Mikey was the best of us. The best of White Water Connection. A beautiful man a loving and generous conscience's the world will sorely miss. Paddle free my brother.

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**peter Spiers** - May 14 at 04:43 AM

DD

Thank you so much for sharing this, Mikey loved boating with you. Last summer we took Jacob to an exhibit of rafting on the South Fork. We were there less than 5 minutes and Jacob shouts “Hey mum, this is dad.” They were showing the “Wild Americans” video of when you, Heather, Andy, Steve and Mikey ran Golden Gate. We appreciate your words more than I can say. Love, Didi x

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**Didi Dean** - May 15 at 09:56 PM

KB

“ Kelly B. planted a [Memorial Tree](/store/Product.aspx?ProductId=4518) in honor of Michael Oliver Dean.

Kelly B. - May 13 at 10:14 PM

RI

“ 1 file added to the tribute wall



Resa Inman - May 12 at 10:14 PM

RI

“ Resa Inman lit a candle in memory of Michael Dean



Resa Inman - May 12 at 10:02 PM

DD

Thank you Resa.

Didi Dean - May 15 at 09:56 PM

RD

“ In 1993 I went rafting on the American River. Turned out my guide was my cousin Mike. He asked where I was from and he said he had uncles there. Which lead to our discovery we were cousins. We ended up spending the next day hanging out and kayaking together. It was a pleasure to spend time with him and I'll glad to hear he had a loving wife and family. So sad for their loss. Sure he will be greatly missed.

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**Rodger Dean** - May 12 at 08:47 PM

DD

*Thank you for sharing Rodger.*

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**Didi Dean** - May 15 at 09:57 PM

SM

“ What can I say? Mikey was a one of a kind. A gentle, sweet, loving human being. I was fortunate to be in their circle. He is gone, at peace now...but he is not forgotten. Never forgotten.

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**Suzi Milligan** - May 12 at 07:01 PM

BK

*Mikey was always the one that we looked to on land or the river. With his amazing smile he convinced us all to follow and trust that the day would be good. We are all blessed to have shared a moment of his life and his compassion for all.*

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**Bubba Kite** - May 14 at 03:31 PM

MK

*Mikey was only 17 went I met him at WWC. I was a rent a guide on what was WWC's largest trip they had ever done. Somehow I was made in charge of condiments and the soda fountain machine. I was put in charge of changing those canisters and checking on the ketchup and such. It was I like was a deer in the headlights. I had no idea what to do. He wasn't head boatman on this trip but took his time to calmly help me and told me not to worry. He patiently showed me what to do and then he checked on me, throughout the evening, to make sure it was all ok. What a kind man at such a young age.*

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**Michelle Kite** - May 17 at 05:17 PM

JJ

*I was new to WWC in the best days ever went through guide school with Pete Spiers. After that Andy was my mentor Jim hooked me up with taught me everything especially important eddies were my friends and I was ready to step in as a guide. I had done the lower SF a few times at good water. However, this day doing the upper at 600 a nightmare with non english speaking peeps. Heather was HB and Kiwi Keith made it clear I didn't belong with little experience and couldn't believe Jim put me on the trip. Heather disagreed and she spoke up saying I could do it her choice. My biggest fear was letting her down. Mikie heard the convo between Heather and Keith and the fear and trepidation in my face damn near wanting to cry which I never do. Mikie put his arm around and said Jules you got this just follow me I got your back. I was terrified. First two runs a disaster because low water nothing but rocks and my peeps didn't speak English. Mikie pulled up next to me told me to learn the commands in French which I did and all went perfect after that his typical wisdom and kindness. He was beyond kind had faith in me and had my back watched me over his shoulder the whole trip he could do that in his sleep such an amazing guide. He made you smile and laugh all at the same time never condescending. He was an amazing human both he and Didi- a breath of fresh air always. He will be missed by all. Gone but never forgotten- a Coloma legend for real!*

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**Julie Juliano** - May 21 at 11:02 PM