

# *David Michael Lee Sr.*

September 17, 1946 – October 8, 2025



David Michael Lee Sr., known affectionately as Mike, passed away unexpectedly on October 8, 2025, at the age of 79, while recovering in a rehabilitation facility following an extended hospital stay. A beloved father, devoted friend, a veteran,

and cherished member of the Barstow community for nearly eight decades, Mike's passing leaves an immeasurable void in the hearts of all who knew him.

### Military Service and Career

Mike proudly served his country in the U.S. Army during the Vietnam era from 1967 to 1969. Following his honorable military service, he built a distinguished 30-year career as a machinist with BNSF Railroad, where he was respected for his craftsmanship and formed lifelong friendships with colleagues who became his extended family.

### A Life of Simple Pleasures

Mike found joy in life's authentic pleasures. He was passionate about classic automobiles and hot rods, spending weekends at local car shows and drag strips where his knowledge and enthusiasm made him a welcomed friend to fellow enthusiasts. He took great pride in maintaining his home and tending to his yard, finding peace in the simple satisfaction of honest work.

Mike cherished his time in the desert with close friends, enjoying target shooting and the camaraderie of shared adventures. His favorite retreats were the mountain community of Big Bear, California, and Caliente, Nevada, where his beloved mother Edna once lived and where he felt most connected to family memories.

### Devotion to Family

The cornerstone of Mike's life was his unwavering devotion to his son, David Lee Jr. Their bond transcended the typical father-son relationship, built on mutual

respect, absolute loyalty, and unconditional love. Mike's greatest pride and purpose centered entirely on his son, creating a relationship that stood as a testament to the profound depth of familial love. In David Jr.'s words, his father was simply "the best person" he had ever known.

## A Heart of Gold

Mike possessed a quiet, extraordinary capacity for compassion, empathy, and kindness. He was thankful to God for the life he was given, embracing its simplicity and never taking anything for granted. He was deeply pained seeing others hurting or in need and would do anything within his power to try and better their day, whether he knew them or not. He gave freely, often before being asked, and without seeking any attention, showing through his actions that deeds done for recognition are done for the wrong reason. If anyone spoke of repayment, he would simply tell them, "I don't need it, we've got everything we need, you save it and give it to the next person that your conscience tells you could use help."

He taught that we must never pass judgment or offer malice, for everyone deserves love, respect, and dignity. His guiding philosophy was a constant call to gratitude: "We just need to thank God for what we have and that we are able to help others however we can." In a humorous detail underscoring his humility, Mike famously "didn't even know how to boil water." Yet, his legacy lies not in culinary skills, but in the indelible mark of pure kindness he left on every soul he touched.

## Survivors and Preceded in Death

Mike is survived by his beloved son, David Lee Jr.; his dear friend and former spouse, Karen Cipriani; his niece, Julie Lee, and her children; and countless friends who considered him family.

He was preceded in death by his parents, Roy and Edna Lee, and his brothers, Kenneth Lee and Billy Lee.

### Services and Memorial

In accordance with Mike's wishes, no formal funeral service will be held. He will be cremated and his remains interred with full military honors at Riverside National Cemetery in Riverside, California.

### In Lieu of Flowers or Gifts

To honor Mike's humble spirit and lifelong generosity, the family requests that memorial donations be made to St. Jude Children's Research Hospital, an organization whose mission of helping sick children and their families beautifully reflects Mike's compassion for the vulnerable and his belief in lifting others during their darkest hours.

Mike's greatest tribute would be for each person whose life he touched to carry forward his legacy of kindness—to see someone in need and respond with the same generous heart he showed the world every day of his remarkable 79 years.

"...thank God for what we have and that we are able to help others however we can." – Mike Lee