



Dr. Michael Robert Nihill

January 18, 1936 - February 10, 2023

Dr. Michael Robert Nihill. On Friday February 10 at 4.30 a.m., at the age of 87, Michael passed away peacefully.

He is survived by his wife, Ilsa Nihill, they were married for 57 years; his daughter, Amanda; his sister and brother, Caroline and John; his grandchildren, Thomas and Ella. His daughter Alisen passed away in July 2022.

Michael was born in Haberfield, Australia. He and Ilsa migrated to the U.S. in 1968. He started working as a pediatric cardiologist at Texas Children's Hospital, where he remained until retirement at the age of 81. He achieved many accolades as a doctor and professor at Baylor College of Medicine. He

was a humble and kind soul, admired by many colleagues, patients and friends, for his intelligence, wit and kindness. The family would like to thank Dr. Anthony Gunawan for his dedication in assisting Michael over the years and in the recent illness until his passing. The family will hold a private ceremony at a later date.

If you wish to donate in memorium, please donate to The Heart Center at Texas Children's Hospital.

Tribute Wall

JN

“ Q: How did you meet Dr. Michael?

A: He was my cardiologist from birth in 1977.

Jeff Nichols - June 06, 2025 at 10:52 AM

DM

“ Wow, sitting here thinking about Dr. Nihill, so thought I would get online only to learn that he is amongst the angels now. I worked for him at TX Children's in the late 90s. I enjoyed working for him. He was kind, funny and well-respected. My deepest condolences to his family.

Denise Hopewell (formerly Middleton) - March 18, 2025 at 10:01 PM

JO

“ As the other Australians in Houston in 1972-3 we remember Mike as a friend and great doctor.

We have so many happy memories of Mike's humour and personality during our time there. Our sympathy to Ilsa and family. love Gregg and Jenny O'Neill, Sydney.

jenny O'Neill - November 23, 2024 at 10:44 PM

JT

“ I had the privilege to work with Mike in the Cath Lab in Riyadh Saudi Arabia as a Nurse assisting him in procedures. He did several locums with us as did Tom Vargo, Chuck Mullins and others from Texas Children’s Hospital.

As a fellow Aussie he was always keen for a barbi and a Violet Crumble Bar (Australian honeycomb chocolate that he missed.) His skill with a catheter, sense of humour and patience was always appreciated. We were very lucky to have him with us in the Cath lab !

Condolences to his family and friends.

See you in the big Cath Lab and I’ll bring the Vitamin K.

Jill Thomas

Jill Thomas - August 29, 2024 at 11:10 PM

AC

“ Dr. Nihill will always have a special place in my heart as a kind man. I worked at Texas Children’s Hospital with him and many others who are now aging and/or passed away since I left nearly 29 years ago.

I will cherish his kindness and smile and his chuckle. He was one of a kind and a hard worker who I admired.

My deepest condolences and heartfelt sympathy to his entire family. I know that we can be together forever and am grateful for a loving Savior, His Atonement and his mercy and grace. It does matter what we do and how we treat each other in this life. I’m so grateful to know these things. May you find peace and comfort in knowing his deep love for you all.

Aimee Cowart - November 18, 2023 at 11:21 PM

BW

“*DEAR Michael, so sad to hear of your death, only yesterday I heard of your sister Dr Caroline also dying. You were a wonderful medical family. Your dad a country doctor must have been the template for you both. I have wonderful memories of you and all the parties we had when you were at Sydney Uni and I was a nurse at Childrens hospital. Those days will stay with me forever. As a student it was a inevitable you ended up being paediatrician. Thank you for being a sensational doctor and all those years ago a wonderful friend to me. I am sure God has put you way up in heaven with all the best of the best. You had a life of giving and were loved by all. I will miss just knowing you were alive, My heart goes out to your family. God bless them. Barbi Wurth*

Barbi Wurth - October 08, 2023 at 07:59 PM

JH

“*Janee Hebert lit a candle What an unexpected notification to stumble on regarding Dr. Nihill, who was my former boss. Sending my deepest sympathies and heartfelt condolences to his family.*



Janee Hebert - May 02, 2023 at 12:00 AM

KS

“*Such a wonderful wonderful man and doctor. My daughter started seeing him at the age of 5, and she is 26 now. He is one of the reasons that she is at UT McGovern heading to her dream of being a pediatric cardiologist.. peace to the family*

Kelli Stevens - March 29, 2023 at 08:48 AM

MS

“Mason Stevens lit a candle I only knew Dr. Nihill in the context of being a phenomenal physician. As one of his patients from infancy to 18-years-old, I can truly say that he not only changed, but saved my life. He made each and every patient and their families feel so truly listened to and cared for. Among all his other academic and scientific achievements, the one most important to me was the extra time he took to explain all the complex things to me so I could understand even from a young age. Now, as a fourth year medical student at McGovern, I sit and write my personal statement as I get ready to apply to pediatric residency (with the aspiration to become a pediatric cardiologist), and he plasters my entire statement because of what an amazing physician he was. I am so grateful for the care he provided me, and my condolences extend out so sincerely to his family and friends. I just wanted to share that his memory will always be carried on with me and into my practice as I progress into residency and fellowship as I'm sure it will many of his other patients as well. My parents and I are so grateful for everything he did for us, and our love and support go out to those who love and supported him.



Mason Stevens - March 29, 2023 at 12:00 AM

TF

“The most generous man, and a great teacher of fellows

I can remember him now, stating, as he rushed into the Cath Lab with the Fellow Cathing “and the wedge pressure is “

Made that kind, docile, soul, rest in peace

Thomas Forbes - March 22, 2023 at 07:49 PM

SW

“Mike Nihill’s Irish ancestors would be proud of him. He was a lovely man.

As good a friend as anyone could wish for, he was kind, generous, loyal - and funny. He had the readiest wit of anyone I’ve ever met, with an extraordinary ability to instantly come up with a pun or one liner to suit the occasion.

It is heartwarming to read the tributes from his former students. He must have been a wonderful teacher. As a friend he was always keen to share and encourage one’s interests and enthusiasms and to help unstintingly with technical or practical problems.

The times I have spent, over the past fifty odd years, with Mike, Ilze, Amanda and Alisen have been among the happiest of my life.

My deepest condolences to his family and all who grieve for him.

Thank you, Mike. I shall never forget you.

Susan

Susan Welch - March 09, 2023 at 01:29 PM

LB

“Linda Borg lit a candle My deepest condolences on the loss of Dr. Nihill. He was my son’s Pediatric Cardiologist since my son was a toddler. He took care of him well into my son’s adult years. A finer pedi cardiologist could not be found. Kind, incredibly skilled, and had a wonderful sense of humor. May he forever R.I.P.



Linda Borg - March 07, 2023 at 12:00 AM

GP

“Giles Wesley Vick, III MD, PhD lit a candle I am deeply saddened about the death of my friend and mentor Dr. Mike Nihill. Those of us who were fortunate enough to have been tutored by him in Pediatric Cardiology will always be profoundly grateful for his exceptional teaching and for his expert and kind guidance. But our regret should be tempered with celebration of a life well lived. Dr. Nihill made multiple major contributions to medicine, particularly in pediatric cardiac catheterization. He was a polymath, and designed an electronic medical records system that was years ahead of its time. Dr. Nihill had substantial educational achievements, training many, many Pediatric Cardiology fellows from around the world who continue to advance our field. Dr. Nihill was a superb clinician, and skillfully managed thousands of patients over his long career. He was also a wonderful colleague and companion, and was always friendly, humble, and unassuming, despite his great intelligence and many accomplishments. So we will miss Dr. Mike, but take joy in his life lived in the service of humanity. May God Bless him and his family. "Well done, thou good and faithful servant".
Wes Vick



Giles Wesley Vick, III MD, PhD - February 24, 2023 at 12:00 AM

RC

“Radha Cohen lit a candle Dr. Nihill was an exceptional and wonderful physician and person. I was fortunate to have known him. He brought so much wisdom and humor to every situation. Rest in Peace, MRN.



Radha Cohen - February 21, 2023 at 12:00 AM

DN

“ *Danielle Nihill lit a candle Vale, Uncle Mike xo*



Danielle Nihill - February 19, 2023 at 12:00 AM

AM

“ *Amanda lit a candle It fills my broken heart with pride to read the comments about my Dad. To me and my sister, who he joined in his passing, he was a hero who loved a good pun. I admit I put him on a pedestal - and he never wavered off. I admire him, am proud to be his daughter, he was not only all the things people have said, he was a beautiful father. Im so lucky. Even in the hospital in the last weeks, he was asking how I was, how Mom was. See you again one day Dad. Thank you all for posting. - Amanda*



Amanda - February 19, 2023 at 12:00 AM

CM

“It’s hard to put into words just how much Dr. Nihill meant to all of us. He was a special person, charismatic, warm and self deprecating. He loved Ilsa and his family so much and the weekends at the beach house. He trained with many giants of cardiology in both Australia and London before moving to Texas Childrens hospital. He was a huge support to all the fellows and faculty. He loved the cath lab and all the staff there. So many witticisms.. snickers and cola for lunch, echo schmecko, a fortuitous concadenation of shadows...and a few others I can’t mention.. he was a true original. A small part of us all died when Mike passed away. But how lucky were we to bask in his warmth and sunshine while we had him. We all loved you Mike. Safe trip my friend.

Colin McMahon - February 18, 2023 at 06:11 PM

WF

“Wayne J. Franklin lit a candle As we all know, Dr. Mike Nihill was a true original. Whether he was making a diagnosis with his stethoscope, or reciting one of his famous phrases (“To cath is to cure” or “Echo schmecko”), or walking the halls and saying “Age before beauty” and then letting me walk through the door first. I fondly remember him almost always chewing gum to hide his “coffee” breath. He was a true gentleman, physician, and professor. it was an honor to be trained by him, and to have worked with him. He will be forever remembered.



Wayne J. Franklin - February 18, 2023 at 12:00 AM

AJ

“Aamir Jeewa lit a candle I count myself fortunate to have worked with Dr. Nihill for the time I was at TCH. A true gentleman with an amazing sense of humor. One of the giants of cardiology. His ears were probably sharper than any echo machine ("echo schmecko"). He will be dearly missed and will be in our thoughts and prayers.



Aamir Jeewa - February 18, 2023 at 12:00 AM

TV

“It has been great seeing all of the notes about Michael here on this site and on social media posts. He has been my friend for 55 years. We worked together for 50+ years. He was a fantastic teacher. His trainees learned a lot about being a superb physician from him. His patients were treated kindly by him, he always did whatever he could to help them. He absolutely deserved the tributes his trainees, patients, coworkers, and friends have written about him since his passing.

I hope many of you can come to his Celebration of Life (not yet scheduled) - we will have many positive stories to tell each other about this truly outstanding physician and person.

Tom Vargo

Thomas A Vargo - February 17, 2023 at 05:25 PM

MR

“ Mitch Recto lit a candle I will never forget Dr. Nihill, from the very first time that I met him in 1996 when he drove me to dinner and because we were late he was driving a bit fast and overtaking cars at a pretty fast clip. We or rather Mike managed to knock off the passenger side view mirror of his car! I almost passed out but Mike was unperturbed and we made it to dinner and had a great night. To this day whenever I use a Goodale Lubin (GL) catheter I remember Mike fondly as he liked to start almost all of his catheterizations with this catheter (for reference Dr Mullins preferred an NIH or Cardiomarker catheter), as fellows we better knew who we were cathing with and more importantly use the correct catheter! Mike was also very generous and lent the fellows his beach house on Galveston island. I remember him saying that one day it would become beachfront property! He liked to dabble on a lot of things including the Cardiology EMR. I like the rest of the TCH family will miss him dearly.



Mitch Recto - February 17, 2023 at 12:00 AM

RC

“ We will miss Mike at our Saturday Mexican breakfast at Mi Abueleta in Galveston. He always was cheerful and added some interesting conversations. Ron Coker

Ron Coker - February 16, 2023 at 07:41 PM

GR

“ I always found Michael to be the consummate gentleman. He was engaging, charming, witty and so pleasant to be around. My condolences to his family. He will be sorely missed. Rest in Peace, dear, sweet man.

Gerard Resseque - February 16, 2023 at 05:38 PM

DG

“ I had the privilege of working with Dr. Nihill for many years when I started in the cath lab. I’m so lucky to have been the beneficiary of his kindness, his expertise in our field, and most of all, his humor. I take the many lessons he taught me with me every day, and I will miss him. My sincere condolences to the Nihill family in this time of great loss.

David Gebo - February 16, 2023 at 10:32 AM

CE

“ Chris Erickson lit a candle Mike was a true class act mixing his primary dedication to the patient, use of every teaching moment, and blending in some humor as well. He was one of my favorites when I was in fellowship. My favorite quote:

“There are lies, damn lies, and echos” - M. Nihill



Chris Erickson - February 16, 2023 at 12:00 AM

PS

“ As one of Mike’s many trainee’s he taught me not only pediatric cardiology. He introduced me to “gin and bitters” at my bachelor party and recounted tales of his time as a ship’s doctor. One of a kind! He will be missed. God Bless.

Paul Seib - February 15, 2023 at 06:57 PM

DM

“Dean McKenzie lit a candle As a young congenital heart surgeon my first job was at Texas Children’s Hospital where great cardiologists like Dan McNamara, Mike Nihill, Chuck Mullins and many others pioneered advances in pediatric cardiology. They were accustomed to working with the likes of Denton Cooley et al and didn’t suffer fools lightly. Dr Nihill however, being the consummate gentleman, accepted this “wet behind the ears” surgeon as a colleague, mentored me and made me believe that someday I would accomplish great things like he and his colleagues had. His legacy lives on in all the pediatric cardiologists he trained and in his patients, whose lives were made better because of him. With great admiration, Dean McKenzie



Dean McKenzie - February 15, 2023 at 12:00 AM

DP

“Dan Penny lit a candle I will always remember how as a trainee in The UK and Australia reading about the enormous advances that were being made in our field by TCH legends like the late, great Dr Nihill. Little did I think that one day he would even know who I was, not to mind that I would get to work with him and be his friend. I will be forever grateful to Mike for his graciousness and kindness to me when I eventually came to work at TCH. I remember thinking ‘What a classy, humble man’. We miss the great doctor that was Mike Nihill, we miss the great innovator that was Mike Nihill, we miss his smile, his sense of humor and most of all his humanity. God Bless you Mike Nihill. Echo schmecko.



Dan Penny - February 15, 2023 at 12:00 AM

AG

“ A Gunawan lit a candle I first met Dr Nihill when I was cardiology fellow in Texas Heart institute. Dr Nihill is good physician and educator , his smile and humor impressed me He worked until he was 81, he served his calling as good physician I am honored to know him and talked to him until late in his life May god bless his family A Gunawan MD



A Gunawan - February 15, 2023 at 12:00 AM