

Mike D. McDonald

Born: January 3, 1947

Died: November 14, 2015

Location: Morton, Illinois



Knapp-Johnson Funeral Home

140 S. Detroit Ave

Morton, IL 61550

Tel. (309) 263-7426

Tribute & Message From The Family



Morton - Michael D. McDonald, 68, of Morton, passed away at 9:05 p.m. Saturday, Nov. 14, 2015, at UnityPoint Health-Methodist in Peoria.

Coach Mac was born Jan. 3, 1947, in Pekin to Justin and Maria (Berardi) McDonald. He married Peggy Talbert on April 17, 1971, in Little Rock, Ark. She survives.

Also surviving are one son, David (Leah) McDonald of Delavan; one daughter, Allison Vershaw of Morton; three granddaughters, Kherington Vershaw and twins, Harper and Marley McDonald; and two step-granddaughters, Abigail Green and Alexis Robinson.

He was preceded in death by his parents and one brother.

He was a member of First Baptist Church of Morton.

Mike graduated from Pekin High School. He earned his associates of arts degree from Canton Community College, a bachelor's degree in physical education from Bradley University and a master's degree in physical education from Illinois State University. In college while playing baseball, he earned All Missouri Valley Conference Baseball honors his senior year at Bradley as a third baseman and was on the 1968 winning team for the Missouri Valley Conference Championship in baseball.

After college, he taught one year at Bergan High School and was assistant baseball and football coach. In 1970, he signed as a free agent catcher with the St. Louis Cardinal Organization. After two years of Class "AA" baseball, he began a 34-year career at Morton High School where he taught physical education and health education. He was assistant football coach for 24 years and coached baseball for 26 years, two as assistant and 24 as head baseball coach.

During his tenure as baseball coach, he amassed a career record of 452-313-4, along with seven conference championships, eight 20-plus win seasons, four regional championships, two sectional championships and two state appearances: 1984 State Champions and 1994 State Runner-Up. Mike was selected as District 3 Coach of the Year twice and was named Illinois Coaches Association "Coach of the Year" in 1984.

He was one of the founding fathers of the Peoria Area Junior-Senior and Underclass All

Star games played in Peoria. In 1995, Coach received the highest honor in the IHSBCA when he was named "Man of the Year." He was the baseball chairman for the ICA for four years, running the ICA East/West All Star Game held in Peoria. He coached the ICA All Star Games and Illinois vs. Michigan All Star Game at Comiskey Park in Chicago in 1985.

Following his high school coaching career, he coached for six years at Illinois Central College as an assistant baseball coach and for two years at Eureka College as head baseball coach.

Coach Mac was an associate scout with the Cincinnati Reds and St. Louis Cardinals. He worked baseball camps at Bradley, University of Illinois, and ICC and hosted a baseball camp for a group of adolescences in Belgium. He was a color commentator for the IHSA State Baseball Tournament on Sports Channel. He was guest speaker for the IHSBCA., University of Missouri Baseball Clinic, and Illinois Association of Health, Physical Education, Recreation and Dance.

Coach Mac was inducted into the Bradley University Hall of Fame in 1976, IHSBCA Hall of Fame in 1991 and Spoon River College Athletics Hall of Fame in 2012. He was named to the Sunday Morning League Hall of Honor and was a current board member of the Greater Peoria Sports Hall of Fame.

He loved his family, spending time with his granddaughters, listening to his son play music and family vacations. His hobbies included playing golf, watching football and baseball and meeting with friends on Saturday mornings for coffee.

Cremation has been accorded. A baseball theme Celebration of Life where guests are asked to wear their favorite baseball team shirt or hat will be from 1 to 5 p.m. Saturday, Nov. 21, 2015, at Knights of Columbus in Morton. A memorial service will be at 2 p.m. Sunday, Nov. 22, 2015, at First Baptist Church in Morton. Burial of cremated remains will be in Hirstein Cemetery in Morton.

Knapp-Johnson Funeral Home and Cremation Center in Morton is handling arrangements.

In lieu of flowers, the family asks that memorials be made to Morton Youth Baseball Association, P.O. Box 354, Morton, IL 61550.