**Michael Gumiela**

Michael Gumiela, 52, of Long Prairie passed away on December 21, 2022 in Saint Cloud, MN. A celebration of his life will be held from 10:00 AM - 2:00 PM Saturday, June 3, 2023 at the Cedar Lake Memorial Park Pavilion, 1736 Abaca Road, Burtrum, MN 56318.

Michael Anthony Gumiela was born March 16, 1970 to Czeslaw and Lois (Pepin) Gumiela in Coon Rapids. In his youth his family moved to Long Prairie where he graduated from high school. Afterward, he joined the US Navy. Having served four years and traveled extensively serving as a Naval Aviation Warfare Systems Operator (AW) assigned to squadron VS-29 and Naval Air Crewman on three aircraft carriers he was honorably discharged. He then attended Moorhead State University where he earned a Bachelor of Arts in Education. He secured a position teaching English at his alma mater, Long Prairie Grey Eagle High School.

Michael became interested in learning about his family’s history in eastern Europe and, with help from his father, began meeting family members living in Ukraine. After traveling throughout the country for several years, he moved to Odessa to teach English as a Second Language at the London School of English for nearly a decade. Teaching, spending time with family, developing enduring friendships, and immersing himself into Ukrainian culture was extremely rewarding for him. He returned to Minnesota in 2014 to pursue a graduate degree. While attending St. Cloud State University, he was again hired to teach at Long Prairie Grey Eagle High School. In 2021, Michael earned his Masters Degree Teaching English as a Second Language, which was an important milestone in his life.

Michael was a true teacher at heart. His love of the arts & humanities, extensive travel, diverse work experience, and sharp wit enabled him to provide a unique and invaluable perspective on the world to his students. He loved language and often illustrated his lessons and conversations with rich metaphor and creative word play. Michael deeply valued hearing words of support and appreciation from his students, and he frequently showed his loved ones letters of gratitude he received from past students. One of his greatest joys was knowing the positive influence he had on young people’s lives.

Michael was also a passionate motorhead. From a young age he expressed his artistic talent building detailed models of cars and naval ships, experience that later evolved into him wrenching on muscle cars. He loved going to car shows and drag races, and he took meticulous care of his classic cars, trucks, and motorcycles, excitedly awaiting the first drive or ride of spring. He loved to ride his motorcycle. Friendships and bonds to fellow riders with the Combat Veterans Motorcycle Association were especially important to him. Michael also had great respect for the outdoors and enjoyed hunting, fishing, camping, and hiking with his loved ones.

Michael is survived by his father Czeslaw of Hibbing; brother Joshua of Minneapolis; uncles John (Sylvia) Pepin of Blaine, Jim (Elaine) Pepin of Elk River, David (Jan) Pepin of Helena, MT, Stefan Gumiela of Columbia Heights, and aunt Halina Gumiela of Kankakee, IL.

He is preceded in death by his mother Lois, aunt Alice Pepin, and aunt Tess Gumiela.

Williams Dingmann Family Funeral Homes, Stein Chapel has been entrusted with arrangements.