



Michael R. Cornelius

July 27, 1953 - January 5, 2023

Portsmouth, NH - Michael R. Cornelius, 69, passed away on January 5, 2023 at the Portsmouth Regional Hospital following a sudden illness. Michael was born on July 27, 1953 in Bemidji, Minnesota, the son of Carl and Louise Cornelius. He was raised in Virginia as his father worked for the Bureau of Indian Affairs in Washington, DC.

Michael came to New Hampshire to attend Dartmouth College in Hanover. While at Dartmouth he was active in Native American and World Affairs, and local politics. In 1974, while still a student at Dartmouth, Michael was elected to represent the town of Hanover in the New Hampshire House of Representatives. He was an active and successful State Representative, and was appointed as Democratic Whip after only one term in office. While serving in the House he met his former wife, Patti Blanchette of Newmarket.

Following the election of Governor Hugh Gallen in 1978 Michael served in the Gallen Administration, first as Special Assistant to the Governor, then Legislative Liaison, Budget Director, State Energy Director, and ultimately State Comptroller, overseeing all state finances.

After moving to Newmarket Michael was elected to the Board of Selectmen, and later worked for The Cheney Companies. In May of 2000, following a move to Portsmouth Michael began a successful career as Associate Vice

President of Finance for Beth Israel Lahey Health Behavioral Services (BILH BS) where he was employed until his death. Michael oversaw the team which was responsible for the daily Finance Operations, including direct oversight of Accounts Payable, Purchasing, Accounting, Payroll and Facilities. He helped lead the organization through many organizational transitions over nearly 23 years. He was described as the "go to" for all things, often volunteering to assist in areas outside of finance operation. He was proud to be a founding member of the BILH Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Council.

Michael was an avid season ticket holder for the New York Yankees, often driving to New York City for games, and even traveling to Florida for Spring Training. On any given Saturday or Sunday Michael could be found on the golf course, regardless of the weather, often accompanied by his long-time closest friends and Dartmouth College roommates, Don Hebert and Burt Keirstead. He was a USGA member, and traveled to courses everywhere, including the old course at St. Andrews in Scotland, and most recently this past Thanksgiving, three courses at Pinehurst, in North Carolina. Luckily for Michael his friend Don Hebert is a pilot with a plane to fly him around to sports events, including horse races in Saratoga and Belmont.

While in New York City he often saw shows and visited museums. Recently, he attended the soft opening of the Jackie Robinson museum in Tribeca. When visiting his family in Virginia he always spent a day with his longtime friend since third grade and wife, Robb and Esther Turnage visiting museums.

In February of 2010 Michael began writing a sports blog, digging into the personalities and experiences of individuals who participated in sports, sometimes connecting current players and events with their elder 'events years before.

Michael was a complicated person, often a man of few words, with a quick

and sharp wit. He was known for his intellect, and for his bone-dry sense of humor. He was aptly described by a colleague as a quiet unsung hero who got things done.

Michael is survived by his sister, Mary Lou Reilly (Texas), sister and brother-in-law, Shirley and Charles Fegan (Virginia), brother and sister-in-law, Rex and Linda Cornelius (Florida), 11 nieces and nephews, 14 grand nieces and nephews, 1 great grandnephew and his former wife, Patti Blanchette.

Visitation will be from 10 to 11am on Saturday, March 25, 2023 in the Remick & Gendron Funeral Home – Crematory, 811 Lafayette Rd., Hampton, NH. Services will immediately follow the visitation starting at 11am in the funeral home. Interment will be in the Calvary Cemetery in Portsmouth.

Cemetery Details

Calvary Cemetery

Rt 33, Greenland, Rd.
Portsmouth, NH 03801

Previous Events

Visitation

MAR 25. 10:00 AM - 11:00 AM (ET)

Remick & Gendron Funeral Home - Crematory
811 Lafayette Road ·
Hampton, NH 03842
(603) 926-6500
info@remickgendron.com
<https://www.RemickGendron.com/>

Funeral Service

MAR 25. 11:00 AM (ET)

Remick & Gendron Funeral Home - Crematory
811 Lafayette Road ·
Hampton, NH 03842
(603) 926-6500
info@remickgendron.com
<https://www.RemickGendron.com/>

Tribute Wall



“ *Remick & Gendron Funeral Home created a Webcast in memory of Michael R. Cornelius*



Remick & Gendron Funeral Home - February 17, 2023 at 12:14 PM



“ *Days of Sunshine Bouquet was purchased for the family of Michael R. Cornelius.*



March 23, 2023 at 10:03 AM



“ *Friends & Colleagues from DEI purchased the [Memorial Trees](/store/Product.aspx?ProductId=4518) for the family of Michael R. Cornelius.*

Friends & Colleagues from DEI - March 22, 2023 at 03:28 PM

AW

“ Michael was a great boss to me and I miss him very much, especially his sense of humor and intelligence. He always had a calming presence to him when things were hectic. Miss you Michael - RIP
Andrea White

Andrea White - February 24, 2023 at 02:28 PM

SA

“ Michael was hands down the most brilliant person I've ever known. His quick grasp of any given problem was simultaneously followed by the solution. But, it was his razor sharp wit I enjoyed the most. He and Patti hosted many, many fun filled gatherings at their home. Mike was a unique man; quiet, yes, but also knowledgeable, funny and kind. We were lucky to have him in our midst.

Sandy Allen - February 23, 2023 at 09:27 AM

JG

“ I was first introduced to Michael through my late husband Dick Gallant. They had a mutual respect for Newmarket, especially the Moody Point development. Michael & Patti were customers of our restaurant and seeing him quietly navigate his way through the Portsmouth landscape made me more appreciative of how incredibly gifted he was. It wasn't long after Dick passed that our daughter formed a friendship with Michael who became a family friend often present at NASCAR, Christmas dinner and special occasions. We were never fooled by his quiet demeanor. His actions spoke louder than words. You were a great friend, a steady guiding presence in our lives and you are missed. RIP Michael, you left big shoes for all of us to step into.

Jill A Gallant - February 21, 2023 at 09:25 PM

BT

“ *BILH BS Senior Leadership Team purchased the Country Basket Blooms for the family of Michael R. Cornelius.*



BILH BS Senior Leadership Team - February 08, 2023 at 11:08 AM