



# Michael Gaechter

JAN 9, 1940 - AUG 17, 2015



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## **Michael Gaechter**

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**M**ichael passed away August, 17, 2015. Mike was born January 9, 1940 in Santa Monica, California to Rudolph and Mildred, who preceded him in death. During Mike's high school years they lived in Lancaster, California where he attended Antelope Valley High School and ran track. Gaechter then received a scholarship to the University of Oregon. In 1961, during a track meet at the University of Washington, Mike recorded his fastest time with 9.4 seconds in the 100-yard dash. In 1962, Gaechter along with teammates Mel Renfro, Jerry Tarr, and Harry Jerome, ran the third leg on the University of Oregon's world record setting team, in the 4x110 yard relay. His football career began in college and he was voted most improved player. In 1962, Gaechter was signed by the Dallas Cowboys as an undrafted free agent and as a rookie became the starting left cornerback. In that season, Gaechter intercepted a 100-yard return for a touchdown, a team record that was held for 48 years. He had a reputation as a formidable defensive player so in 1963 he switched to strong safety. He also played in the Ice Bowl against the Green Bay Packers in 1967, the coldest football game on record. In 1969 during the Play Off Bowl with the Los Angeles Rams, Mike ruptured his Achilles tendon, an injury which ultimately ended his career. After his football career ended Gaechter dabbled in various businesses eventually establishing a very respected and successful career in outdoor advertising. He started businesses in Amarillo, San Antonio, Albuquerque, and Waco. Mike experienced early onset dementia which led to the decision to sell Gaechter Outdoor Advertizing in Waco, Texas. Eventually he was diagnosed with Alzheimer's. Michael Gaechter touched many lives. Family was very important to him. As busy as he was establishing his new businesses, he always remembered those he loved. To surprise Katharine, his daughter, on her 11th birthday, he flew all night from Greece to South Carolina to be with her. She fondly remembers him showing up at her boarding school when she was 16 to watch her play basketball. Mike loved



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his family and would organize events to get us all together. He made them all fun with his outrageous sense of humor and jokes, most of which are not suitable to this occasion. He kept every one laughing and enjoying life. Mike put all of his energy into anything he decided to do and then did it well and with great enthusiasm. This was true of college sports, professional football, golf, his outdoor advertising business and skiing, which he loved. One winter several couples were to join Mike at Beaver Creek for a skiing holiday. He got there a day ahead of the others to get in an extra day of skiing. When the others arrived they were greeted by Mike with a black eye, broken ski goggles, one ski bent at a 90 degree angle and raving about the great skiing conditions. Gaechter never understood the concept of making turns, and would head straight downhill. When we would meet up at the bottom, he would show up black and blue, and limping, ready to go again. He was not one to be deterred by small setbacks. He loved his brothers. As a child, his younger brother Bill idolized him. Once they were playing cowboys, Bill was the horse, and Mike made him eat grass. Bill choked and choked. When Mike wasn't looking, Bill hit him over the head with a board and ran as fast as he could. Gaechter had a way with people, and he could get away with saying things that others couldn't. If you knew Mike, you know what I mean. Mike always had a toothpick tucked behind his ear and one in his mouth. He had many "Gaechterisms". He had a big heart, a generous spirit, and a loving nature. If the number of friends is any indication of a life well lived, then he exceeded the maximum. He was there when you needed him, in any capacity. He leaves behind a legacy of faith, strength, tenacity, friendship, and love of family. He is survived by his wife Cheryl Gaechter, his daughter, Katharine Rea and his granddaughters, Caroline and Camden Rea of Frisco, and his brothers, Paul Anthony Gaechter of San Jose, California, William Gaechter of Glenwood Springs, Colorado, and Mark Gaechter of Eugene, Oregon. Family will receive friends on Sunday, August 23, 2015 from 6:00 – 8:00PM in The Memorial Chapel at Restland Funeral Home with Rosary at 7:00PM. Funeral Mass will be held Monday, August 24, 2015 at 2:00 PM at St. Ann Catholic Church in Coppell. Funeral arrangements have been entrusted to Restland Funeral Home and Memorial Park, 13005 Greenville Avenue, Dallas, TX 75243. In lieu of flowers, memorials may be made to St. Jude's Hospital (he



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loved children), the ASPCA (he loved dogs); or UT Southwestern Brain Health Research.



## Tribute Wall

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KS

**Kirby S.** posted:

Kirby S. purchased a sympathy card for the family of Michael Gaechter.

August 24 at 1:59 PM

RD

**Restland Of Dallas** posted:

Florist Choice Bouquet was purchased for the family of Michael Gaechter.

August 24 at 11:08 AM

RD

**Restland Of Dallas** posted:

Violets And Butterflies was purchased for the family of Michael Gaechter.

August 24 at 9:48 AM

PW

**Paul Wilson** posted:

lot of love to his family, and I know he's in God's hall of fame. thanks for the great games of the 60,s. and I enjoyed meeting your wife and you 14 years ago and I have your cowboy picture hanging in one of my offices. paul

August 24 at 3:36 AM



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CT

**Christy (Kinsey) Turner** posted:

My husband Tom and I were discussing NFL wear for women when I told him I had a Cowboy Jersey from 1961 or 62. I told him I loaned it to a Cowboy who live over me or under me at the Four Seasons apartments on Inwood Road in Dallas, his name was Mike Gaechter. we wondered where he was today. That, sadly, brought us to his obituary on the internet. I lived in an area of this large apartment complex where lots of Cowboys lived. I was a bit rowdy and noisy at times. The apartment complex even had a racing team, so there was great fun at Green Valley Raceway off season. I don't remember why I loaned it to Mike, but it was a Roger Staubach number and name given to me by Mel Renfro. I asked Mike a couple of times for it but I just gave up and my work changed and I ended up moving to a complex on Gaston Avenue. Mike was a wonderful neighbor. He was quiet, respectful and a true gentlemen except for some of his remarks and stories. I never really minded. He will be sorely missed even though I haven't seen him since 1962. We had occasion to be in Coppell in September for a family wedding. It was at St. Ann's. Such a beautiful church. I would loved to have been to his mass. Pleas know that I will remember his fondly. Christy & Tom Turner tomturnermo@semo.net Poplar Bluff, MO (whole another story how I ended up in Missouri)

August 16 at 7:00 PM

KC

**Kap, Eric, Caroline, And Camden Rea** posted:

Kap, Eric, Caroline, and Camden Rea purchased the Arrive in Style for the family of Michael Gaechter.

August 16 at 7:00 PM

MS

**Mary And Bob Scichili** posted:

Mary and I have known Mike since his Cowboy days and been our privilege to his friend. We send our sympathies to his family and many friends with many prayers for their peace. Our prayers for Mike will be daily as we remember him in our hearts. Mary and Bob Scichili

August 16 at 7:00 PM

RD

**Restland Of Dallas** posted:

Beautiful Dreams was purchased for the family of Michael Gaechter.

August 16 at 7:00 PM



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RD

**Restland Of Dallas** posted:

Beautiful in Blue was purchased for the family of Michael Gaechter.

August 16 at 7:00 PM

IB

**In Loving Memory, Veronica And Thomas Busa** posted:

In loving memory, Veronica and Thomas Busa purchased the Beautiful in Blue for the family of Michael Gaechter.

August 16 at 7:00 PM

RB

**Ronnie And Helenann Busa** posted:

Ronnie and HelenAnn Busa purchased the Garden of Serenity Bouquet for the family of Michael Gaechter.

August 16 at 7:00 PM



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

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



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