



Dr. Michael C. Goering

May 16, 1951 - April 29, 2024

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Dr. Michael C. Goering, 72, of Topeka - known to his loyal optometry patients simply as “Dr. Mike” - passed away on April 29, 2024, departing a life of love including three children, three grandchildren, four siblings, and a wide circle of extended family and friends.

Mike was born on May 16, 1951, in Newton, Kansas, the second of five children of Dr. Emil and Lavina (Ediger) Goering. Mike was a devoted optometrist, master gardener, adventurous chef, intrepid cocktail mixologist, joyful golfer, and lifelong golf ball hunter.

Mike spent his earliest years in Newton, Lawrence, Kansas City, Mountain Lake, MN, and Pretty Prairie, KS. In his time growing up on the edge of Prairie Dunes Golf Course, he learned to hunt golf balls, spotting them in the rough even when no one else could.

As a young man, Mike attended Union Valley Elementary and graduated with high honors from Buhler High School in 1969. In high school, he ran track and cross country and played basketball and golf. Mike completed his college work at Bethel College and Washburn University, graduating with a Doctor of Optometry degree from University of Houston College of Optometry in 1982.

He prided himself in working from an early age, laboring at construction jobs in framing, concrete and roofing to help put himself through school, as well as medical jobs as an EMT and hospital orderly. His early business ventures included a golf course snack bar called the Pop Stand and a sandcast candle company.

Dr. Mike was a man of many talents. He deeply loved both his large family and his patients, each of whom he counted as a friend. Mike gave his all to these endeavors, yet also found time to design and landscape the family's backyard on Lakeside Drive into a truly magnificent garden, featuring limestone edging surrounding meticulously designed annual and perennial flower beds. He was especially fastidious about maintaining his many varieties of daylilies and irises.

In the summer of 1994, while Mike's kids were away on a four-week road trip through the Rocky Mountains, Dr. Mike spent nights and weekends surprising them by designing an elaborate play structure in the backyard, including a two-story climbable playhouse and adjoining swingset. One night when the kids phoned home from the mountains, Mike spilled the surprise, adding that he'd seen a duck in the backyard, coming to see what was happening. The playhouse and swingset provided the kids with many years of joy (along with a few head bumps and split lips). But the memory of the curious (if imaginary) duck still brings them smiles.

Alongside beautifying the family's backyard, Mike led the Beautification Committee of the Westboro Homeowners' Association. His colored pencil sketches of landscape designs reflected a symphony of beauty and color in all four seasons. He was a creative genius in the garden. He could plan and talk at length about how foliage would turn color, change size, and leaf out differently over the span of a year.

When the family moved out west of town to the countryside, he dutifully tended 180 black raspberry bushes. He devoted hours to tending a large in-ground swimming pool, complete with a diving board that offered him (and his brothers) a platform to demonstrate clown dives, “cannon balls,” belly flops, and more while overlooking his beloved Flint Hills and the Kansas prairie.

In the backyard, the family regularly enjoyed watching the sunset from a large granite boulder that seemed to have a wide seat conveniently carved right into it. Mike lovingly dubbed it “Butt Rock,” which was to become a favorite place for pondering the great questions in life as well as its beautiful daily moments.

A natural teacher, Mike frequently offered to teach his children (and anyone else who would listen) how to do a variety of things. Many of his methods were quite particular, and some unforgettable. When teaching his first daughter to drive a car, for example, Mike’s constant advice and correction was to aim high - to look out at the horizon in order to stabilize the wheel and avoid rattling from overcorrection. He taught patients as much as they could ever hope to know about the structure and function of the human eye, and he was especially precise on the optimal chopping of carrots and onions.

Among his many other interests and talents were the physics of golf (including building his own clubs), Kansas basketball (especially defense strategies through his running commentary on the 1990s webforum “KUHoops” under the screen name “EyeHawk,” a pun on his profession); Don McLean music (especially “On the Amazon”); swing dancing; mixing cocktails with various types of tequila and mezcal; cooking food inspired by cuisines such as Cajun, Tuscan, Thai, and Mexican; collecting leather loafers via eBay and estate sales; and developing a rainbow wardrobe of Merino wool sweaters and jubilant Tommy Bahama-style button-down shirts (arranged passionately by color, pressed and ready to wear on a moment’s notice).

Mike's guacamole was legendary at family parties long before avocados and cilantro could be reliably sourced in Kansas. His fireplace mantel décor included the one remaining enormous sand candle from the short-lived candle manufacturing company he'd started with his siblings.

Of his many talents and interests, Dr. Mike's optometry practice was truly his legacy. Over 42 years, he connected with and cared for hundreds of friends and community members around the Topeka area and far beyond. Mike built his optometry practice from scratch the old-fashioned way, slowly but steadily, focusing his time and attention on meeting each patient's unique needs. Dr. Mike prided himself on always putting his patients first. Over the early years of the practice, he regularly responded to late-night and weekend phone calls, often meeting a patient at the office on short notice to address an unexpected eye problem. So loyal were his patients that even those who moved far away from Topeka would occasionally come back to him for their routine eyecare.

In 1999, with Dr. Mike's support and encouragement, his youngest brother Jonas earned his optometry license. Over the next 25 years, Dr. Mike and Dr. Jonas greatly enjoyed working together, serving patients in southwest Topeka as Goering Family Optometry.

Dr. Mike also loved his office staff dearly. He explained his secret to great hiring: He would leave a crumpled piece of paper on the interview room floor (next to a trash can). When the candidate arrived, Mike would deliberately wait a few minutes before entering the room to talk. By that time, he would know he had a winner if the interviewee had already picked up the crumpled paper and tossed it in the trash bin. Dr. Mike's entire team was fiercely loyal and protective of him, and each one deeply cared for both patients and Dr. Mike with heartfelt attention (including confessing to close family members that for decades they'd switched half his coffee to decaf, to calm his jitters).

After his father Emil suffered a near heart attack in May 2007, Mike learned that he had inherited heart problems. When diagnostic tests revealed major risks, he promptly underwent multiple heart bypass surgery in August 2007. Thankfully, the excellent medical care he received during and after the heart surgery allowed him to enjoy his life for nearly 17 more years.

Among other things, Dr. Mike will be remembered for his fierce competitiveness at family bridge and board games; his love for Jayhawk basketball; his enthusiasm for driving his kids to and from college no matter the weather; and his legendary tendency to fall asleep in the midst of family holiday parties and almost every movie he ever watched – whether in theaters or reclining at home in his favorite blue chair.

A week before his passing, Mike enjoyed celebrating his granddaughter Gia Luna's first birthday in San Francisco. He was looking forward to partial retirement to spend more time with his growing family, including grandsons Orion and Walden, while still offering optometry services as needed to help support the practice.

Dr. Mike was a loving, dedicated, brilliant, competitive, and creative spirit who left the world around him a better place.

He was preceded in death (and no doubt greeted lovingly on the other side) by his parents, Emil and Lavina (Ediger) Goering, and his brother-in-law, Allan Tanner. He is survived by his three children, Megan Goering Mellin (Joe Mellin), K. Hobbes Entrikin-Goering, and Benjamin Goering (Gaby Moran); his four siblings, Beth Tanner, Les Goering (Linda), Tom Goering (Deb), and Jonas Goering (Sherry); three grandchildren, Orion Mellin, Gia Goering-Moran, and Walden Mellin; several nieces and nephews; and numerous cousins.

We wish you every peace and happiness in resting, Dad. May you enjoy many more gin and tonics or bourbon and Cokes with Emil, watching the big KU basketball screen in the sky. We'll keep aiming high.

A Celebration of Life will be held Saturday, June 1 at 1:30 p.m. at the Governor's Row House, 811 SW Buchanan St, Topeka, KS 66606. Tommy Bahama-style shirts (Mike's favorite) are encouraged but not mandatory. A memorial service will take place at 1:30 p.m. with reception and storytelling to follow until 5:30 p.m. Stories, photos, or other mementos are welcomed by the family for the construction of a timeline around Mike's life.

In lieu of flowers, please consider a donation to the Dr. Michael C. Goering Memorial Fund (for a special project to honor Dr. Mike's memory) at any Kaw Valley Bank location or Kevin Brennan Family Funeral Home, 2801 SW Urish Road, Topeka KS 66614.

Previous Events

Celebration of Life

JUN 1. 1:30 PM (CT)

Governor's Row House
811 SW Buchanan Street
Topeka, KS 66606

Reception and Storytelling

JUN 1. 3:00 PM - 5:30 PM (CT)

Governor's Row House
811 SW Buchanan Street
Topeka, KS 66606

Tribute Wall



“ Kevin Brennan Family Funeral Home created a Tribute Video in memory of Dr. Michael C. Goering



Kevin Brennan Family Funeral Home - May 30, 2024 at 04:59 PM

PJ

So very sorry to hear of Dr Mike's passing. May your many memories bring you comfort. Grief is love with no where to go. It will get easier to bear, but doesn't go entirely away because there is a hole in the heart.

Phyllis Pahmahmie patient of Dr Jonas - June 04, 2024 at 03:17 PM

PA

“ We were very sad to hear about Dr Mike. He was an amazing Dr. So friendly, and ready to explain any questions you could have. He will be very missed.



Paula Alejos - June 12, 2024 at 12:59 PM

BH

“ Dear family. We were shocked & saddened to hear of the sudden loss of your dear Dr. Mike. We have been patients of his for many years. He always made us feel special. He will be greatly missed.

Bill and Ginger Hefley

Bill and Ginger Hefley - May 31, 2024 at 04:24 PM

CW

“ I was stunned and saddened when I heard of Dr. Mike's passing. I saw him in January of this year and what better way to start the new year than a visit with Dr. Mike. Of course walking to the exam room was always a workout since he had that long stride. I always chuckled during the exam when it was "which is better 1 or 2 or about the same." Then we talked about cataracts and options for down the road. Of course we always talked about our kids as he took care of our entire family. When I had a retina issue on a Saturday he met us at the office within an hour. How blessed I am to have had the greatest care in the world and cross paths with this brilliant individual.

Charlotte Walker - May 28, 2024 at 06:02 PM

LV

“ I'm so sorry to learn of Dr. Mike's passing away. He will be greatly missed. I first learned of the Goering Family Optometry by seeing Dr. Jonas at a walk-in clinic in Lawrence. I recall he was filling in for a friend that day. I was impressed by how much he educated me about the eye, and on what he was doing. I happened to work in Topeka, so made my next appointment with Goering Family Optometry, but didn't realize there were two Dr. Goerings, so guessed which one when I made the appointment. I had made the appointment with Dr. Mike, and turned out equally as pleased with him. I went to Dr. Mike for many years and he was always so thorough, making sure I understood things to be aware of given family history, and educating me on everything in the retinal pictures, and on allergies and dry eyes, etc. Adding in his friendliness, he was a top notch person and doctor.

Lynne Ruhlman Valdivia - May 28, 2024 at 01:20 PM

SH

“ I had an appointment with Michael just a few days before his tragic accident. I've known Michael for years and knew his parents as well. They were a wonderful family and Michael was a wonderful person. I am so sorry.

Steve Hare

Stephen Hare - May 24, 2024 at 06:16 PM

SN

“ My condolences Dr. Jonas and to the rest of the family. Dr. Mike started treating me 30+ years ago and, he is so irreplaceable, I have traveled back to Topeka from my current home in West Virginia as needed for the last 10 years to visit my trusted Doctor and, to me, friend. What a great loss to the profession and society.

Steve Nelson - May 24, 2024 at 04:43 PM

BH

“ Dr. Mike was our optometrist for many years. He was the BEST. We will miss him so very much. Dear family of Dr. Mike, we are deeply sorry for your loss. Bill & Ginger Hefley

Bill & Ginger Hefley - May 22, 2024 at 09:27 AM

MS

“ So sad to hear this. Great doc and person. Took care of me and my daughter for 30 years. I will miss his friendly personality. Prayers for family and friends.

Mary Stimatze - May 21, 2024 at 01:34 PM

DK

“ Dr. Mike has taken care of my eyes since 1983, and it was always reassuring to know that he and Jonas knew my complete vision history and what to look out for. He also cared for my parents and for my kids in the absolute kindest way possible. Sending peace and strength for those who remain behind.

Donna Kirk-Swaffar - May 20, 2024 at 03:59 PM

BM

“ Dr. Mike will be missed. He's been my eye doctor for years. My thoughts and prayers are with the family.

Barb Montgomery - May 20, 2024 at 10:51 AM

DD

“ Dr Mike was my doctor for many years. We shared many jokes at my office visits. I could always depend on his good judgement with any questions I had. I have lost a good friend.

Diana Doak - May 19, 2024 at 09:05 PM

KS

“ Our family eye doctor for many years... he was one of a kind! I'll never forget his kindness to my elderly mom when she suffered a detached retina. She was scared, of course, and he couldn't have been more patient or caring, and called her a couple of times at home just to check on her. Prayers for peace for Dr. Mike's family.

Kris Dickerson Saia - May 19, 2024 at 12:22 PM

TB

“ My condolence to the family. So shock to read of Dr Goering passing. He has been my eye doctor for several years. Will be missed.

Terry Barker - May 19, 2024 at 10:09 AM

LM

“ It is with sadness we learn of Dr Mike's death. He was a neighbor on Randolph St and we were looking for an eye doctor. Such a joyful man! And so funny... And, he diagnosed my husbands lazy eye, putting a prism in his lens that halted his car sickness! Recently, one of my optometrists staff in Kearney saw my sunglasses case and wanted to replace it. I showed her Mike's name inside and said "No Way!" Our sincere condolences to the family. You will be in our prayers. But Mike is perfect again with his Lord, gathering all the lost golf balls in Heaven! -- Lee & Patty McQueen

Lee & Patty McQueen - May 19, 2024 at 02:47 AM

CR

“ *Simply the best !*

Cleo D Roehrman - May 18, 2024 at 06:39 PM

JH

“ *Back in the '90s when I hoped the newer soft contacts might be a good idea for my sensitive eyes, I remember getting a soft contact stuck to my eye way back on my eyeball. After being unable to coax it back to the front on my own, I called Dr. Mike in a panic. Never expecting a housecall, but he was at my door within minutes, retrieved the lens in seconds, and left almost as quickly. I thought he must have come from home. Relieved, I decided contacts might not be a very good choice for my overly dry eyes. I have been a client of his for many years and really appreciated his patience and kindness all that time.*

Jean Herrold - May 18, 2024 at 05:46 PM

CE

We met and was patients of Mike after going to his Dad's Doctor practice in Burlingame, KS. Dad was very proud of Mike and his accomplishments. He referred us to him for our eye care. We have been going to Mike and Jonas to this day. He was an exceptional friend and Doctor. We will miss him. Prayers for his family, staff, and friends for their loss of a great man of God

Connie & J. Gordon Eddy - May 18, 2024 at 07:54 PM



“*Mike was my little brother. He got a small cardboard suitcase for my third birthday. At 23 months he was too little to understand why he was left out.*”

Beth Tanner - May 18, 2024 at 12:01 PM

SL

“*Mike was at one time a neighbor and had been our optometrist for decades. We will miss very much his friendliness and genuine caring. Always willing to help the patient understand in layman's terms what he observed as a professional, Mike had a warmth about him that was from another time in today's busy healthcare world. We are so sad to learn of his passing.*”

Sandy & Swanee Lawrence

Sandra Lawrence - May 18, 2024 at 07:14 AM

KG

“*Mile was a dearly loved cousin who would always flip up his upper lip at me when he saw me. This continued into adulthood, just showing the humor that the Goering family (men, especially) shared. The reason for this is that, as children, we were playing on the bunkbeds at their home in Hurchinson, and Mike fell off the top bunk and his teeth went binto his inside upper lip. I was always accused of being the one who pushed him. That may be true, but it would have been unintentional since all of us were playing on the top bunk! I am sure it was an accident, but from that day forward, Mike always drilled it home! It was a source of extreme funnyness for him and we always laughed about it. I hadn't seen him for many years and will miss him dearly. He could always make me laugh!*”

Kathryn Goering - May 18, 2024 at 02:40 AM

DB

“*I had an appointment on April 3 with Dr. Mike not knowing that would be the last time to see him. He was the most thorough optometrist I have ever had and explained everything and showed concern for his patients. I have known him for a long time. I met him through his first wife Lynn as I worked with her. I attended their wedding and reception. I was one of his first patients. Hard to believe he is gone. I am very sad but glad he is not suffering and is at peace. Prayers for the family and friends at this difficult time.*”

*Darleen Bernhardt
Tecumseh, KS*

Darleen Bernhardt - May 17, 2024 at 10:59 PM

CS

“ I just saw Dr. Goering in March for a eye exam. I always liked the last appt of the day then we could talk for awhile about family and friends.(he wasn't much of a talker LOL) I worked for Dr. Goering for 10 years. And been his patient for the last 27 years. he was such a good person in every way. He will be missed!! Prayers to the Goering Family!

Christine Sevigny - May 17, 2024 at 02:56 PM

TG

“ Michael Goering was a good person i didn't know Michael Goering im sending my symphaty to the Goering family terry I glenn

Terry I glenn - May 17, 2024 at 02:21 PM