



Michael "Mike" Hurla

December 2, 1939 - May 16, 2025

Michael Erwin Hurla, 85, of Topeka, Kansas, passed away peacefully at home on May 16, 2025, surrounded by his loving wife and family.

Born on December 2, 1939, in Topeka, Mike was the third of ten children of Anthony and Mary Hurla. He married the love of his life, Judith Stafford, on May 22, 1965, and together they raised a wonderful family of four children, ten grandchildren, and three great-grandchildren.

Mike is survived by his wife of 60 years, Judy. He is the proud father of Michelle, Christine, Brian, and Bradley. He is survived by Michelle (Brian) Shea, Christine (Jerry) Kottman, and Brian (Jennifer) Hurla; grandchildren, Samantha Shea, Sara Shea, Jacob Kottman, Kelsey Kottman, Alex Hurla, Amanda (Andrew) Blaylock, Ty Hurla, Zach Hurla, and Lucas Hurla; and great-grandchildren Caden Morris, Addison Morris, Braxton Blaylock, and Baby Blaylock, due in October. He was preceded in death by his son Bradley Hurla; his parents; granddaughter Morgan Kottman; and siblings Charlotte Hurla, Margaret Montgomery, John Hurla, Steve Hurla, and Charlie Hurla.

After spending his first seven years in a house on Seward Avenue in Oakland, Mike's family moved to an 80-acre farm northeast of Topeka, land on which all of his children and several other family members still reside. He had many happy memories growing up on the farm—not the least of which was

attending North Fairview Elementary, then a one-room schoolhouse. Of course, he claimed to have walked uphill both ways. Not all memories were rosy—there was hoeing corn, shocking wheat, and milking cows at 3 a.m.—but he had help from his siblings, including brothers John, Steve (Shirley), Dave (Kathy), and Louis (Kathy), and sisters Margaret Montgomery, Dorothy (Steve) Hammer, and Carolyn (Alan) Lawton.

The Monday after graduating from Hayden High School in 1957, Mike started working in the mailroom at Southwestern Bell. In May, 1959, realizing that \$1.10 an hour was not the path to prosperity, Mike began what would become a 40-year career with the ATSF Railway, where he served in a variety of roles—including carman, draftsman, and engineer in the Technical Research and Development Lab. As he approached retirement, Mike was entrusted with a unique assignment: traveling across the rail system to collect historic clocks from former Santa Fe stations. Many of those clocks remain in use today in BNSF offices. Over the decades, Mike built not only a respected career but also countless valued friendships.

In 1961, Mike joined the U.S. Naval Reserve and served for six years as a proud Seabee. He inspired multiple generations of family to serve their country in the Navy, Army, and Marines. In later years, he was rarely seen without a Seabee's hat or shirt, and he made full use of veterans' discounts—Veterans Day was practically a holiday marathon.

Mike met Judy Stafford in 1963 at Charlie Hall's Dance Hall. She wasn't easy to win over, turning down his first several dance requests and refusing to give him her phone number. But Mike learned she lived with her sister, Donna Wege, and called every Wege in the phone book until he found her. Persistence paid off—after a two-year courtship, mostly through letters, they were married at Assumption Catholic Church in Topeka, KS.

Mike was never afraid of hard work, a trait he passed on to his children through countless family projects—building a house in his spare time, flipping houses, salvaging building materials from a barracks at Forbes Field, and even running a food truck before food trucks were trendy. He served as a Scoutmaster for Boy Scout Troop 133, where he mentored dozens of young men and proudly saw Brian and all of his grandsons earn the rank of Eagle Scout.

In retirement, Mike fully restored a 1956 John Deere 520 and used it for parades, hayrack rides, and Christmas caroling. He also worked part-time for Ferrellgas, volunteered at the St. Francis print shop, and was a fourth-degree member of the Knights of Columbus at Mother Teresa Catholic Church. He and Judy traveled extensively, enjoying cruises to Hawaii, the Caribbean, and the Panama Canal, and a memorable trip to Alaska.

Mike will be remembered as a devoted husband, a loving father and grandfather, a hardworking provider, and a faithful friend. His life was marked by service—both to his country and his community—and by a deep, unwavering love for his family. Whether he was mentoring scouts, restoring tractors, dancing with Judy, or simply telling stories around the table, Mike brought warmth, wisdom, and humor to all who knew him. His legacy of resilience, kindness, and dedication lives on through the many lives he touched. He will be deeply missed and forever cherished.

Visitation will take place from 5 to 6:30 p.m. with Chalice Ceremony and Rosary to follow at 6:30 p.m. on Thursday, May 22, 2025, at Mother Teresa of Calcutta Catholic Church, 2014 NW 46th Street, Topeka KS 66618. Mass of Christian Burial will be celebrated at 10 a.m. on Friday, May 23 at the church. Interment will follow at Mount Calvary Cemetery in Topeka.

In lieu of flowers, the family suggests donations be made to the Mother Teresa Catholic Church Building Fund in honor of Mike's lifelong commitment to service and community, in care of Kevin Brennan Family Funeral Home, 2801 SW Urish Road, Topeka KS 66614.

Condolences may be sent online at www.kevinbrennanfamily.com

Cemetery Details

Mount Calvary Cemetery

801 SW Westchester Rd
Topeka, KS 66606

Previous Events

Visitation

MAY 22. 5:00 PM - 6:30 PM (CT)

Mother Teresa of Calcutta Catholic Church
2014 NW 46th Street
Topeka, KS 66618

Knights of Columbus 4th Degree Chalice Ceremony and Rosary

MAY 22. 6:30 PM (CT)

Mother Teresa of Calcutta Catholic Church
2014 NW 46th Street
Topeka, KS 66618

Mass of Christian Burial

MAY 23. 10:00 AM (CT)

Mother Teresa of Calcutta Catholic Church
2014 NW 46th Street
Topeka, KS 66618

Tribute Wall



“ A [Memorial Tree](/store/Product.aspx?ProductId=4518) was planted in honor of Michael "Mike" Hurla.

May 22, 2025 at 07:37 PM



“ From the Shea Family purchased the Days of Sunshine Bouquet for the family of Michael "Mike" Hurla.



From the Shea Family - May 21, 2025 at 10:23 PM



“ From the Shea Family planted a [Memorial Tree](/store/Product.aspx?ProductId=4518) in honor of Michael "Mike" Hurla.

From the Shea Family - May 21, 2025 at 10:23 PM



“ Judy and family. So sorry to hear about Mike. He was a great friend and always has a smile and a hug. He will be greatly missed. Rest in peace. Thoughts and prayers are with you. Darlene Daudet

Darlene Daudet - May 21, 2025 at 06:53 PM

KN

Judy and family. Sending my sincere condolences to you ALL on Mike's passing. I actually just found out today, and apologize for missing the service. As his caregiver, I thank you for allowing me into your home and getting to know your family. Mike shared so many great family-related stories with me, especially when we went for our neighborhood walk. He was SO proud of you all. Thank you for welcoming me into your lives. RIP Mike! 🙏

Kevin Neal - August 24, 2025 at 09:55 AM

SB

“ *There isn't anyone who crossed paths with Mike that didn't like him! He was an honest, caring, fun and respected Man. His work ethic was like none other! He loved his family and it showed! I'm so very sorry for your loss. He will truly be missed by all who knew him. You are all in my prayers.*

Sally Brooke - May 21, 2025 at 05:26 PM

GA

“ *My deepest condolences to the Hurla family.
Greg Anderson*

Greg Anderson - May 21, 2025 at 10:19 AM

SS

“ *Hurla Family, You will all be in my thoughts and prayers. Your Dad/Grandpa/Uncle/Brother/Friend was a wonderful human.*

God Bless! Shelly Sullivan

Shelly Sullivan - May 20, 2025 at 09:32 PM

DS

“ *My thoughts and prayers go out to all the family. Mike was a wonderful friend, will certainly miss him.*

Dennis Spain - May 20, 2025 at 11:46 AM

JH

“ Michelle, Christine & Brian,

Sorry to hear of the passing of your dad. Your family is in my thoughts and prayers.

Julie Germonprez Hall

JULIE HALL - May 20, 2025 at 09:14 AM



“ Beautiful in Blue was purchased for the family of Michael "Mike" Hurla.



May 20, 2025 at 08:36 AM

GN

“ Gary R Nelson lit a candle in memory of Michael "Mike" Hurla



Gary R Nelson - May 19, 2025 at 07:55 PM