

Mike  
Babbitt



## Mike's Life Story



Whether he was tinkering on a motor, watching wrestling on television with his son, or sharing a pop with a grandchild, Mike Babbitt did them all with compassion and grace, cherishing his family above all else. To Mike, life was not about accomplishments, accolades, or material possessions, but about the impact he made on the lives of those around him, especially his family and friends. Mike lived each day to its fullest, bringing light and life to even the darkest of days, embracing both the peaks and valleys along life's journey.

The decade of the 1950's is often referred to as the "fabulous fifties," due in part to the technological advancement of the television, the introduction to the fabulous sounds of rock 'n roll, and fans flocking to witness various sporting events like never before. Alice (Howard) Babbitt, of Plainwell, Michigan was preparing for her own fabulous experience as well; as Alice was due to give birth to her baby at any time. Her husband Lawrence had recently died and she was in need of a ray of hope. She was indeed blessed on April 24, 1956 with the healthy birth of her son, Mike. As the youngest of a large family,

Mike learned from an early age how to hold his own and quickly settled into the typical things that boys enjoy, earning him the description of "all boy." Mike was an intimidating opponent when he was playing sports such as basketball or football, and from a young age he developed a passion for auto racing. When he was just 16, he and his brother Robert entered their first race at the Kalamazoo Speedway and although their experience yielded quite hilarious results, a life long love affair with racing had begun.

Mike's love for cars didn't just stop with being a spectator, but he learned from his older brothers how to work on engines. This skill led to a life long love for tinkering with motors whether they were from cars, snowmobiles, dirt bikes, or more, if it had an engine, Mike could tinker with and fix it. Mike didn't finish school during his younger years, but his education would continue much later in his life, after he pursued other avenues.

A bright spot in Mike's life occurred when he met and later married Gail Gilmore and although the marriage ended in divorce, the couple was blessed with the births of two children, Ben and Maggie. Mike completely embraced his role as a father, his life always seeming to revolve around his family in one way or another.



Life took a pleasant turn for Mike when he was introduced to a delightful woman named Kelly (Fitzpatrick) Saur with whom he had been with for the past 17 years of his life. Not only did Kelly enrich his life, but so did her son Derek and the additional son they had together, Casey; together making one big family. Mike was blessed to share a special relationship with his son Casey and together they did many things like watch wrestling on television or listen to music including Bob Segar, Lynyrd Skynyrd, and the







Allman Brothers. He recently taught Casey how to hunt and was proud that Casey was learning to play the guitar. He was also equally proud of Derek for graduating high school and attending college. He enjoyed spending time with Ben and Bryon working on the plow truck and Harleys. He also enjoyed a fulfilling relationship with Kelly; though they were never officially married they were soul mates and were inseparable and married at heart. Together Mike

and Kelly enjoyed the same things such as going to the boys football games and were rarely seen apart from each other. Mike worked hard to support his family as a union construction worker, a job which he thoroughly enjoyed since he was naturally inclined to working with his hands. Although his job

took him away from home quite often, his heart was always connected to the loved ones he left at home.

When he wasn't busy working, Mike was the heartbeat of his family, always making sure that they were having a good time whether they were gathering at Christmas or around a campfire at the racetrack. Mike played a monumental role in the lives of his children, constantly providing them with his unconditional love balanced with strict, but fair discipline when needed. Mike was often the cook and his family was always well fed.

Mike was a very frugal man who never had a lot of money, but his family never went without any of the things that they needed either. He always loved to search for a bargain or even stumble upon a treasure or two for free, including his prized hat and t-shirt collection. Mike was a very giving person as well who would even give the shirt off his own back to someone in need. He was famous for telling family and friends that whatever was his was theirs also.



Later in life, there were a few things that were of great significance to Mike. Education was important to Mike and so was teaching his children the value of hard work, and so he earned his diploma in 1989 after attending night school, giving his entire family great reason to celebrate. Mike was elated to walk his daughter Maggie down the aisle, and the births of his grandchildren were some of the proudest moments of his life as well. Being a grandfather was a great gift to Mike and he always made sure that his grandchildren were well taken care of,



often with a pop, some cheetos, and of course, some money to go along with them! Unfortunately a construction accident left Mike disabled and unable to work over the past few years, but he was thrilled to spend additional time with his family and doing the things that he was passionate about instead.

It was no secret that family was of the greatest significance to Mike Babbitt and that the births of his children and grandchildren were the happiest days of his life. His friends were also of great importance to him and he was always accepting of others, never judging them and often portraying an attitude of genuine love and compassion instead. Mike could brighten the days of others with his quick wit and great sense of humor and one was never left to wonder where they stood with Mike. He had a lifelong passion for auto racing and he spent a lifetime making cherished memories with those he leaves behind. Although his life ended much too soon, Mike's impact on the world and those around him was monumentally significant. He will be deeply missed.

Mike Babbitt, of Plainwell, MI, died on Wednesday, March 4, 2009.

Mike's family includes his fiancée Kelly Saur; children, Maggie (Chad) Bronson, Ben Babbitt, Casey Babbitt, Derek Saur, Bryon (LaRayne) Schmitt, and Bob (Cheryl) Heckman; his mother Alice Babbitt Brown; brothers, Lawrence Jr. (Elfreda) Babbitt, William (Shelley) Babbitt, Donald (fiancée Kathy) Babbitt, Kenneth (Edna) Babbitt and Robert Lee Babbitt Sr.; sister Rebecca Coak; and six grandchildren: Lucas, Haylee, Alexis, Adam, April and Zachery.

He was also looking forward to his newest grandchild, Brynlee, who was expected to arrive in June. Other members of his family include his two sisters-in-law: Tracy (Nate) and Robin (Louie), Mother and Father-in-law: Paul and Sally Fitzpatrick and also many nieces and nephews. He follows in death his father and brothers and sister: Phillip, Jeffery, Judith and Cynthia, his father Lawrence Babbitt and his step father James M Brown. Visit with Mike's family and friends and share light refreshments, Saturday from 5-7 p.m. and Sunday from 2-5 p.m. at the Life Story Funeral Home, Plainwell, 120 S. Woodhams (685-5881). Funeral Services will be held on Monday at 2pm at the same location. Please visit Mike's memory page at [www.lifestorynet.com](http://www.lifestorynet.com), where you can archive a favorite memory, or photo, sign his memory book online, or make a memorial donation to the family.



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