

It truly bothers me when I have to use this article as an obituary. Not because they are hard to write, but because it means that we have lost a brother.

As many of you know, we recently lost Brother Mike Reynolds. I first met Mike when we were students at Fresno City College around 1962. I then went to Fresno State College and lost contact with Mike. It wasn't until late in 1967 when I was initiated at Las Palmas that I got reacquainted with him and also met his brother John. At that time they were also taking their degrees. While we never had any degrees on the same night, back then all of us attended all of the meetings at Lodge that we were entitled to attend.

Around the first of April of 1968, I got a phone call from then Master, Len Gottner, that John and Mike could not be raised on April 11th as it was Maundy Thursday and their father, Bob, would be active in the Maundy Thursday services at Scottish Rite. I had no conflicts so I jumped ahead of John and Mike and got my 3rd degree on that night. Three weeks later, both John and Mike received their 3rd degrees in Las Palmas. Since there were two third degrees, Lodge had to open around 4:00 pm and there were barely enough members present to confer the first of the two degrees. WM Len Gottner asked me to be the Chaplain for the first of the degrees and while I was nervous, I was very pleased to partake. For the second candidate, most of our Past Masters helped confer the degree as Bob Reynolds was a Past Master (1959).

Through all of the years that I have been a member of Las Palmas, Brother Mike took an active part in the degrees and in later years he helped in the kitchen. He and his wife attended almost every Stated Meet dinner.

When I was in the officer's line back in the 1970's, I once got a phone call from Mike asking if I wanted a ride to Lodge that night. I said "sure" and when I walked out of my house wearing my Tux, there to my surprise was Mike in his classic Rolls Royce. He had recently bought it for use in his wedding photography business. What a thrill for me to ride to and from Lodge in such a vehicle.

In June of 1992, Mike's 18 year old daughter, Kimber, was standing on the sidewalk in front of a restaurant called The Daily Planet which was part of the Tower Theater Building. Kimber was shot and killed by two career criminals (repeat offenders) who were high on heroin when they tried to steal her purse. Several days after Kimber's shooting, the shooter was shot and killed by police while trying to be arrested. The other killer avoided a life sentence by pleading to a robbery charge as he did not fire the fatal shot.

Mike soon gathered members of law enforcement and launched his proposal of a "Three Strikes and You're Out" law which mandated tougher sentences for repeat offenders in California. After much work, on March 7, 1994, Governor Wilson signed into law AB 971 which is referred to as the Three Strikes and You're Out criminal sentencing measure. During 1994, eleven other states and our Federal Government adopted versions of Three Strikes and You're Out. In 1995 ten more states also adopted it. Today, there are 29 states with this law.

Because of Mike's hard work and dedication to his daughter, Kimber, there are many repeat offenders serving mandatory sentences of 25 years to Life in our California prisons. In the first four years after Mike's Three Strikes law went into effect, California experienced its all-time largest crime reduction which nearly doubled the declines seen across the rest of the nation. The number of homicides was cut in half, giving the state its lowest murder rate since 1970.

In 1998, Brother Mike was declared Mason of the Year by our Grand Lodge. In 2019, Brother Mike was awarded the Grand Master's Lifetime Achievement Award.

If you were watching the news on channel 24, you heard that Mike was 97 years old. Of course this was incorrect. Mike had only had 19 real birthdays. I always made it a point every 4 years to call him and wish him a Happy Birthday.

Mike's family has asked me to be the Funeral Master for his funeral to be held on August 5th at the Saroyan Auditorium. I am truly honored with this request. How could I have ever imagined in my wildest dreams that when I first met Mike that over 65 years later Mike would have accomplished what he had done and that I would have the honor of doing his funeral.

Now that you are with your Kimber, may you both rest in eternal peace.

