



## Captain Michael Paul Bialka

November 28, 2017

Captain Michael Paul Bialka, 65, passed suddenly on Tuesday, November 28th, 2017.

As the son of a career Air Force pilot who flew B-24s off Guadalcanal during WW2, Mike was born with aviation in his blood. With his dad's last duty station being Lowry AFB, Mike attended high school in Aurora, Colorado, then went on to earn a business degree from the University of Colorado, before joining the U.S. Navy. Following flight training at NAS Pensacola, Mike flew the T-34, T-28 and TS-2, before being assigned to fleet squadron VP-40 to fly the newly introduced P-3C Orion for the next 3 years on missions all over the Pacific and Indian Oceans.

Mike rejoined the civilian world and in 1982 landed his dream job as a pilot for Southwest Airlines, where he remained for 35 years, retiring on his 65th birthday on August 15, 2017.

While Mike was one of Southwest Airline's most senior captains, he was perhaps better known for his passion of restoring and flying Grumman Albatross seaplanes. Lake Conroe residents and visitors have regularly been thrilled to watch Mike and his team land "Zeus" and "Pegasus" on the lake and parade in front of Walden Marina for fans who follow Everything Albatross' Facebook page. Mike also served as President of Seaplane Crossings Inc., a Texas non-profit that primarily educates people about the many contributions of seaplanes in the advancement of modern aviation, but which also flew Pegasus on three relief missions to the U.S. Virgin islands recently to deliver

critically needed medical supplies, generators and other emergency equipment following this year's back-to-back devastating hurricanes.

Capt. Mike was a true American patriot and a dear friend to countless people from all walks of life who deeply mourn his passing. He leaves behind his sister Charlotte Bialka and brothers Robert and Peter Bialka, as well as countless friends including his Albatross business partners Stewart Lawrence and Capt. Pat Deegan, and his very special lady Bridgette Jakob.

Visitation is scheduled for Sunday, December 3rd, from 7 to 9 PM at Sam Houston Memorial Funeral Home in Willis. A Memorial Service will be held Sunday December 3rd at 8PM. Funeral Services will be held later in the week in Colorado, where he will rest alongside his mother and father. In lieu of flowers, friends are welcome to further Mike's passion by contributing at [www.SeaplaneCrossings.org](http://www.SeaplaneCrossings.org). You are invited to leave a written condolence on our website at [www.shmfh.com](http://www.shmfh.com).

# Previous Events

## Visitation

DEC 3. 7:00 PM - 9:00 PM (CT)

Sam Houston Memorial Funeral Home - Willis  
10129 FM 1097 Rd W.  
Willis, TX 77318  
(936) 890-0454  
greg@shmfh.com

## Memorial Service

DEC 3. 8:00 PM (CT)

Sam Houston Memorial Funeral Home - Willis  
10129 FM 1097 Rd W.  
Willis, TX 77318  
(936) 890-0454  
greg@shmfh.com

# Tribute Wall



“ *Captain Michael Paul Bialka*

November 15, 2022 at 08:33 PM



“ *Captain Bialka was one of the first employees I met as a brand new SWA flight attendant. As I walked out of Howdees restaurant in my new uniform, it was Mike who cheerfully said 'hello' and offered his welcome to Southwest Airlines. I will never forget what a warm and friendly person he was as he walked with me to the gate. I can still vividly remember that day with him! He always had a big hearted smile and hello whenever I ran into him in the following years. I am thankful I had a chance to be his co worker and friend.*

*Beverly Reich Ivy  
FA 1986-1994*

beverly - January 26, 2018 at 11:31 PM




“ *My most memorable "Mike story"...late night flight into DAL with Mike B. in left seat and Mike M. in right seat. Descending just below cloud layer when, BANG!...we hit a flock of geese. Number 2 quit - number 1 spooled down to the point the generator tripped off line. Got kinda dark and quiet in a hurry. No worry with this crew. Landed DAL with one motor and numerous holes in A/C. Made for a great EPT training event that year (iYou remember when that was a thing?)*

*Mike was a favorite of mine. Always a pleasure to have in class.*

*Jim Federer (Ret)*

Jim Federer - December 05, 2017 at 06:12 AM

 Julie  
Bryant

“ Mike always had a smile on his face and was quick to defend "his" flight attendants in any situation. LUV you Capt. Mike!

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**Julie Bryant** - December 03, 2017 at 05:17 PM

KR

“ I have fond memories of Mike from my days as supervisor of flight attendants in Phoenix. One day Mike stopped by my office to say hello as he often did at the end of his trip. That particular day, I was headed out the door to go on an errand to pick up something we needed in the office from a hardware store. As Mike and I chatted for a moment, I explained that I needed to run this errand and I invited him to go with me. Mike was an honorable man and we were friends. So, off we go. As we were getting into my car, another pilot (I will call him Mr. Nosey Pilot) saw Mike and I as we got in the car. Mike and I ran the errand, returned to the office, and I thought nothing more of it.... UNTIL, my husband (SWA pilot) came home from work a few days later and informed me that Mr. Nosey Pilot had informed my husband that Mike and I were having an affair!!! OMG, can you imagine??? Fortunate for me, and Mike, my husband knew us well enough to know that there was no truth to this rumor. But, here it is decades later and I still think of this incident whenever I think of Mike..."my mystery lover"! Ha! AND, whenever I think of Mr. Nosey Pilot, I wonder if he has any idea of what kind of chaos those kind of untrue rumors can cause? Thankfully, Mike was always an honorable man who would never think of interfering in someone's marriage. He was a dear friend, a wonderful person, and he will be missed. Until we meet again, Mike, I pray you are soaring above and around us, and you know how much you are loved. I can still see that sweet face smiling as you walked around our offices at SWA.

Your friend, Karen Rutan }

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**Karen Rutan** - December 03, 2017 at 01:23 AM

JK

“ To know Mike was a memorable experience, replete with great humor, fantastic stories, kindness and compassion and unbounded enthusiasm. It was impossible not to be affected by his presence. A true bon vivant. He lived life large, always at full throttle and on his own terms. Those of us fortunate enough to have shared life with him in the air and on the ground now feel his absence and are richer for the experience. A mighty oak has fallen; fly on West in peace, brother !

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**Jeff Kilponen** - December 03, 2017 at 01:06 AM

BB

“ We share so many great memories of Southwest. Mike, you will be missed, along with all our employees we started this Company with.

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**Belinda Blair** - December 02, 2017 at 10:49 PM

GQ

“ I am devastated by the news about the passing on Tuesday of a lifelong, best friend... Mike Bialka. "Nose" and I met in the same class at Aviation Officer Candidate School in Pensacola, FL, with our Marine drill instructor screaming at us. We both went on to fly Navy. Got introduced to my wife, Lory, through Mike, and he was instrumental in getting me hired at Southwest Airlines way back in 1987. Mike even picked me up in Dallas to bring me to my Southwest, skids greased "interview." We saw each other a lot when we both lived in Houston and based there as Southwest pilots. I drove in from Hill Country here in TX and just saw him a couple months ago at his SWA retirement party at his and Pat Deegan's place. He was all excited about doing the old Albatross Seaplane Atlantic Crossing adventure in 2019. "Everybody needs something to believe in..." Mike was a class act and a joy to be around. I shall miss him and his wonderful sense of humor greatly. RIP and Godspeed, dear friend Mike.



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**Greg "Magic" Quist** - December 02, 2017 at 02:17 PM

JM

“ I flew with Mike when he was a new Captain and I was a new First Officer for the whole month. I looked forward to every flight with Mike, a superb aviator and later a wonderful friend. Mike always had a great attitude and fun to be around. His attitude was contagious and he was a loyal Southwest Pilot. I will miss you Mike.

*God Bless the Bialka Family,*

*John MacPherson*

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**John MacPherson** - December 02, 2017 at 10:01 AM

JG

“ I flew with Mike extensively, a true, genuine kind friend. Mike was an awesome teammate on the MS150 SWA Team for a number of years, we shared a lot of fun on those rides! He was so excited about “The Crossing”next year! Will miss you good friend...you will always be remembered!. Rest In Peace Mike.

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**Jean-Pol Gruslin** - December 02, 2017 at 09:55 AM

GA

“ My friend Mike: Always a smile and always an uplifting spirit. We have some who cross our paths in life and only bring joy and a positive outlook. Mike always brought that to our life. I met Mike in 1982 when we were both fairly new first officers at Southwest and became instant friends and also shared our experiences as Naval Aviators and as the sons of WW II aviators. I will miss your humor, honesty , passion and love my friend. Fair winds and following seas Captain and thank you for crossing my path.

Love ya man!

Glenn L Anderson SWA 4422

Vicki Anderson. SWA 7878



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**glenn anderson** - December 02, 2017 at 09:50 AM

DW

“ I meet Mike at Southwest Airlines over 25 years ago. His ability to get along with people and his zest for life was apparent every time we met. The humor he possessed was unique to him and there were no equals.

Mike contributed. And his contribution to living Life to its fullest will always be felt by me.

I will miss you Mike and so will everyone that knew you.

God Bless to the Mike Bialka Family.

Don Waits

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**Don Waits** - December 02, 2017 at 09:11 AM

BT

“ I knew Mike as a friend at Southwest Airlines for over 30 years. He was a fantastic pilot as I was fortunate to give Mike many check rides over the years, as he aced every ride. He was always happy, smiling and had a huge heart. Mike, I haven't seen you in a few years and until we meet again, rest in peace my friend and thank you for your friendship over the years.

bob torti

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**bob torti** - December 02, 2017 at 08:35 AM



“ I will miss Mike so much. I was one of the flight attendants who worked his last flight. He was so happy, and looking forward to his retirement. I will always remember his easy going nature, and generosity. He had several flight attendants over to his home in Dallas many years ago to share his extensive wine collection. We had lot's of fun times with Mike, and he will truly be missed.  
Candace Boyd

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**Candace Boyd** - December 01, 2017 at 10:23 PM

JM

“ Mike and I were in the same pilot class at Southwest . We became close friends and at times traveled around the world together. Mike's passion for life was very special ! He was a wonderful friend, a superb aviator , he will be greatly missed! God speed my friend !

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**jay Miranda** - December 01, 2017 at 03:27 PM

MS

“ Our sincere condolences to Mike's family. It was my good fortune to help Mike land his job at Southwest and remain his friend since then. A fine aviator and consummate gentleman, truly one of a kind. He will be missed.  
Monty and Gail Sparks

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**Monty Sparks** - December 01, 2017 at 12:06 PM