



Michael Clyde Oden

July 17, 1945 - March 17, 2013

Michael Clyde Oden was born July 17, 1945 at St. Mary's Hospital in Modesto, California to parents Clyde and Ruth Oden. Michael's mother required a Cesarean Section and since the hospital had no elevators, she had to walk down a narrow stairway to the operating room. One can only wonder how she made it upstairs after surgery. Michael made parenting so pleasurable and successful that later two more children were added to the family. His younger years were normal and happy. He has a fond recollection of visiting his maternal grandparents on their country farm near Modesto, CA. Michael succeeded in elementary, middle and high school. He performed in a couple of high school plays and had the leading role in one of them. He was elected Student Body vice president during his junior year and Student Body President in his senior year. It needs to be noted that a studious, quiet young man named George Lucas was a member of Mike's senior class at Downey High School. No one at that time knew how successful he would become. Mike can't remember a time when the church wasn't an active and important part of his life. His early memory of the pastors at First Christian Church in Modesto were the Rev. Beard, followed by Rev. Hartzell Cobb, both of which were role models for his career choice later in life. Lest anyone is lead to believe he was a saint, we can dispel that notion right away. Rev. Cobb had a daughter Mike's age named Johnna and they were good friends. One time while sitting in the balcony during the service, they were looking through the hymnal and would add little phrases to the titles of the songs, thus changing

the whole thought of the song. One time they giggled so loudly that Rev. Cobb had to interrupt his sermon to scold them (the kids sat in the front row of church after that so the pastor could watch their actions a little closer). Another time during a boring Sunday school time, the kids walked down the street from church to the skating rink. When it was discovered they were missing, an Elder of the church was sent to look for them. When found, they were marched back by the nape of their neck to church. They never tried that again. Mike was active in youth functions both in his local church and regionally. After high school graduation he left Modesto CA to attend college at Northwest Christian College in Eugene Oregon. He knew from an early age that he wanted to be a pastor so studied theology. Mike served as youth minister while still in college and was later called as an associate minister after graduation from college. While in college he met and married Ellen Waalkes during the summer of his junior year. Son Travis was born a year and a half later. Mike was so proud of Travis. Before a bottle of formula was offered Travis after birth, Mike had an official size football in his tiny hand. Mike and Travis grew up together going through T-ball, Little League and both played adult softball. Both of them often shared their thoughts and loyalties to various teams they enjoyed and followed. Sports played a big part of Mike's life, playing football in high school and later on several softball teams until he was in his 40's. Golf was probably the favorite sport he participated in. While serving as associate pastor and on the platform during a sermon by the senior pastor, Mike had a radio in his pocket, earphones in his ear listening to the World Series. He held his hand over his ear, smiled and nodded each time the pastor looked his way. To date, this has been a secret shared with very few people. Pursuit of a higher education took the family to the Claremont University area in Southern California where Mike received his PhD. While in that area and a student, he pastored churches in some of the most beautiful areas of California, such as Santa Monica and San Diego. During this time, daughter Mylissa was adopted. They selected the possessive form of her name as evidence she was much wanted and loved by her family. While at the

church in San Diego, a youth touring group was formed that took them to several performances in various states near California during the summer vacation. The 30 year reunion of this group was a wonderful time to reminisce. On another summer vacation, the youth group from Santa Monica traveled by bicycle up the California coast, staying in churches during the night. After graduation the family moved to Yakima, WA to pastor the church there. Many new experiences were enjoyed while there. Mike and fellow youth pastor Larry Southern spent a couple of years doing an early morning radio talk show. It took a lot of creativity but they really enjoyed this experience. A divorce ended their stay in Washington and being alone with the two children, Mike felt it would be best to return to his home in Modesto, CA where he could be closer to his parents and his sister and her family. Home always meant a lot to Mike all through the years and when it was necessary to select a code or password, often he would chose some combination of the address of the home of his youth. Another unplanned event changed Mike's life while working part time as a pastor in Tracy, CA and part time as a salesperson at Montgomery Wards in Modesto. A young lady with pretty eyes came in to purchase a gallon of paint and as they say, the rest is history. Michael married Pauline and combined both families and many new adventures. Churches in Phoenix, AZ, Amarillo TX, Mandeville LA and Albuquerque, NM rounded out exciting places to live, new cultures to learn and retained many lifelong friends from the various churches. The Amarillo location provided a new pastoral challenge never faced by Mike before. He was asked to start a congregation from scratch. Ten years later with a fairly large membership of worshipers and a wonderful new phase one church building, Mike was able to see something happen that only with God's help could ever be accomplished. Being such a sports lover, the opportunity came available to move to the Dallas/Ft Worth area that Mike called the Sports capitol of the world. The Cowboy's and Ranger's were teams he followed with great loyalty. He loved the area so much that after inheriting a small amount from the estate of Pauline's mother,

they decided, for the first time in their lives, to live in a new home of their design and style. Much thought and planning went into the new house in Grand Prairie, TX. Every detail was scrutinized by Mike as he was exacting and particular about everything he did. The selection of the brick name (frosted cake) shows that after working 46 years in the war zone of the church, he wanted his dream home to be the frosting on the cake. The Duncanville Church decided to reduce the funding for a pastor and though disappointed, Mike took this like a man. Since he was of an age to retire, he decided to do so. Mike, however, hadn't exhausted or was finished with his creative need so he took an interim position in a small town in north Texas. Mike's employment abilities always included the use of the computer to create web pages, newsletters and PowerPoint presentations. Several of the former churches Mike pastored continue to use the web pages and newsletter formats he designed. Mike loved music and brought new life to every congregation by blending contemporary Christian music with familiar hymns. When appropriate music couldn't be found for a topic he was speaking on, he would compose both words and music to accomplish the theme he wanted. He certainly will be remembered for his funeral meditations specific to the person who passed away as well as the wedding rehearsals and wedding services he performed. It can never be said that there was a dull moment when Mike had anything to do with it. While it can be said that Mike was very exacting and a perfectionist in his work and creative in everything he did, he did not work all the time. His leisure time would include reading such novelist as James Patterson, Clive Cussler to name a few and religious authors such as Phillip Yancy, C.S. Lewis and many others. On days off, he tried to see a movie and paid particular attention to find a way to weave and incorporate some moral lesson in a sermon illustration. Mike was called on to speak to groups and organizations such as the Lyons Club that he belonged to and supported fully. Mike loved his beloved dogs and they knew when he came home every day, his first routine would be to give them a treat which made them feel loved and special to him. Michael would probably want to be

remembered as being a person who loved the people he served in churches he pastored. He wanted people to direct their praise and worship to God and live a closer relationship with Him. He wanted every worship experience to be more of God and less of self, be fresh and uplifting, never just a time to go through hoops but to leave with a new love for Christ. The words of the prayer written by St. Francis of Assisi seemed a very good way Mike wanted to live and treat others. Mike had a good sense of humor and viewed life optimistically. Mike took pride in the way he dressed, everything coordinated and tasteful whether it be casual or business attire. He certainly will be remembered for his hats of every style, shape and color, an appropriate hat for every season, wanting his head warm in the colder weather and protected from the sun in warmer weather. Mike wouldn't deny the fact that he liked nice things and enjoyed electronic enhancements to daily life and wanted to be as current as possible with these new advancements. If Mike had any regrets, it probably would be that he never got to experience retirement and do the things he couldn't do while working. Mike felt a strong tie to Ireland and wanted to visit and play golf there. Mike wishes he could have known his three grandchildren but did get to see all of them. He fought his illness with a fierce fight primarily because he wanted to be able to enjoy the love of his wife and partner longer. Michael was bigger than life to his wife and children. Those who survive him are the love of his life, his wife, Pauline. His children and step children are Gail Brasfield, David Pearson, Travis Oden and Mylissa Jordan. His grandchildren include Cassandra Ratcliff, Aimee Orr, John and Matthew Philips, Taylor and Sydney Oden and Taylor Jordan. His mother is Ruth Oden; siblings are Christine (Lynn) Jamison and Forrest Oden (Marlene), a niece and three nephews and their children, as well of a host of good friends. The family is forever grateful for the faithful friendship and compassion shown to Mike by Roy and Patty McAlester during the long journey of his illness. Memorial contributions can be made to Arlington Internet Ministries, 4409 Pleasantview Drive, Arlington, TX 76017

Tribute Wall

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“ *Michael Clyde Oden also had a granddaughter that was named after him. Michelle Lynn Oden (daughter of his son Travis Oden) and a great grandson Aiden Cash Rascon. Not that they matter to the Oden family. Just thought I'd set the facts straight. He was no saint.*

Brenna Felix - November 05, 2023 at 06:01 PM