

Michael J. Muldoon

October 8, 2024



Michael John Muldoon was born on October 27, 1943, to John (Jack) and Elizabeth Muldoon in Oxnard, CA. On September 6, 2024, he passed away at home surrounded by family and friends.

Mike was the great-grandchild of John and Mary Caroline Donlon. John was an early settler of the Oxnard Plain. Mike was a 3rd generation Californian who enjoyed an idyllic childhood in an agricultural community made up mainly of ranchers. He also enjoyed a special relationship with his paternal grandfather, B.R. Muldoon. Together, they spent a lot of time hunting and fishing.

While attending Santa Paula High School, he had the most important experience of his life. Mike met a girl named Mary Janette Bucknell. They would be together for 64 years. After graduating high school in 1961, Mike attended Ventura Junior College before moving to Humboldt County to attend Humboldt State College. He graduated in 1968 with a degree in Geography.

In 1966, Mike got lucky and married Mary Janette 'Netty'. In 1969, their first son, Patrick was born. In August of 1970, Mike moved the family to Crescent City where he took a job teaching History at Del Norte

High. In late 1970, their second son, Matthew was born. After meeting this child, Mike proclaimed, "We can't do better than this." and they stopped having children.

Mike taught at Del Norte High until 1980 when he moved to Sunset High School. More than anything, he enjoyed working with at-risk students. 'Mr. Muldoon' had an amazing ability to make connections with students and motivate them. The motivation did not always need to be academic, sometimes just the right words of advice for someone to better understand their self-worth. He even used to make home visits to sit down with parents and students to increase communication and create a better plan for the student. He 'retired' in 2004 but continued working with students for a few more years at his own pace. Not surprisingly, both of his sons became teachers.

Outside of teaching, Mike was a man who was always working on something. In the early 60's, he met a man named Bill Stover who taught him gunsmithing. This love of guns lasted his entire life. There were many friends throughout his life that either had their gun fixed or were taught how to reload in his garage. Mike bought or sold or traded hundreds of guns throughout the years. He even sold some guns to raise the down payment for the house on Jaccard St. in 1975.

Another hobby of Mike's was fly-fishing. Over the years, he owned a few jet boats to go up and down the Klamath River. His favorite boat was a Knudsen Craft. During the 80's, he was a fishing guide on the Klamath. His family spent a lot of quality time on the river, spending days at Blue Creek and often stopping at Steelhead Lodge for dinner on the way home. In addition to guiding, he built many fly rods for family and friends. He also taught his sons to tie flies at a young age. Not surprisingly, both of his sons fly fish.

No story of Mike's life would be complete without talking about his 30+ year love affair with a little place called Big Flat. Mike and Janette bought 11 acres on Jones Creek in 1990 and spent the next few decades transforming the property into a destination for family and friends. Many happy memories were made in Big Flat including the time Mike rode his son's bike down the hill and the gravel road was so jarring that his sweats fell down and for 75 feet his family had to see part of his birthday suit.

Having taught Civics for years, serving his community was important to Mike. He was part of several committees and non-profits over the years, including the Juvenile Justice commission and most recently the Planning commission. Of late, he was interested in starting a program to help the county's youth with mental health issues.

Mike was preceded in death by his father, John Muldoon, his mother Elizabeth Muldoon Brinley and stepfather Finley Brinley, his in-laws Chuck and Mary Bucknell and his younger brother Timothy.

Mike is survived by his wife of 58 years, Mary Janette 'Netty'. He is also survived by his sons Patrick (Carrie) and Matthew (Susan). He leaves behind five beloved grandchildren: Moriah, Jordan, Bryant, Jessica and Max. He is also survived by his wonderful sister Patricia. He will miss his many nieces and nephews, especially Siobain Bonilla (Ernie), Haley Murphy, Bridget Murphy, Paul Murphy, John Muldoon, Judy Phelps (Clay), John Marble, and Jeff Marble.

Mike had many friends in his life, and he would hope they would remember him often when sitting out by a fire or having a drink or working in a garage or just laughing. Special mention must go to Richard ‘Lumps’ Lombardo, Phillip Shafer, Jerry Miller, Dan Marvin, and John Murphy for their great friendships.

Thank you to the wonderful staff at Asante Rogue Medical Center, Coastal Hospice, and Weir’s Mortuary.

A Celebration of a Life well lived will be held at a later date. If people are interested in making a donation in Mike’s name, please consider donating to the Humane Society of Del Norte. Mike loved dogs and left behind his last, Henry.

“Legacy is not leaving something behind for other people. It’s leaving something behind in other people.”

Peter Strople