

Mike Rohleder Obituary

(Received from North Central Branch)

Michael Paul Rohleder was born July 28, 1954 in South Bend, Indiana. Little did the community know that its face would be changed forever with the work of Mr. Rohleder. Mike was a graduate of LaSalle High School, in South Bend, and earned his Bachelors and Masters of Science in Civil Engineering from Purdue University in West Lafayette, Indiana. On November 23, 1978, in Highland, Indiana, Mike married Gail Arner, his “bestest friend”. In 1990 his daughter Robin was born.

Mike was a lifelong area resident of South Bend, Indiana until he died unexpectedly in his home on December 30, 2001.

An active member of Ridgedale Presbyterian Church since 1980, Mike served as Moderator of the Deacons, was an Elder on the Session, and was chairperson of the missions committee. Mike put his electronic talents to use by installing the church’s sound system in the sanctuary and made himself available to be in charge of running the system on Sunday mornings. Mike was also involved in the design and construction of the church kitchen renovation. During his membership at the church, he gave his time and shared his abilities with the congregation in not only the few things mentioned, but in other ways too numerous to cite.

While not helping the church or being the devoted father and family man, Mike had a lead role in many facilities constructed throughout the state and around the Midwest. As previously stated, after Mike received his Bachelors of Science in Civil Engineering from Purdue University in 1978 and his Masters of Science in Civil Engineering from Purdue University in 1980, Mike received his Professional Engineers license in the State of Indiana in 1982. This was followed by additional registrations as a Professional Engineer in Illinois in 1986 and in Michigan in 1993.

Mike also passed the exams required for the Structural Engineers’ license in the State of Illinois in 1986, otherwise known to engineers as the “SE”. This achievement set Mike aside in an exclusive fellowship of engineers, as truly a select few strive for and accomplish this level of excellence within the profession.

Along with the American Society of Civil Engineers, Mike was a member of the American Concrete Institute and the American Institute of Steel Construction. Prior to joining DLZ Indiana, LLC in 1980, which was Cole Associates Inc. at that time, Mike was enrolled in the Purdue University Cooperative Education Program, spending four work sessions with Dravo Corporation in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania and one co-op session with Clyde E. Williams in South Bend, Indiana. While attending Purdue, Mike was a member of the Chi Epsilon Fraternity.

Mike started his employment at Cole Associates Inc. on May 19, 1980 as a Structural Engineer. During his 21 years with the firm, Mike saw changes including when Cole became a part of the DLZ Corporation in 1992. Mike was not the type to let changes frustrate him. He used it as an opportunity to grow – both professionally and personally.

Mike rose to the Department Manager of Structures, which was a part of the DLZ Architectural Division. As shown by the projects listed below, Mike used his engineering and people skills to make an impact to his peers and to the community, which is visually apparent. One look around most anywhere in downtown South Bend gives the observer a broad gamut of Mr. Rohleder's work, as it is evident all around us.

Mike had a wide range of experience in the structural design and investigation of numerous facilities. He provided analysis, restoration and design services for an assortment of buildings and facility types including correctional, educational, office/commercial, industrial, wastewater treatment, health care, libraries, along with studies and designs for the U.S. Postal Service, U.S. Army Corps of Engineers and the Indiana Department of Transportation. He worked on the design of the Coveleski Baseball Stadium in South Bend, as well several skywalks including the connection from Century Center to 1st Source Bank/Marriot Center.

Mike was project manager on numerous high-profile projects in the north central Indiana and throughout the state, including the new St. Joseph County Jail, the new St. Joseph County Juvenile Justice Center, the new Pendleton Juvenile Correctional campus, the new Muessel Elementary School building, the Ristance Corporation building expansion, the New Castle Correctional facility, renovation of the St. Joseph County County-City Building, the North Lawrence Community Schools and many other projects, investigations and studies too numerous to mention from steel mills to residential structures.

Mike also was lead structural engineer for John J. Young Middle School addition and renovation, LaSalle Elementary renovation and addition, three parking garages in the City of South Bend, an office building renovation of St. Joseph Station, seismic analysis and rehabilitation of the Indiana State office Building in Indianapolis, a new corporate headquarters buildings for National Steel and for Three Edison Lakes in Mishawaka, a new office building for Bendix (then known as Allied-Signal) Engineering in South Bend, and Maintenance Service Facilities for the Town of Porter and the Cities of Columbia City and LaPorte.

Mike's industrial experience includes Whiting Steel, Clark Equipment Company, American Maze Corporation, the Bayer Corporation, Spin-Cast Plastics, Kuert Concrete, Trans Western, Allied Signal, Uniroyal and Bendix Dynamometer.

Water treatment facility experience included Mishawaka North Well Field, South Bend's Pinhook plant, South Bend's Edison plant, a Clear Well Baffling Addition in Greenville, Ohio and an Iron Removal/Filtration plant in Columbia City.

Wastewater treatment plant experience included numerous facilities at the Valparaiso and the Alexandria treatment plants, as well as additional work at Bayer's private treatment plant and the plant at Columbia City.

In addition to architectural designs, Mike worked on numerous projects for the Transportation Division at DLZ. These projects included the Broadway Interchange at Indiana Toll Road Milepost 15, which was the first interchange of its kind in the state of Indiana, a Single Point Urban Interchange. Mike also had key roles in the Olive-Sample railroad overpass and the Ironwood-Conrail railroad underpass – two projects in St. Joseph County, which became reality after decades of planning. Also in St. Joseph County, Mike worked on the St. Joseph Valley Parkway and the Cedar Street bridge projects. Mike was project Manager on a 1998 FEMA studies for the Michigan Department of Transportation, as a response to severe storm damage in the communities that year.

The above is just a sampling of Mr. Rohleder's experience throughout the Midwest. In the more than 21 years of Mike's career, he had built a resume enviable to most any engineer in the state. His resume does not, however, reflect the relationships, which were formed through Mike's dealings with the clients, peers and contractors. Every one who worked along side of Mike took back a piece of his gregarious character.

Mike's contribution to the profession transcended the organizations and projects he worked on. Another intangible quality was the mentoring Mike provided to the young engineers with whom he associated. It was a tremendous loss to the professionals who had the honor to work with Mr. Rohleder and to the community, which will not continue to benefit from a leader who was lost in the prime of his life and career.

Mike will truly be missed by all.