



## Michele Catherine Mician

October 28, 1975 - November 28, 2017

Michele Catherine Mician, age 42, passed away unexpectedly on November 28, 2017 in Sarasota, Florida. Michele was born on October 26, 1975, in Tampa, Florida to Miloslava (Mila) and Rudolf Mician.

Michele graduated from Gaither High School in Tampa in 1993. She attended American University in Washington D.C. and continued her studies at the University of South Florida (USF) to earn a B.A. in Technical Writing in 1997, a certificate in Latin American studies in 2001, a graduate certificate in Women's Studies in 2002, and her M.S. in Environmental Science and Policy in 2003. Michele also studied Rainforest Ecology at La Suerta Biological Field School in Costa Rica and earned a certificate in permaculture design from Cazadero, California's acclaimed Earth Activist Training course.

As an undergraduate, Michele was a volunteer coordinator for the Tampa Bay Performing Arts Center. She was a project manager and team leader at Kinkos in Carrollwood for five years; during which, she implemented a pioneering recycling program to reduce waste. She was a proud member of Chi Omega Sorority, and after graduating, she delighted in being involved in alumni chapters. She had countless owl (her sorority's mascot) momentos. Michele volunteered for various organizations including USF Ambassadors. She was as an editor for The Oracle, USF's newspaper, and was the editorial assistant for several academic journals including Organization and

Environment.

While in the M.S. program at USF, Michele was very active in the Tampa Bay community. She served on the Women's Status Committee under President Genshaft, as a volunteer and education tour guide at Sweetwater Organic Farm, as a project coordinator for Hands on Tampa (HOT). She was also involved in community outreach for many local organizations.

After graduate school, Michele worked as a cartographer and GIS analyst for the Hillsborough County Real Estate Department. From 2002 to 2008, she was a neighborhood coordinator for Sarasota's Neighborhood Partnership Office where she organized the Florida Neighborhoods conference, was the founding editor of Neighbor to Neighbor, and was responsible for Sarasota's certification as a Local Green Government. Later, she served as Sarasota's first sustainability coordinator creating the "Your Green City" program. Simultaneously, she was an adjunct professor in the Women's Studies department at USF's Sarasota Campus.

In 2009, Michele moved to Palm Springs, California to take on the position of Sustainability Manager for the city and recreate and expand on the her successes in Sarasota. She worked diligently to improve sustainability adding over 40 electric vehicle charging stations, introducing desert landscape programs, and creating an urban forestry inventory and local food production programs. The City won numerous awards and designations through Michele's efforts including the California Center for Sustainable Energy's State award for sustainable cities. The City plans to name the community gardens she helped create in her honor.

In 2017, Michele returned to Sarasota as the Executive Director of the Florida House Institute (FHI). During her brief tenure, she reinvigorated the Institute. She was not afraid to get her hands dirty. Her drive and passion for STEM,

sustainability, and environmental education were undeniable and infectious. She used her platform to help individuals, her community, and the environment. She developed and expanded many programs including the butterfly and pollinator corridors, urban bee and chicken keeping, and edible gardens. Michele also submitted a 1.4-million dollar grant proposal to the National Science Foundation (NSF) which could secure FHI's future for years to come.

Michele was very involved in Rotary International. She was a Rotary Global Study Exchange team member to Japan in 2006, Friendship Exchange for Peace in Thailand in 2008, and a Rotary Peace Fellow at Chulalongkorn University in Bangkok, Thailand in 2012.

For fun, Michele enjoyed athletic activities such as running, swimming, biking, and dancing. She was an avid triathlon and marathoner and yoga instructor and practitioner. Michele was also an amateur poet, having compiled a collection of over sixty poems, and singer / songwriter.

Michele was proud of her Czech and Slovak heritage. She was fluent in Czech, Slovak and English

Michele's exuberant energy, compassionate leadership and contagious spirit will be missed, but her legacy will live on in the people and organizations she helped and the ideas and knowledge she helped spread.

Michele is survived by her mother, Miloslava (Mila) Mician, and brother, Rudolph (Rudy) Mician. Michele was preceded in death by her father Rudolf Mician.

A Celebration of Life service will be held on January 20th at 2:00 p.m. at Toale

Brothers funeral home at 40 N. Orange Ave., Sarasota, Florida 34236 – across the street from where Michele worked for the city.

The family has asked for donations to the Florida House Institute, where she worked, and Safe Place and Rape Crisis Center (SPARCC Sarasota) in lieu of flowers.

# Tribute Wall

JF

“ I think of Michele every day. She was an inspiration in how she lived life fearlessly and purposefully. Michele and I dated for about a year. She was a wonderful woman, and I miss her terribly. She continued to love and support me as a friend after we were no longer together as a couple. And she would encourage me when I was feeling down. I know how much she enjoyed life, and she would radiate that positivity to everyone she encountered. I send out my thoughts and prayers to Rudy and Mila at this time. I love you, Michele. I know you can hear me and one day I will see you again. Until then, may peace be with you sweetheart. ❤️



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**Jason Fox** - July 13, 2018 at 12:00 AM

JF

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**Jason Fox** - July 13, 2018 at 12:00 AM

BE

“ I was very fortunate to have known Michelle, albeit for a brief time. We dated, and on our first date we went for a run-her idea. I was immediately struck by how completely unique she was. She was so genuine to what spoke to her in this life. Such a rare quality. My deepest condolences to her family and all those who loved her.

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**Ben Eicholtz** - March 24, 2018 at 12:00 AM

DS

“ Michele, or "Peanut" as I called you, I will miss your quirky, innovative, creative and inquisitive energy. To use your words from our Burning Man experience together, I think I'll be making a "psychic phone call" to check in on you from time to time. Until we meet again, rest in peace dear friend. Love, Chin Chin



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**Donna Sturgeon** - January 20, 2018 at 12:00 AM

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**Donna Sturgeon** - January 20, 2018 at 12:00 AM

GR

“ *Your love and passion for this world will be missed. Working along side you was always a delight. Sorry you had to leave so soon.*

*Love*

*Gabriel*



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**Gabriel Rivera** - January 18, 2018 at 12:00 AM

CM

“ *We'll always remember the cheeky, energetic Michele of our teenage years. So much fun inside one small person. Thinking of you both, Mila and Rudy, and we're so very sorry for your loss.*

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**Caroline Morgan** - January 17, 2018 at 12:00 AM

LP

“ *My thoughts and prayers are with Michele's family. We worked for a short time together at Palm Springs. Michele was a caring person. She will be missed.*

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**Luz Pope** - January 16, 2018 at 12:00 AM

AM

“ *Michele did so much for Palm Springs. I'm touched to hear a garden will be named in her memory. She was a wonderful neighbor and I missed our chats when she moved to Florida. Her passing is a loss to many who loved her and respected her passion to make the world a better place.*

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**Arthur Macmillan** - January 16, 2018 at 12:00 AM

AZ

“ *May your memory be a blessing to us all. My family was touched by Michelle and all she contributed to the Florida House. Thank you!*



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**Alyson Zildjian** - January 16, 2018 at 12:00 AM

AW

“ *Dear Michele--my dear friend, we are so sorry to lose you so soon. I felt about you like a mother towards a daughter; we shared laughter and sorrows, and you were the liveliest spirit I knew. May peace be with you, sweet girl.*



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**Anne Wilkinson** - January 14, 2018 at 12:00 AM

RS

“ *My dear Michele, the last time I saw you you literally belted out a few show tunes. Friends of mine at the party stopped and listened in awe and I said you can sing too!! You have left a footprint on my heart beautiful lady...I shall never forget your infectious laugh, your vigor and wit and spirit. I didn't get to see you in January or help decorate your house...so much left to do. Rest in peace and watch over us all, sweetheart. Love you forever, Roseann Secchia*

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**Roseann Secchia** - January 13, 2018 at 12:00 AM

DK

“ Though I only had the privilege of knowing Michele for 6 months she has made a lasting impression on me both at work ( Florida House) where she served as the director, and in my personal life as well. She was driven, had vision, was compassionate, humble, and the most energetic person I have known. She is dearly missed.

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**Diane Keal** - January 12, 2018 at 12:00 AM

JM

“ Oh Michele.... my heart is broken over the loss of your sweet and brilliant spirit. You were a rebel, a fighter, a role model for so many. Palm Springs is a better place because of you. Rest peacefully now. You are loved.

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**Joy Meredith** - January 11, 2018 at 12:00 AM

JW

“ I enjoyed working with Michele in Palm Springs. She was so enthusiastic and creative and she really made things happen. She was greatly missed when she decided to move back to Florida. I am so very, very sorry for the loss of such a wonderful and giving person and my deep and heartfelt condolences go to her mom, brother and friends.



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**Julie Warren** - January 11, 2018 at 12:00 AM

SJ

“ When I think of Michele, I am reminded of heart, spirit, deep thinking, living with purpose and a bright, wide smile. Whether it was in a Board room, a yoga studio or visiting her Palm Springs home, Michele raised the spirit in the room

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**Suzette Jones** - January 11, 2018 at 12:00 AM