



# Michael Aaron Newhams

February 28, 1967 - December 30, 2025

Michael Newhams, 58, passed peacefully with his family by his side on December 30th, following a relentless battle against declining health brought on by the long-term effects of cancer treatment he received 40 years ago. He was born February 28, 1967, in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, to the late Patricia A. Newhams and Thomas H. Newhams. Mike grew up in Norwalk, Connecticut, graduating with a Bachelor of Science degree in Physiology and Neurobiology from the University of Connecticut (boy did he love watching Husky basketball!) and a Master of Science degree in Education from the University of Bridgeport. Following graduation, Mike embarked on a lifelong career dedicated to education, beginning with 4 years at The Carlisle School in Martinsville, Virginia. In 1997, Mike and his wife Joan moved to Sarasota, Florida, where they made their permanent home, and where he became a member of the faculty of The Out-of-Door Academy for the past 28 years. Teaching high school science to the students of ODA, through his enthusiastic, infectious, and often humorous approach to his work he sought to instill an excitement and curiosity for science in each and every student. In fact, Mike was repeatedly told that he inspired many former students to pursue careers in the sciences. He will long be remembered by those students, both past and present, as well as his many close friends and colleagues at ODA.

The greatest joy in Mike's life came from raising his children, Kinsey and Ryan, who are thriving young adults with the same passion for life and building strong friendships that Mike enjoyed. Mike was a lifelong musician who shared his love for music with both of them as well as the ODA community at the annual Thunderpalooza talent shows. Both Kinsey and Ryan have followed in Mike's footsteps by pursuing careers they are passionate about, inspired by his love of learning and music. Mike was the epitome of a proud dad, simply elated to watch his kids grow and discover their own passions. In recent years, Mike was thrilled to be able to travel to Europe, to visit each of them during their college semesters abroad in Italy and France. Despite the challenges presented by his health issues, Mike was fortunate to be able to fully enjoy these European adventures and other trips through hiking, climbing, and touring with Kinsey and Ryan, adding to their lasting memories of him.

Mike's passion for life included forging scores of lifelong friendships that he treasured. When healthy, Mike was always on the move, enjoying life through his love of golf, boating, 6 a.m. Tuesday morning hoops with his ODA colleagues, partying with the Alpine crew, populating the infamous "Mr. Newhams student quote wall", kayaking through the Sarasota mangroves, holiday decorating (or overdecorating?) his house, and, especially, hosting his annual Dirty Santa Christmas party, where "what happened at the Dirty Santa Party stayed at the Dirty Santa Party!"

Mike is survived by his daughter Kinsey, son Ryan, and Jo Pisaniello, all of Sarasota, brother Jeff and wife Kaisa of Norwalk, Connecticut, brother Kevin and wife Sakina of Cleveland, Ohio, sister Maggie of Boston, Massachusetts, aunt Jerri Altenhof of Orange City, Florida, aunt Bobbie Knapp of Citrus Heights, California, as well as scores of extended family, great friends, and the ODA community whose lives he touched. The family would like to extend our heartfelt thanks to the many physicians and nurses who cared for Mike in recent years, especially Dr. Hakim Morsli.

A visitation will be held at Toale Brothers Colonial Chapel in Sarasota on January 31, 2026 from 9:00am to 12:00pm.

In lieu of flowers, memorial contributions can be made to First Tee Sarasota/Manatee at [www.firstteesarasotamanatee.org](http://www.firstteesarasotamanatee.org).

We love you, Mike.

# Previous Events

## Visitation

JAN 31. 9:00 AM - 12:00 PM (ET)

Toale Brothers Funeral Home & Crematory - Colonial Chapel

40 N. Orange Avenue

Sarasota, FL 34236

(941) 955-4171

[info@toalebrothers.com](mailto:info@toalebrothers.com)

<https://www.toalebrothers.com/>

# Tribute Wall

CM

“ I cannot think of my short time at ODA without thinking about Mike. I was extremely fortunate to be a colleague of Mike’s for three years, working alongside him in the Science Department. While my time with him was short, it did not take long for me to witness a truly dedicated professional in his natural habitat. Mike was committed to and involved in anything that he felt made a student’s experience at ODA greater. You did not even have to ask. If you were chatting casually with him and describing an activity you wanted to plan, he would just say, “I’ll help with that.” Academics, Arts, Athletics, he supported it all. Mike was a Renaissance Teacher. He was a master educator, his knowledge of his content was superb. His pedagogy was an art form. He challenged the brightest students and elevated those who were struggling. He lifted their spirits through humor, and made lasting impressions with them through true open and honest connections. Working with Mike was akin to taking a Master Class in what it meant to be a professional educator. He taught the whole student, making sure that they learned study skills, leadership, time management, responsibility and emotional development.

Thank you Mike, for all the lessons you taught me, the laughs we shared, and the memories I will carry with me forever. Rest in Peace.

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**Cory Militzer** - January 31 at 09:02 AM

JJ

“ It was a true privilege to know and work alongside Mike, a colleague whose talent and dedication touched so many. Mike was not only gifted in his profession, but he also genuinely cared for his students and inspired them to engage deeply with what he taught. His enthusiasm was infectious, whether he was playing his guitar at school events, performing in skits at pep rallies, coaching, or chaperoning field trips. Mike’s school spirit and warmth motivate everyone around him. I was honored to teach both his children, whom he loved dearly, and I witnessed firsthand the pride he took in his family. Mike’s kindness, generosity, and unwavering commitment will be deeply missed by all who had the privilege of knowing him. His legacy lives on the lives he touched over the years.

Joanna Johnson

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**joanna johnson** - January 31 at 12:03 AM

PM

“ I cannot explain how saddened I was to hear of the passing of Mike. The one thing that brought me comfort was to realize and think about how many lives he touched. Mike was a gift to this world, his community, his friends and most importantly his family. My sincerest condolences to Kinsey, Ryan and the rest of his family.

philip meyer - January 26 at 01:17 PM

MW

“ I'll always remember Mr. Newhams' reaction to my Bjorn Borg Halloween costume when I sat down in assembly in the morning - pure laughter as he appreciated the effort and participation I put into that particular school activity. His teaching around understanding material, not just memorizing it, and going back to one's class notes and typing them up as a means of retention, have stayed with me and are ones I am glad to have been taught. God's blessings to Mr. Newhams and his family.

Michael von Waldner - January 26 at 05:53 AM

LP

“ Lisa P. planted a [Memorial Tree](/store/Product.aspx?ProductId=4518) in honor of Michael Aaron Newhams.

Lisa P. - January 23 at 12:22 AM



“ Sweetest Sunrise Bouquet was purchased for the family of Michael Aaron Newhams.



January 17 at 12:00 PM

KS

“ Kelly Vickery, John Vickery, Cam Stenson planted a [Memorial Tree](/store/Product.aspx?ProductId=4518) in honor of Michael Aaron Newhams.

Kelly Vickery, John Vickery, Cam Stenson - January 17 at 12:00 PM



“ Although Mike and I didn’t work together every day, since he taught in the Upper School and I taught in the Middle School, we shared many meaningful moments through school activities. From homecoming pep rallies and spirit days to singing together as part of the Deer Street Boys at Thunderpalooza, Mike brought joy, humor, and kindness to everything he was part of.

*Mike had a profound impact on so many lives, including my own. He was incredibly kind, genuinely funny, and exceptionally intelligent, but what I will remember most was how deeply he cared about his students. He always made time for them, always went the extra mile, and always believed in the good they were capable of. He was the kind of teacher everyone hopes to have and the kind of colleague everyone hopes to work alongside.*

*Mike’s presence made our school a better place, and his legacy will live on through the countless students and colleagues whose lives he touched. He will be deeply missed and fondly remembered.*

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**Dane Gass** - January 15 at 10:20 AM



“ Mike Newhams was an amazing educator and friend. I was extremely saddened to hear the news of his passing, as was the rest of the Dobosz family. I’ve known Mr. Newhams since the high school, now LWR Campus opened. Mike assisted us in the theatre department with construction on many set pieces, taught myself and both of my siblings, and was a dear friend to our family. His legacy lives on every day in the students that he taught to be compassionate, caring, and genuinely kind people. Mike truly is an example of what The Out of Door Academy stands for as an institution. Wishing nothing but peace to the entire family. Rest well Mike.

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**Peter Dobosz** - January 14 at 05:32 PM

AS

“ Our family (Gil, April, Ethan, and Ben) were deeply saddened to hear the news of Mike’s passing. He was an extraordinary teacher who had such a positive impact on both of our boys. He was also a wonderful golf coach to our older son.

*Beyond the classroom and the course, Mike was a true friend to me. During my cancer diagnosis last year, his kindness meant more than I can put into words. He consistently checked in on me and made a point to look out for my boys, always making sure they were doing okay. He was a sweet, caring, and genuinely funny man who cared deeply for his students and the people around him. We will always be grateful for the love and support he showed our family. We will miss him dearly. Our heartfelt condolences go out to his family during this incredibly difficult time.*

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**April Salu** - January 14 at 09:40 AM

KR

“ I worked with Mike for many years and taught his beautiful children. Years later, he met my own boys through class and athletics. This fall Mike went to my oldest and asked him to join the golf team for another year. Brody wasn’t going to play this year but agreed to it. He couldn’t say no to Coach Newhams. And he’s so glad he didn’t say no! I’m so thankful for how Mike impacted our family. His legacy will live on his students.

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**Kelly Rose** - January 13 at 10:39 PM

LA

“ Mr. Newhams was a remarkable, memorable teacher for me and all of my classmates (ODA class of '05). I always looked forward to his class both Freshman year as well as AP Bio. I never would have even taken AP Bio had it not been Mr. Newhams as the teacher! I knew that with his methodology I could not only enjoy the challenge, but pass that test. Mr. Newhams was tough, but so fun. He never hesitated to let us know when we weren't performing up to our potential, or were being just plain silly (and he wrote our most ridiculous quotes on paper, and taped them to the wall for us to laugh at all year). The way he taught was so approachable and digestible. I'll never forget how shocked he was when we asked him to be our teacher speaker at our graduation - always humble - we all adored him. When I ran into him a little over a year ago, he was so excited to see me & my family. He assured me he was in good health and everything was going really well. I was so shocked and sad to hear about his passing - what a massive loss. Sending so much love to his family, friends, and students past & present.

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**Lindsay Anderson** - January 12 at 01:59 PM

DK

“ I took Freshman Biology and AP Bio with Mr. Newhams in 2001 and 2004. I went on to be a biology major in undergrad, got a M.S. in agricultural sciences, and then a Ph.D. in environmental sciences. I’m now the Science Director at a non-profit focused on sustainable agriculture. My whole adult career has been in the sciences, and I credit Mr. Newhams with helping to set me on that path. He not only made biology interesting and accessible, he helped give me the skills and mindset to be a scientist. He cared about the details of the things we were learning. He approached teaching with both breadth and depth, and he was open-minded and curious. He taught me how to study for a test and that persistence matters when studying difficult topics. He was a gifted, natural teacher, and he was fun to be around. I knew that he had battled cancer years ago, and my heart breaks that complications from treatment are what ultimately ended his life. But I’m grateful that our paths crossed and for his influence on me. My condolences and love go to his family and to his friends and colleagues at ODA, particularly his good buddies Mr. Ball and Coach Brewer. Thanks, Mr. Newhams. I’ll miss you.

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**Dan Kane** - January 12 at 12:25 PM

CG

“ Mike had a wickedly great sense of humor, an insatiable curiosity about the world, and the rare quality of being able to gripe about just about anything with a grin and conspirator's appreciation for mischief. These things made him one of the best people to eat lunch with every day on the porch at school. One of my last memories of Mike will be the incredible story he shared in episodes about being in a medically induced coma during a recent hospitalization. He remembered the story in a richness of detail befitting an animated screenplay that you'd see on Netflix, with his family, co-workers, and medical staff playing starring roles. He delighted in storytelling. Besides his innate intellect, Mike's ability to understand and relate his experiences to others also made him a powerful teacher. He was a noticer; he saw things clearly with a storyteller's knack for making meaning. He was an incredible colleague and friend. To his family, who I know are grieving his passing, I hope you can take some small comfort in knowing that Mike Newhams will be alive within the memories of all whose lives he touched, forever.

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**Camela Giraud** - January 11 at 10:43 AM

JR

“ It was a true blessing knowing Mike throughout the years. Our time together started at ODA when I worked with Kinsey in PreK and taught her again in 3rd grade. Ryan came my way in 3rd grade shortly thereafter, so getting to know Mike through his wonderful children was a delight. We then did the switch, as he taught both of my children, exceedingly well, when they made their way through ODA's Upper Campus. The icing on the cake was judging the ODA Thunder Fun Day chili cookoff with Mike and Renee Pitts for several years. Not only was the chili delicious, the time spent together resulted in incessant laughter, which I will never forget. Seeing his sweet smile and recalling how much joy he brought to so many of our lives is a treasure I will hold dear to my heart.

Jane Runge - January 11 at 09:37 AM

NY

“ Mike was a true gem of a human being. I had the honor to work with him and call him a friend. He was the first and only faculty member to sit side-by-side with my piano students as he took "Keyboard I" at ODA. The last couple of years I was fortunate to make music with Mike as part of the Faculty 5 band. His caring and playful personality made him an absolute joy to be around. I will miss his incredible sense of humor, huge smile, and infectious energy.

Nicole P Young - January 10 at 05:19 PM

MD

“ The entire Dobosz Family (Stef, Mark, Peter, Katie and Tim ) express our deepest sorrow and sympathy to the entire Newhams Family. Mike was one of the kindest, caring people we have ever met and are blessed to have been able to have been part of his life and his in ours. He gave us so much of himself and we will never forget working with him, having him teach our kids and working on all the plays with him. We miss him dearly.

mark dobosz - January 10 at 01:21 PM

MS

“ Mike was my biggest advocate as a teacher. He hired me and for that I thank him. I have had the privilege of teaching his amazing children and he has taught mine. He will never be forgotten and his legacy lives on through all the students he has coached, mentored and inspired to enter the biology field!

Ms Sasseti - January 10 at 12:49 PM

LL

“ *My sons, Seth (of blessed memory) and Scott Woolf were students for many years of Mr. Newhams. ODA was fortunate to have had him teaching and influencing our children all those many years. He was a super golf coach, too.*



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**laurie lachowitzer** - January 10 at 12:28 PM

GG

“ *On behalf of my nephews Huy Hoang and Nam Hoang who both were students in Mr Newhams class. Our deepest condolence to family and friends and ODA community. Huy and Nam both have great memories of Mike as a wonderful and kind teacher. He will be dearly missed!*

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**Giang Geringer** - January 09 at 10:51 PM

CC

“ *Mr. Newhams encouraged my love of the medical field. When he started the high with our class, he facilitated a medical club after school. He was calm and encouraging, with a smile on his face every day! A genuinely kind and funny human who will be remembered fondly by so many.*

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**Carrie Collins** - January 09 at 12:46 PM

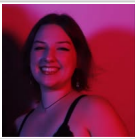
JC

“ I knew Mike mostly by reputation. He was on medical leave for most of the 2021-2022 academic year when I was serving at ODA. Accounts of his teaching, love of students, and congenial collegiality let me know I how much had been missed by his absence. Sean's constant updates on Mike from frequent hospital visits told me all I needed to know about his value to the school and the fierce loyalty he found in his friends. I was able to follow Ryan a bit. I delighted in his performance in the black box.

Toward the end of the school year, Mike recovered sufficiently to do a bit of substituting. His roast with Tim of Sean in celebrating Sean's milestone school anniversary at ODA truly brought home the qualities I had heard so much about. Mike's smile lit up a room. His sense of humor turned up the glow. Truly, Michael Newhams was a carrier of light and a reminder of how my one year at ODA enriched me beyond measure. Rest in peace, Mike. You have lived a life of purpose and brought much good into our world. Your favored seat in institutional memory is well earned. My thoughts and prayers are with Ryan and his family and the entire ODA community. Jim Connor

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**Jim Connor** - January 09 at 11:48 AM



“ Mr. Newhams was a shining light in the ODA community. He was one of the most caring teachers I've ever had and made sure to instill study habits in everyone that could be taken to college and beyond. Even though science was never my forte, the passion that he had for biology permeated every facet of his class and you couldn't help but to take an interest. I'm starting my own career in education now and although I fell into the field rather by accident, it was teachers like Mr. Newhams who subconsciously made me drawn to it. I would consider it a lifelong accomplishment if I could be half the teacher that he was. Mr. Newhams thank you for everything and know that you have touched the lives of so many.

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**Kate Crump** - January 09 at 11:09 AM

LV

“ Mike was a great colleague and friend, and I was honored to teach his children in my lower school music program. He always worked closely with me to make sure his kids, Ryan and Kinsey, were comfortable and reaching their full potential. Not only was he beloved throughout the ODA community, but also in our South Gate Neighborhood. I remember some fun times at the South Gate Pool, all coordinated by Mike and his family, and which always included music, with Mike playing guitar. Yuri and I send our deepest condolences to the Newhams family. His memory will inspire us for a lifetime.

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**Linda and Yuri Vasilaki** - January 09 at 10:53 AM

FM

“ Thankful for the round of golf that I got to play with Mike a few years ago. 18 holes of laughter. I only wish I had also known he was such a big Uconn fan. Go Huskies. CT born and raised as well. Hit'em straight in that heavenly fairway Mike.

*Fred Morris  
Out-of-Door Academy*

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**Freddie Morris** - January 09 at 10:25 AM

RA

“ My deepest condolence to family and friends. I know that Mike will be missed, such a nice sweet man.

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**Rannveig** - January 06 at 01:47 PM