



## Michael Curley

January 29, 1950 - January 16, 2024

Michael Curley, 73, of Oskaloosa, passed away Tuesday, January 16, 2024, at his home in Oskaloosa.

Michael James Curley, son of Donald Elston and Helen Mary (Ashley) Curley, was born on January 29, 1950, in Martinez, California. He spent his early years in Huntington Beach, a coastal town in Orange County. The family moved to Las Vegas, where he attended high school. As a teenager, he roamed the surrounding hills during the day and night before suburban sprawl overtook it. Michael also dove off the cliffs into Lake Mead, a short distance from Hoover Dam. He worked in the casinos either during or shortly after graduating high school, doing room service, among other things.

Because of vision loss in one eye, he was not drafted or otherwise allowed into the U. S. armed forces. His yearning for adventure took him to the rain forests of Maui's wild coast in the late 60's or early 70's. He lived alone, fishing the adjacent reefs, avoiding morays, lionfish, sharks, and other dangers, and eating fruit from the forest. Eventually, he got "bored" and returned to the mainland.

He furthered his education in San Diego, California, and Flagstaff, Arizona, and graduated with a B.A. Degree in Business Administration. Michael was a civilian employee for the Department of Defense at the Nevada Test site, except for Area 51. While working in these restricted areas, he occasionally indulged his wild side in a high-performance auto; he would outrace pursuing Nevada Highway Patrol units on his way to his work site's entrance gates. He also owned motorcycles and performed similar stunts on them.

Michael worked under increasingly high-security clearances with his move to Anchorage, Alaska. They included guarded radar sites along the DEW Line (Distant Early Warning) from the coast of the Bering Sea to the interior of Alaska. However, Michael did little or no work in the Aleutian Island Chain. He was later employed with the Regulatory Commission of Alaska as an I.T. Supervisor in the Hazardous Waste Division. They did environmental cleanup at a number of DOD locations. In the private sector, Michael did commercial fishing from a sailing boat in the treacherous waters of the Alaskan panhandle. Over the years, Michael also lived in Nome and Palmer, Alaska.

In the 90's, Michael had an eye surgery that caused him to go blind. Although this was devastating to his career, he continued to be a positive and happy person. His guide dog,

Skippy, helped him get out and about safely for several years. Even though he couldn't experience the world through sight, Micheal was very much in touch with the world. He was an avid Ham Radio operator with a higher-grade license. His other areas of knowledge and interest included astronomy, law, history, and general science. He listened to audiobooks from several institutions: the Library of Congress, the University of Nevada, and others. He wanted others limited by sight to experience the world as he did and had started writing a book for blind people.

Michael married Ellen Karaffa-Taylor on January 18, 2003, in Palmer, Alaska. They had met through their memberships in the local Lions Club. They moved to Sparks, Nevada, in 2011, and friends encouraged them to move to Oskaloosa in 2021. Michael will be remembered as a high-energy, go-for-the-gusto, leave-the-world-a-better-place guy who had a tender spot for cats and loved his wife dearly.

Michael's family includes his beloved wife, Ellen; a stepdaughter, Valerie (Robert) Kuhn of Wasilla, Alaska; brothers, Ron (Kathy) Curley of Nashville, TN, and Don Curley of California; and several nieces and nephews.

He was preceded in death by his parents and a sister, Diane Barfield.

As was his wish, Michael's body has been cremated. No services are planned at this time.

Langkamp Funeral Chapel has been entrusted with Michale's final arrangements.

Instead of sending flowers, the family requests memorial contributions be made to the SPCA, Society of the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals. The link to donate is: <https://secure.aspca.org/donate/ps-gn-202401-p1?linked=1>

# Tribute Wall

HC

“ I am so happy that Michael is in peace he was the most intelligent man he did amazing things that you would never think he could do being blind I remember walking him outside and he just loved to learn something new everyday I truly miss him since he left Reno and now know I can never see him again hurts he saved my life so many times in need he was truly a second dad and Ellen I love her so much too they are and we be the most nicest caring understand people I met through a job working and here comes ellen to bring her comforters that Micheal spilled his drink on to my cleaners and than from that day forward they pretty much adopted me as there 2nd daughter I will miss his funny goofy ways and his guidance he gave me in those years we spent together I love you Ellen stay strong and I'm only a phone call away GOD BLESS

Heather C. - January 23, 2024 at 03:44 AM

WL

“ Mike was a close friend throughout highschool and well beyond. We were feral children together. He was well loved by my entire family, dogs and cats included. My mom loved him and patched him up on numerous occasions, he was more than just a little accident prone. We spent many nights camping in the desert with Jerry Payne, we hiked and climbed at Red Rock, swam at Lake Mead and enjoyed our own private campsite at 'Brad's'. He was part of the infamous Milk Truck Gang, and as such, could handle a fire extinguisher. There are so many Curley stories, each one more unbelievable than the last. He is legend. See you in the desert brother.

Wayne Logan - January 22, 2024 at 11:06 PM

EK

Thank you Wayne

Ellen Karaffa-Taylor - February 26, 2024 at 03:44 PM

EK

“ Don't send flowers. If you want to send something in his memory send a donation to the SPCA in Oskaloosa Iowa. He would have loved that.

ellen karaffa-Taylor - January 22, 2024 at 07:30 AM

HC

I love u!

Heather C. - January 23, 2024 at 03:47 AM

JS

“ I did not know Michael, either, but I wish I had met him. What a beautifully written obituary! My heartfelt condolences to this wife, to Valerie, and others who cared for him. I was not in the military, but I still salute him!

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**Jean Stanford** - January 20, 2024 at 09:29 AM

VK

Thank you for your condolences

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**Valerie Kuhn** - January 20, 2024 at 11:09 AM

EK

Thank you. He was my best friend, besides being a wonderful husband. I sure do miss him.

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**Ellen Karaffa-Taylor** - February 26, 2024 at 03:48 PM

CM

“ I had not know Michael, but he sounds like a man that anyone would have enjoyed spending hours listening to his adventures in life. My deepest condolences.

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**Carla Malloy** - January 19, 2024 at 12:51 PM

VK

Thank you💕

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**Valerie Kuhn** - January 20, 2024 at 12:22 AM

EK

Thank you

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**Ellen Karaffa-Taylor** - February 26, 2024 at 03:45 PM