



MICHAEL J. G. NEILSON

January 30, 1946 – August 22, 2025

Michael John Gilmour Neilson, 79, passed away peacefully, surrounded by his loving family, at his home in New Canaan, Connecticut, on August 22, 2025. The cause of death was prostate cancer.

Mike was born on January 30, 1946, in Biggar, Scotland. His parents, John Langlands Neilson, a British Royal Navy officer, who served in the Mediterranean during WWII, and his mother Margaret Agnes Robertson, a British Wave, met and married in Alexandria, Egypt. After the war the couple lived in Biggar, Scotland, but later emigrated to the United States, settling in New Hyde Park, Long Island, one of several communities developed for returning servicemen and their families. In 1996 Mike became a naturalized citizen of the United States. He often remarked that the National Oath Ceremony at the U.S. District Court in Bridgeport, Connecticut, was one of the most inspiring moments of his life.

After graduating in 1968 from Southern Methodist University in Dallas, Texas, with a degree in finance, Mike joined Manufacturers Hanover Trust Company in New York. He rose to be the District Head of the Great Lakes District in its commercial bank, then joined Manufacturers Hanover Ltd. in London and became its Executive Director. In that position, he led the merchant bank operations in Europe, Asia and Australia. Later, Mike joined CIBC in New York where he headed CIBC Capital Markets. Mike retired in 2004 after a 36-year career in banking.

During his grade school years in New Hyde Park, Mike met Susan Marie Hennings, his wife-to-be of 56 years, celebrating their marriage on September 7, 1968, at Gloria Dei Lutheran Church, in New Hyde Park. After living a few years in New York City, the couple chose New Canaan, Connecticut, to raise their family. New Canaan has remained their treasured home for almost 50 years, but for a life-changing five years in London. In retirement they lived seasonally in Spring Island, South Carolina, and more recently in Vero Beach, Florida. They built a family home on Spring Island, a naturally dramatic community along the picturesque riverways of coastal South Carolina, enjoying many activities, new friends and family celebrations. In 2016, Susan and Mike reluctantly left Spring Island to embrace a new chapter and home tucked in historic Riomar in Vero Beach.

Throughout his life in Long Island, Connecticut, London, Spring Island and Vero Beach, Mike's long-lasting love, in addition to his wife and family, has been the game of golf. Playing at courses around the world and at local clubs gave him endless joy and enduring friendships, if not always the best of results. In addition to a 35-year

membership in the Stanwich Club in Greenwich, Connecticut, Mike loved the links at his retirement clubs: Spring Island's Old Tabby Links; and the Riomar Country Club and Quail Valley Golf Club in Vero Beach.

During his working years, his regular games at the Stanwich Club with John Folts, Mike Cassell and the late Russ Harden were a force of nature, memorialized at season end with martinis overlooking the stunning course. After not so diplomatically comparing sunny American golf to British golfing weather, David Bonsall, his dear English friend and colleague, admonished "If you won't play in the rain, you'll never play golf in England." Needless to say, Mike bought "waterproofs" and enjoyed his rounds with David at Royal St. Georges in Sandwich, England. Although unable to play during the last few years of his life, Mike cherished other golf experiences with his family and followed the professional game with great enthusiasm. His wife Susan celebrates him as her very best and most annoying teacher of the game.

At the time of Mike's initial prostate cancer diagnosis, the cancer had already advanced, something that occurs in a very low percentage of cases. Despite that dire diagnosis, his doctors employed every new test and treatment to stay ahead of the cancer for over 15 years. The family extends heart felt gratitude to the many professionals who cared for him compassionately, and in particular, to his oncologists Dr. Howard Scher and Dr. Charles Ryan at Memorial Sloan Kettering in New York, and to Nuclear Medicine Professor Dr. Matthias Eiber at the Technical University Hospital in Munich, Germany.

Mike's often-quoted philosophy, "I'm doing the best I can with the resources made available to me," was an endless source of well-placed joking and humor in his family but served him well as he lived life fully despite cancer's challenges. Among his best loved times, in addition to golf and family, were solving the New York Times Sunday crossword puzzles, learning to play Bridge decently, rooting optimistically for the New York Giants, and traveling, especially cruising many diverse itineraries on Regent Seven Seas and Seabourn.

He believed that he had been truly blessed with his family and found unbounded joy in his wife, children and grandchildren (to whom he was always "Mikey"). Mike is survived by his wife Susan, sons Cameron Michael (Anna Larsen), San Francisco, CA, and Peter James (Krista Hornaday), New Canaan, CT, grandchildren Catherine Nairn Neilson, Peter James Robertson Neilson and Elliott Atticus Neilson, and sister Patricia Helen Wessinger, Vero Beach, FL.

Mike enjoyed music of all kinds from Handel's Hallelujah Chorus to Tina Turner to Willie Nelson to patriotic marches and Sunday church hymns. Come sing at a Memorial Service to be held at The Congregational Church of New Canaan, 23 Park Street, New Canaan, CT on Saturday, September 20, 2025, at 11 a.m. Then, come follow to a

reception at Peter and Krista Neilson's home at 280 Rosebrook Road, New Canaan, CT.

In lieu of flowers, donations may be made to the Prostate Cancer Foundation, pcf.org, or to the Senior Resource Association Foundation, seniorresourceassociation.org.