



## Jon Helmuth Mielke

March 8, 1952 - February 28, 2023

Jon Helmuth Mielke was born in Grand Forks, ND, on March 8, 1952. He died in Minneapolis, MN on February 28, 2023 at the age of 70.

Jon grew up in Grafton, ND, the son of Lester and Rose (Luedtke) Mielke. He received his Bachelor's Degree in Business Administration from the University of North Dakota in 1974 and his Master's Degree in Public Administration from UND in 1981. After college, Jon lived and worked in Grafton from 1974 to 1975. He worked for the city of Minot from 1975 until 1978, when he moved to Bismarck. He worked for the North Dakota Highway Department from 1978 to 1980 and for the North Dakota Public Service Commission from 1980 to 2004. He served as the PSC's chief executive officer from 1994 to 2004. He worked as a transportation planner for the Upper Great Plains Transportation Institute from 2004 to 2015. In 2004 he was awarded the John Agrey Award for his significant contributions to the state of North Dakota through his involvement in transportation.

Jon married Carol Ann Polivka on May 26, 1979. They were blessed with two wonderful children, Sarah Elizabeth and Matthew Lester. Jon and Carol were foster parents for 20 years and fostered over 50 children, primarily infants. Many of these children were with them long-term and became members of their family. Jon and Carol were named North Dakota Foster Parents of the Year in 2006.

Jon was an avid curler. He was a founding member of Bismarck's Capital Curling Club and a state men's and senior champion. He coached junior and adult teams at numerous national events, was a national level instructor, and served as Chairperson for the 2002 World Curling Championship in Bismarck. In 2012 he was inducted into the United States Curling Hall of Fame. He was a charter member of Charity Lutheran Church in Bismarck and served in numerous capacities including vice president and treasurer.

In 2003, Jon was found to have pulmonary fibrosis and was subsequently diagnosed with systemic sclerosis which led to serious cardiac issues. Despite these diagnoses, the following years were filled with countless blessings including foster parenting, childrens' graduations from law school and medical school and their marriages to wonderful spouses, the birth of his grandchildren, travels to Europe, Kenya, and Korea, a curling goodwill tour of Scotland, and the never-ending love and devotion of his wife, Carol. It was a wonderful life.

Jon is survived by his wife, Carol, his daughter Sarah and her husband Chris (Tatum), his son Matt and his wife Tessa, grandchildren Rosie, Naomi, Jacob, Luke, Alec, and Ben, and siblings Norma Kotyk and Chuck Mielke. He was preceded in death by his parents and siblings Mary Ann Lindell, Marvin Mielke, and Marlene Gorder. He donated his body to the University of North Dakota Medical School to educate future health professionals.

A memorial service will be held at Charity Lutheran Church (120 Aspen Ave, Bismarck) on Friday, March 10th at 3:00 p.m. All are welcome.

In lieu of flowers, Jon can be honored by donating to the North Dakota Curling Foundation in support of youth curling (send checks to 165 E Independence Ave, Bismarck, ND 58503 or Venmo @MattMielke), Nexus-PATH Foundation

in support of ND foster children, or the University of North Dakota Business School.

# Tribute Wall

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“ *To Carol and family.  
I recently heard of Jon’s passing and so offer belated condolences.*

*For many years Jon played a lead role in promoting a healthy grain elevator industry in North Dakota as well as vigorously advocating for railroad service to the grain elevators. He was well-known for his persistence. I got to know Jon and work with him through my employment with the ND Grain Dealers Association. We attended many meetings in ND and elsewhere. He was a valued colleague and personal friend. During his time with the ND Public Service Commission he would often say “Service is our middle name.” He meant it and lived up to that standard. He was sorely missed when he left the PSC and then later retired. The Jon and Carol Mielke foster parenting team set an example of love and self-sacrifice.*

*His curling credentials are well-known. Due to our friendship with Jon a couple Grain Dealers officers and I and our wives attended parts of the 2002 World Curling Championship in Bismarck which he chaired. It was a busy time for him and a fun time for us, an event never to be forgotten.*

*Steve Strege  
Fargo*

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**Steve Strege** - May 19, 2023 at 08:24 PM

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“ *I was saddened by this news but treasure the memories I have of working with the Mielke's through the foster care system. I will be making a memorial donation to PATH and wish Carol and all the family great memories and strength. May he rest in peace.*

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**William H Kerzman** - March 08, 2023 at 11:47 AM