



# Michael Royce Lemaster

MAR 11, 1947 - APR 21, 2026



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# Table of Contents

<b>Obituary</b> .....	Page 3
-----------------------	--------



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**M**ichael Royce Lemaster, 79, passed peacefully in his sleep on Tuesday, April 21, after a short bout with cancer. His spirit lives on through his wife of 49yrs, Debra; his children, (and spouses), Aaron, Jordan (Margot), Logan (Corey), Lauren (Patrick); and three grandchildren, Avery, Roman, and Arlen. He is also survived by his sister, Phyllis Mann. Mike was preceded in death by his parents, John and Mellie Lemaster; and siblings, Joe Tom Lemaster, Betty Williams, Mary Brock, Kathleen Hennessee, Bill Lemaster, Johnny Lemaster, Marcia Becker, Beverly Fitzner, Gary Lemaster, and Sammy Lemaster.

Mike was born in Afton, OK in 1947, as the youngest of 12 siblings. He attended Afton High School, where he excelled in academics and sports. He attended Northeastern Oklahoma College and then transferred to the University of Arkansas where he earned his bachelor's degree in business. He worked for the juvenile court system in Fayetteville, AR, where he met the love of his life, Debbie Billiet. They married on March 5, 1977. He then started his long tenure in the home center retail business as general manager of National Home Center in North Little Rock, AR. Mike and Debbie raised their three children in central Arkansas until 2001, when they decided to relocate back to Fayetteville.

There he joined, presided over for a period, and remained active in the Ozark Highland Trail Association for the rest of his life – designing, mapping, and maintaining trail sections on the OHT. His passion for this club was immeasurable, and he was always determined to see it grow and flourish to get more people to step on the trail. The OHTA announced this year that in his honor, they would award the “Mike Lemaster Sawyer of the Year” for an outstanding individual's achievement related to their trail maintenance contributions. Being the renaissance man that he was, Mike found other passions in life including serving on various community boards, getting his master gardener certification, and most recently in pickleball. He



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considered himself a “pickleball ambassador” in the Northwest Arkansas area and had a group of dedicated players and friends with whom he played sessions daily without exception.

We were blessed to learn many valuable lessons from Mike during his 79 years on Earth, but perhaps his most notable trait was his ability to connect with people. He was determinately selfless and would not think twice about cancelling his own daily plans at a moment’s notice to help a friend, or even an acquaintance, in need. He would speak to a perfect stranger for five minutes and would have already exchanged numbers and made plans with them. This always ensured that his path was varied and unpredictable, just as he preferred.

Mike was also a masterful storyteller and was known for his unique sayings and phrasings (many of which are not suited for a formal obituary, but feel free to ask Debbie or any of his children and close friends, and they could rattle off hundreds).

He loved to laugh and was a relentless teaser of his adoring grandchildren.

Lastly, he loved to read the obituaries in the newspaper each week. If he saw someone he knew in the obits, he would often relay a funny or interesting story about that person to anyone that was around. That was his way of honoring the people he knew when they passed. Since you are now reading his, please do Mike the honor of sharing a story about him to someone today. He would have loved that.

In lieu of sending flowers, please consider donating to and/or becoming a member the Ozark Highland Trail Association in his honor. <https://ozarkhighlandstrail.com/>



## **Memories only last if you share them**

Join us in honoring Michael by contributing to a collection of shared memories.



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