



Joseph "Mike" Prelee

August 18, 2023

Joseph "Mike" Prelee, 94, of Bergenfield, NJ (formerly of Sharon, PA) passed away peacefully on August 18, 2023. He was the beloved husband for 37 years to Arlene. Devoted father of Michael Prili, Christina Stoll, Sarina Prelee (Peggy), Ronald Lanzo Sr. (Linda) and predeceased by his daughter Elizabeth Owen (2022). Cherished grandfather of Giovanni, Valentino (Diana) & Sierra Stoll, Sasha Navarro (Victor), Dylan & Tucker Schettina (Samantha), Ronald Lanzo Jr., and Erica Lanzo Hunt (Chris). Great grandfather of Morgan, Ryan & Cameron Lanzo, Alexis & Lyla Hunt, Sebastian & Sienna Navarro, and Orion & Isadora Stoll. Mike worked 50 years as a Broadcast Journalist and served over 25 years as News Director in NYC at both WNEW & WHN Radio. He was the on-air news anchor for Mutual Broadcasting and NBC Radio Networks, covering on scene major news events including Far East Korean War interviews, Vietnam Peace talks in Paris, Space launches at Cape Canaveral, Presidential Conventions and Dr. Martin Luther King's famous Freedom March on Washington, DC. As a United Nations Correspondent, he flew on the first flight of the Boeing 747 from New York to Paris. He also covered the restoration of the Statue of Liberty from outside the torch. Mike won multiple awards for his career in broadcasting including the coveted Sigma Delta Chi Distinguished Service National Journalism Award, The Deadline Club NYC award for "Broadcasting Excellence" and the Associated Press Award for "Best Radio News Program in New York City". Mike was a long time model railroad lover who became known as "Mr. Mountain" for his

specialty in crafting realistically scaled mountain scenery upon his retirement. In his home he would most often be found running his coveted O Gauge "Red Rock & Roll RR". Mike was also a talented musician who played piano and keyboard. Much to everyone's surprise at this 90th birthday party, Mike brought joy and smiles to his family by playing the guitar. Mike was a longtime active parishioner at Our Lady of Mt. Carmel Church Tenafly, where he served as lector and usher for nearly four decades. He will be dearly missed.

Visitation at Barrett Leber Funeral Home, 148 Dean Dr., Tenafly, NJ on Friday, August 25, 2023, from 3-7 PM. Funeral Mass, Saturday, August 26, 2023 at 10 AM at Our Lady of Mt. Carmel Church, Tenafly. Interment to follow at Mt. Carmel Cemetery, Tenafly. In lieu of flowers, memorial donations may be made to The Office of Concern Food Pantry (55 W. Demarest Ave., Englewood, NJ 07631).

Cemetery Details

Mt. Carmel Cemetery

10 Serpentine Rd
Tenafly, NJ 07670

Previous Events

Visitation

AUG **25**. 3:00 PM - 7:00 PM (ET)

Barrett Leber Funeral Home
148 Dean Dr
Tenafly, NJ 07670
(201) 568-8043
<https://www.barrettleberfuneralhome.com/>

Funeral Mass

AUG **26**. 10:00 AM (ET)

Mt. Carmel RC Church
10 County Rd
Tenafly, NJ 07670

Tribute Wall

PC

“ Arlene, and family members of the Prelee family you my thoughts and prayers. He was a very sweet humble man and loved broadcasting from his heart. A great career and once my book about Youngstown-Sharon Area broadcasting history is all published. He will be very special dedicated.

Phil Ciccone - December 21, 2024 at 12:59 PM

PK

“ I know Mike as a great Model Rairoader, and one of the nicest people on the planet. I'll miss seeing his Railraad, and will miss him coming over to see mine.

Pete K - August 27, 2023 at 04:01 PM

DM

“ Mike was fun to work with. I had a run on thing with Mike. When I was beginning in broadcasting in NYC I went to all the stations. I hit WHN where Mike was News director. I sat in the waiting room with "Benny (Levine) the Fan" fame. Mike came out to see Bennie and to tell me WHN didn't have any positions open and didn't hire me.

Fast forward a few years later I'm working at WNEW and one morning around 4:30am who rings the security entry door? none other than Mike Prelee to do vacation fill in for morning news. Jim Gordon, rest his soul told Mike to ask for Don Mini. (Miniman). I said I am he, he said his name and BING it came back to me WHN radio. LOL. Being the clown I can be I thought I'd have some fun with that. We chatted and I reminded him who I was and sitting in waiting room at WHN with Bennie the Fan whom I had lunch with that day. It came right back to Mike, he remembered. So I joked; gonna hire me now? We both laughed and he said NO! There wasn't any bad feelings about that. Hey after all, it's NYC radio. From that day on that was the line I'd use on him and I'd get the same response. NO!

The last time I saw and chatted with Mike was at Ted Brown's funeral in the city where he gave a fantastic eulogy. It was touching with comic relief thrown in. Mike was a master of the word and always a pleasure.

May Mike R.I.P. in broadcaster heaven with other greats from WNEW and others. My thoughts and prayers go out to his wife Arlene, and his family. God Bless!

Don "Mini" Minichino - August 22, 2023 at 08:53 PM

HO

I attended Ted's funeral and remember Mike's touching eulogy. It was perfect and summed up Ted in a very special way.

Howard - September 09, 2023 at 07:51 PM

MZ

“ I met Mike at Tenafly Bagel store when my son, Nicky was 5 years old in Kindergarten. Every Friday, I would go to work a little later so I could have a bagel with my son & my new friend, Mike. We would sit and talk about everything. We became very close families. Loved to visit his home and see his amazing trains. My kids grew up loving him like another grandfather. He was a wonderful man and soul. Wish miss him dearly! Love to Arlene & family.- Monica Zaccario

Monica Zaccario - August 22, 2023 at 06:45 PM

BV

“ Worked with Mike at WHN, New York on The Jack Sterling show. We shared a love of model railroading. Mike, known as Mr. Mountain for his talent for creating mountains on railroads, had a feature published in Model Railroading magazine. A kind and talented broadcaster. Very sad to hear this. Bob VanDerheyden

Bob VanDerheyden - August 21, 2023 at 09:27 AM

SC

“ After interning at WNEW-FM in 1983 and part of '84, Mike gave me my first paying break in radio -- September 1984 -- and the ride continues 40 years later. A kind and very fair man who will never be forgotten. --Sal Cirrincione

Sal Cirrincione - August 20, 2023 at 08:04 PM

AF

“ Mike arrived at WNEW shortly before I was preparing to leave Metromedia. After our morning news shifts, his on 1130 and mine on 102.7, we'd often sit in his office and talk. He was wonderfully easy to talk to. After we both retired, we'd lunch with other radio folks, telling the same stories and laughing harder each time. He was a man of many talents and shared them freely. He will be missed for his talents, but especially for his kindness and friendship.

Andy Fisher - August 20, 2023 at 09:31 AM