



Michael Bovaird

February 20, 1943 - April 1, 2024

On Monday, April 1, 2024, James Michael Bovaird joined with our ever-loving Father and passed from this earth. If one would ask him how he would want his passing described, he would have been sure to say he preferred idioms such as "bit it," "bought the farm," or "kicked the bucket." However, those who knew him best knew that he often bit off more than he could chew when volunteering his time, he had already bought the farm ("Chiggerland"), and rather than kicking any sort of inanimate object, he'd just as soon kick back and relax on the tree farm with his wife of 53 years, Kathryn Ann Marie (Benedict).

Michael reached the ripe experienced age of 81, and he lived just north of Overbrook KS, with his wife Kathy. He was born February 20, 1943, in Bala-Cynwyd PA, the son of Gilbert Bater and Astrid Marie (Thorell) Bovaird.

Michael is preceded in death by his parents. He is survived by his wife Kathy; his four children, James Alexander IV (Lia) Bovaird of Lincoln NE, Kristin Lee (Ben) Bovaird-Abbo of Greeley CO, Kelly Ann (Jeff) Farmer of Oskaloosa KS, Robert Alan (Emily) Bovaird of Louisburg KS; and two sisters, Ruth (Sam) Zeisloft of Pittsburgh PA, and Jane (Ed) Blaydon of Klamath Falls OR. He was blessed to have seen eight grandchildren grace the world with their talents and love for life.

Michael served his country in the United States Army from 1961-1964 before being honorably discharged. While in the Army, he was stationed at Fort Jackson SC, Fort Gordon GA, and Fort Huachuca AZ. He had received orders to go overseas to Vietnam, but he did not go due to a service-connected disability.

Although he dropped out of high school in 1961 to join the Army, he made the most of the opportunities for further education. His education consisted of studying mathematics at Thiel College in Greenville PA, earning degrees in Psychology and Sociology from Susquehanna University in Selinsgrove PA and earning an MBA in Finance from the University of Pittsburgh Graduate School of Business in 1969. He began pursuing pre-med studies from Clark University in Worcester MA after he met the love of his life, Kathryn.

Michael then began a career with the Department of Veterans Affairs that took him and his family on a journey that began in Bath NY. Over the course of nearly 20 years, his career at the VA allowed the family to live in Baltimore MD, Canandaigua NY, Dublin GA, and Knoxville IA. In the final step of his career with the VA, the family settled in Topeka KS, where the children were able to put down roots. Michael was very proud of the fact that all four of his children graduated with honors from Washburn Rural High School in Topeka and earned undergraduate degrees from Baker University in Baldwin City KS.

During his time with the VA, Michael climbed the administrative ranks and served as Chief of Medical Administrative Services in several VA hospitals. He received professional awards from the American Legion, the Maryland Veterans, and the Director's Accommodation for Excellence from the Maryland VA. He also collaborated with Dr. Lynn Huebler to introduce "Holistic Medicine" at the VA hospitals in Dublin, GA, and Knoxville, IA. In 1991, Michael retired from his career with the VA.

As a young man, Michael grew up spending a great deal of his time in the outdoors. He became an avid outdoor enthusiast while spending summers at Camp Pasquaney in Hebron NH, where both his father Gilbert and his mother Astrid served as camp counselors. His true outdoor passion was hiking, and he had the opportunity to hike the entire length of the Appalachian Trail twice in his lifetime. He also hiked the Long Trail in Vermont and the southern part of the Continental Divide Trail in New Mexico. This passion was shared with his wife and children, who joined him during various segments of his thru-hikes over the years.

This passion for the outdoors and nature led Michael and Kathy to purchase a plot of land in southwest Shawnee County to develop as a tree farm. This property, lovingly referred to as “Chiggerland,” became officially known as Kamika as they further developed it as a tree farm. In 2016, Michael and Kathy were honored with the “Tree Farmer of the Year” award from the Kansas Forest Service.

Visitation will be 9 to 10 a.m. Tuesday, April 9, 2024, at Kevin Brennan Family Funeral Home, 2801 SW Urish Road, Topeka KS 66614, where funeral service will follow at 10 a.m. with Military Honors

Michael was a brilliant man with a love for his family and the outdoors, and he will be greatly missed. In lieu of flowers, memorial contributions may be made in Michael’s memory to the Kansas Forest Service and sent in care of the funeral home or online via <https://www.givecampus.com/campaigns/35518/donations/new>

Condolences may be sent online to www.kevinbrennanfamily.com

Previous Events

Visitation

APR 9. 9:00 AM - 10:00 AM (CT)

Kevin Brennan Family Funeral Home
2801 SW Urish Road
Topeka, KS 66614
(785) 272-7888
info@kevinbrennanfamily.com

Funeral Service

APR 9. 10:00 AM (CT)

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2801 SW Urish Road
Topeka, KS 66614
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Tribute Wall



“ Kevin Brennan Family Funeral Home created a Tribute Video in memory of Michael Bovaird



Kevin Brennan Family Funeral Home - April 04, 2024 at 02:40 PM

AB

“ I am sorry for your loss. I did not know Michael, but came across his obituary and found it most interesting. My husband, James Blessing, is a cousin - a great-nephew of Uncle Gil and Aunt Astrid.
Ann Blessing

Ann Blessing - June 20, 2024 at 10:46 AM



“ We enjoyed meeting Michael and Kathy when they joined the Kansas Prairie Packers. We enjoyed hearing stories about his many hiking exploits and enjoyed his company at meetings and outings. We also appreciated his generosity in offering his cabin for us to use for our Christmas pot luck. We will miss his humor and enthusiasm at our meetings and outings. Dave Dunford.

Dave Dunford - April 06, 2024 at 11:13 PM

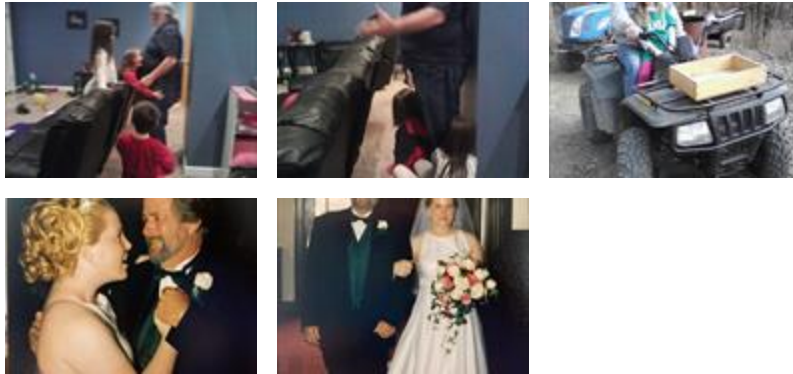
MS

“ I remember meeting Michael through Boy Scouts when I was a child. He let us explore his tree farm, go fishing at his pond and stay at his cabin. It was also the place where my 8th grade class went for their retreat. He was a great man and will be missed by myself and my family.

Matthew Self - April 04, 2024 at 08:06 PM

KA

“ 6 files added to the album Family Memories



Kristin Abbo - April 04, 2024 at 03:40 PM