



## Michael Hayes

August 18, 1936 - November 14, 2021

Wow, where to start? My Dad, Michael Joseph Hayes died at Sonoma Hospital in Sebastopol on November 14 following a car accident in August with a city of Concord police vehicle. Mike was born August 18, 1936, in Seattle, Washington to native Benicia Nicholas Hayes and Helen Kavetski Hayes. Nick had gone to Seattle to find work during the Great Depression and that is where he met and married Helen. There they had four boys: James, Jack, Mike, and Jerry. Just prior to the start of WW2 they moved back to Benicia when Nick started working at Mare Island Naval Shipyard.

My Dad Michael attended St. Catherine's Academy in Benicia and St. Vincent's High School in Vallejo graduating in 1954. While at St. Catherine's, Mike would meet his future wife Angela Lynch during her brief stay in Benicia while her father worked at the Benicia Arsenal. Twenty years later Mike's Mom Helen and Angela's Mom Katherine reconnected and had Mike and Angela meet again. They married in very short order in August 1969, bought a home on Howard Avenue in Vallejo and bore one child, Michael Joseph Hayes in 1972.

Growing up in Benicia in the old family home on the 300 block of East I during the 1940s and 1950s Mike became interested in the railroad while watching the trains go back and forth along the waterfront. He decided to make that his career. Graduating St. Vincent's High School Mike wanted to join the US Army transportation corps to become a locomotive engineer. So, the army put him in the infantry. Back in 1955 medical screening for the military occurred during

basic training. When the army found out Mike had been born without an upper palate, the army doctors said they could only do corrective surgery if he decided to make a career of the army. So my Dad promptly decided to return to civilian life. Within weeks of his medical discharge in 1955, Mike was hired by the Southern Pacific railroad where he would work for the next 42 years. His first two years on the railroad were his most favorite working as a fireman/assistant engineer driving old oil-fired steam locomotives before they were replaced by diesel electrics. Mike drove locomotives in San Francisco at Mission Bay and Bayshore, at Watsonville, San Luis Obispo, LA, Yuma and Bisbee Arizona and El Paso Texas. He earned the nickname Boomer by his coworkers. Around 1968 Mike became a clerk/telegrapher for SP and worked at train stations in the Bay Area including Lombard/Napa Junction, Suisun, Ozol, and Oakland finally retiring from SP headquarters in San Francisco in 1997. His last year of employment was with Union Pacific Railroad. In 2013, after many years living in Vallejo, Mike with his son moved back to the old family home in Benicia. Dad was so happy coming back to the little house he grew up in.

At an early age Mike became interested in local and world history as well as his Irish and Polish family genealogy. He also studied books on Russian history at a time when it was not popular to be interested in such topics. Mike loved books and was an avid collector wanting to eventually open a used bookstore: a dream never fulfilled. Charity work was also a hallmark of my dad. Mike was past president of the St Vincent de Paul Society at St. Basil's Church in Vallejo. Also, during the 1980s he was the volunteer manager of the St. Basil's Elementary School library. In the 1970s and 1980s he was a founding member and past president of the Benicia Historical Society. From 2001 Mike was a volunteer and past president of the Sutter Solano Hospital Volunteer Guild. Over the years Mike also worked with the Benicia City Cemetery Restoration Committee which included his work in publishing several survey books on the old California pioneer cemetery. Most recently, this past year, my dad had been writing short history articles for the Benicia

Herald newspaper. About 40 of these short stories had been published and he was working on many more when this tragic car accident occurred.

Mike was preceded in death by his wife Angela, his parents, and his brother Jack. He is survived by his son, Michael, his oldest brother Fr James Hayes O.P. and his youngest brother Jerry Hayes in addition to many relatives.

My Dad could not be the man he was born to be, but he adapted. He developed a unique and practical intuitive insight into human nature which will be sorely missed by his son. I always valued and learned from my dad's insight and intellect. His love, devotion to history, Catholic faith, and charity as well as hard work made him the great man he is.

I could not ask for better parents than Michael and Angela Hayes.

Viewing for Michael will be held on Monday, November 22 from 3:00 to 6:00 pm at Passalacqua Funeral Chapel 901 West 2nd Street, Benicia. Vigil will be held on Monday, November 22, at 7:00 pm at St. Dominic's Catholic Church 475 East I Street Benicia. A Mass of Christian Burial will be held on Tuesday, November 23, at 11:30 am at St. Dominic's Catholic Church, burial will follow immediately after the service at St. Dominic's Cemetery 585 Hillcrest Ave. Benicia.

Arrangements under the care of Passalacqua Funeral Chapel. In lieu of flowers the family would like donations to be made in the name of Michael Hayes to the Benicia Historical Society, P.O. Box 2393, Benicia CA 94510

# Cemetery Details

## St. Dominic's Cemetery

Hillcrest Avenue & East 5th Street  
Benicia, CA 94510

# Previous Events

## Viewing

NOV **22**. 3:00 PM - 6:00 PM (PT)

Passalacqua Funeral Chapel  
901 W Second Street  
Benicia, CA 94510  
(707) 745-3130  
info@passalacquafuneralchapel.com  
<https://www.passalacquafuneralchapel.com>

## Vigil

NOV **22**. 7:00 PM.

St. Dominic'S Catholic Church

## Mass of Christian Burial

NOV **23**. 11:30 AM.

St. Dominic'S Catholic Church

# Tribute Wall



“ *Michael Hayes*

November 29, 2022 at 08:20 PM



“ *Magnificent Life Spray was purchased for the family of Michael Hayes.*



November 20, 2021 at 03:52 PM



“ *21 files added to the album Life Tributes*



**Passalacqua Funeral Chapel** - November 17, 2021 at 07:08 PM



“ 11 files added to the album *Life Tributes*



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**Passalacqua Funeral Chapel** - November 16, 2021 at 06:56 PM

ME

“ *Benicia's loss of another historian. Michael was so special to talk to and to solve special mysteries of our local cemeteries! I have always known the family members and been around for family events over the years. He was kind and gave his all to his parish, his community and his friends, and adored his family. I send my heartfelt sympathy to all who knew Michael, and I know there is a special reunion going on in heaven as we say goodbye to him.*  
*Marie Earp*

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**Marie Earp** - November 16, 2021 at 03:35 PM