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Life Stories - Surfer spent his life on the road

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With such a small community at Wrightsville Beach during the 1960s, everyone knew everyone, so everyone knew the three Curry boys – Mike, Billy and Kenny.

Surfing sometimes in hurricanes with 20-foot waves, the Currys were a part of the Eastern Surf Association with Mike taking titles in surfing from competitions in Wrightsville Beach, Cape Hatteras, Pawley's Island and Morehead City to name a few.

"He could tear a board up, he was a showman," said his brother Kenny Curry. "He had no fear."

Mike endured numerous back surgeries in his lifetime, along with blood transfusions. During these transfusions, Mike contracted hepatitis C, which in turn caused him to develop cirrhosis of the liver. While involved in a routine rehabilitation period, Michael T. Curry passed away March 11 from complications due to hepatitis C at the age of 59.

As a military family, the Currys traveled around the world three times during their late father's military service, before finding their surfing safe haven at Wrightsville Beach.

The Lumina, the Crest Theatre and Newells were some of the Currys' local haunts. Originally using \$50 belly boards made of fiberglass, Mike did not lie down on the popular "boogie" boards – he stood. Short boards were soon seen in the coastal community with Mike riding the nose of the board with ease. Wipeouts were a rarity with the self-taught teens.

"We looked at the ocean as our spiritual guide," said Kenny.

After spending almost 15 years at Wrightsville Beach, Mike, still a teen at the time, left home with \$20 and his backpack, traveling the United States living in communes in Arizona and California.

In the 1970s, Mike picked up the guitar, drums and singing, teaching himself all the proper techniques.

"Experience is the best teacher," said Kenny.

Working as a roadie for his brother, Kenny traveled with Mike as he performed with the Travis Moon Band, named for lead singer David Moon and Mike's son Travis, Steppenwolf, Rainbow, Nitty Gritty Dirt Band, Ted Nugent, The Association and Johnny Rodriguez.

Mike's showmanship on stage mimicked his showmanship on the surf.

"He could make you dance," said Kenny.

Before his passing, Mike and Kenny lived together in Wilmington since 2005.



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Joseph “Skipper” Funderburg, author of “Surfing on the Cape Fear Coast,” reflects on the days he surfed side by side with Mike.

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“We cherish our growing up days, when Mike Curry and the Wrightsville Originals surfed the billows on Old Wrightsville,” he said. “Mike Curry was one of the first surfers in North Carolina and was instrumental in shaping our local surfing community into what it is today.”

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