



## Michael Yurchak

May 4, 1944 - May 8, 2026

Wantage - Michael Yurchak, age 82, passed away on Friday, May 8, 2026 at Newton Medical Center. Born in Sussex to the late Michael and Pearl (Kota) Yurchak, Mike grew up in Franklin and has lived in Sussex County for most of his life. He attended college at Glassboro State College, now known as Rowan University. Mike was employed as an underwriter for Selective Insurance in Branchville before his retirement.

Mike carried with him a quiet connection to his father, Sgt. Michael J. Yurchak of Ogdensburg, New Jersey, who was killed in action on August 10, 1944 in Gathemo, France, during World War II while serving with the 116th Infantry Regiment, 29th Infantry Division, and was posthumously awarded the Purple Heart.

He was an avid reader who could always be found with a book or newspaper nearby, and he carried a lifelong love for the Christmas season. He especially enjoyed watching the Christmas Story, a tradition that brought him laughter and joy year after year. Christmas held a special place in his heart, and each year he delighted in the traditions, music, lights, and holiday movies that came with it.

He was passionate about cooking and took great pride in preparing meals for the people he loved. His collection of cookbooks was well-loved and well-used, and he especially cherished preparing Thanksgiving dinner for the family each year, beginning with his famous stuffing recipe, which he would begin preparing weeks in advance of the big day. He also had a deep

appreciation for wine and enjoyed discovering and sharing new favorites with friends and family. He was a true wine enthusiast.

He had a talent for finding hidden treasures at garage sales and took great pleasure in finding a good deal, often returning home with stories as memorable as the items themselves. His curiosity, practicality, and sense of negotiating made every outing an adventure where he would find the best deals.

A devoted baseball fan throughout his life, he loyally followed the Boston Red Sox and remained a faithful fan of the Giants even after their move to San Francisco. Willie Mays was his favorite player, and he never lost his admiration for the joy and greatness he brought to the game.

He also had a special love for animals and a gentle kindness that extended to every creature he met. More than anything, he will be remembered for his great personality, fun sense of humor, the traditions he created, and his sense of giving to help family or friends in need. His memory will live on in holiday gatherings, shared meals, baseball games, beloved pets, and the countless stories that will continue to be told for years to come.

In addition to his parents, Michael was predeceased by his step-father, Stanley John Balson USN WWII and his brother, Jon Balson. Michael is survived by his loving wife of 32 years, Kathleen (Como); his sons, Mark Yurchak and his wife Kathia of Sparta and Patrick Yurchak of Florida; his step-sons, Adam Lazier and his wife Rebecca of Wantage, Aric Lazier and his wife Agnieszka of Byram; his step-daughter, Ann Marie Sorensen of Wantage; his brother, Gary Balson of Millville; his grandchildren, Allison, Nicholas, Abigail, Owen, Katelyn, Lauren, Kayla, Jacob, Emily, Landon, Dominic, Christopher, and Charlotte; his great grandson, Jaxson and one great grandson on the way; his sister-in-law, Cindi of Pennsylvania; many cousins that he adored, and several nieces and nephews.

Friends may pay respects to the family on Wednesday, May 13, 2026 from 4 p.m. to 7 p.m. at the Pinkel Funeral Home, 31 Bank Street (Route 23), Sussex. In lieu of flowers, please consider a memorial donation in Michael

Yurchak's memory to Father John's Animal House. Online condolences may be offered to the family at [www.pinkelfuneralhome.com](http://www.pinkelfuneralhome.com).

# Cemetery Details

**Private Cremation Services**

# Previous Events

## Visitation

MAY 13. 4:00 PM - 7:00 PM (ET)

Pinkel Funeral Home, Inc.  
31 Bank Street (Route 23)  
Sussex, NJ 07461  
(973) 875-3272  
alexis@pinkelfuneralhome.com  
<https://www.pinkelfuneralhome.com/>

# Tribute Wall

WF

“ *With much love, your 2 West Family purchased the Peaceful White Lilies Basket for the family of Michael Yurchak.*



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**With much love, your 2 West Family** - May 11 at 07:59 PM

KY

“ *As Michael's wife I have many memories obviously, but this is one of my many favorites.... I was working and taking care of an older woman with a serious lung issue. She had a difficult time to breath in humid weather. It was July and quiet hot and humid. She could not afford an air conditioner. I called Mike and told him . He went out and bought one , met with family and gave it to them. He took much pleasure in helping others.*

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**Kathleen Como Yurchak** - May 10 at 06:53 AM

TC

*I'm so sorry for ur loss!!!!*

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**Toni Chadwick** - May 10 at 09:22 AM

JS

*Dear Kathy and family,  
Michael and I, as well as the entire Sheehan family, are heart broken by the news of Mike's passing. I know how hard you worked to tend to his needs these past years and how happy you were during your 32 years together. The story you related is an example of how the man led his life and cared for others. May he rest in peace and may the Holy Spirit comfort you and his family during this difficult time. God Bless you all.*

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**Jim Sheehan** - May 10 at 12:44 PM

LS

*My love and prayers are with you all. I hope the sweet memories serve to sustain you in this time of sorrow. Classmate of Patrick, and ESL friend of Kathia, Lynn Salvatore*

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**Lynn Salvatore** - May 11 at 11:36 PM

RC

*I'm very sorry to hear of Mike's passing. He and I worked at Selective Insurance for many years. Mike was a very genuine person who got along with everyone. I will miss his geniality and his laughter. My condolences to Kathleen and the Yurchak family.*

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**Robert Caggiano** - May 15 at 11:58 AM