



## Michael E. Heath

December 1, 2018

Michael Emerson Heath, age 76, passed away peacefully at home on November 24, 2018. He is survived by his wife Deborah (nee Longo) and, from a previous marriage, sons Michael and Marcellus and four grandchildren. Also surviving are sister Dorothy Jones (James), sister Jeannie Skelton-Mays, and numerous nieces and nephews. Michael was preceded in death by his parents William Heath and Doris Skelton, stepfather Morris Skelton, brother Donald, sister Faye, and brother Arthur. Michael was always very charismatic. His mother used to often say, "He could sell snow to an Eskimo." He was also a meticulous dresser. Even as a young boy, he would iron his jeans to get a crisp crease. As an Eagle Scout, he would starch and bleach his spats to ensure that they were always impeccable and gleaming. Blessed with a beautiful singing voice, Michael loved performing in operettas at East High School in Columbus, Ohio, where he was also the star quarterback of their football team. After high school, Michael served in the U.S. Air Force. There, he fought on the USAF boxing team in the flyweight, featherweight, and lightweight classes, where he broke many records and won many championships, including the PACAF, PANAM, and Golden Gloves. He achieved the boxing honor of wearing white boots in the ring, and he held that honor for a record amount of time. While in the USAF, he was the crew chief for a C130 reconnaissance airplane stationed in Japan, which flew over the Aleutian Islands, among others. His USAF barracks usually ranked first in the daily inspections, which he credited to the iguana that he cleverly enlisted to

roam the premises and keep it bug-free. Overseas, Michael and his beloved dog Doughboy won several awards in dog shows. During training to represent the USAF in the Olympics, he broke his hand while sparring, thus ending his boxing career. In the early 1970s, he intervened in a robbery in a Cleveland restaurant and saved some lives. A couple of marriages, a couple of children, and a couple of jobs later, he attended Cuyahoga Community College, which is where he met Deborah. He soon became captain of the school tennis team. After college, he joined T.J. Maxx as a stock boy, which was a new clothing chain store that had just come to town. Using his stellar organizational skills, he created systems and procedures to maximize stockroom efficiency. He quickly rose from stock boy to head of the stockroom, and on through the ranks, eventually becoming a district manager. Michael was a captivating extemporaneous speaker, so for quite a while, he traveled around the country giving motivational speeches at company meetings about how it is possible to have such a meteoric rise within the company. In 1988, a stroke rendered him an invalid, and he was lovingly cared for since then by his wife of 30 years, Deborah.

# Tribute Wall

RU

“ *May it give you comfort to know others share your loss.*

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**Ruth** - December 08, 2018 at 07:56 AM

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“ *I am so sorry to hear of Michael's passing. I worked with him at National Life & Accident in the late '60's early 70's, he was so proud of his sporty red car. His energy and charisma were unsurpassed.*

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**Susan Lewis** - December 06, 2018 at 08:25 PM