



Michael Joseph Gouge was born September 17, 1951, at the Naval Hospital in San Diego, CA. He moved several times in his childhood before moving to Jacksonville, FL, where he attended middle through high school. His early school years were a struggle, until the light went on in sixth grade. By his senior year in high school, he was president of the Physics Club. He received an appointment to the U.S. Naval Academy, where he graduated in 1973, with a B.S. in Physics, third academically in a class of 889. A Trident, and Burke scholar, Mike taught an undergrad Physics class at the Academy in the Fall semester following his graduation in June.

Mike was commissioned an Ensign in the U.S. Navy upon graduation and spent the next five years (1973-1978) in active duty. He was stationed in Charleston, SC, serving as an engineering officer on the U.S. George Bancroft, a nuclear submarine, seeing

duty from various ports. In November 1975, Mike married his wife, Anita, and they enjoyed their first years of married life in Charleston.

Mike then began his civilian career in Atlanta, GA, where he worked as a Senior Reactor Inspector for the U.S. Nuclear Regulatory Commission. While in Atlanta, he began his graduate studies in Physics at Georgia State University. Then, in 1980, he pursued an opportunity to move more toward research in Oak Ridge, TN. Mike continued his graduate studies by pursuing his PhD in Plasma Physics at the University of Tennessee, graduating in 1984. From 1980 to 1986, he was program manager and Project Physicist for the U.S. Department of Energy. Mike thoroughly immersed himself in research and was known for his commitment to it. From 1986-2011, he was Senior Research Scientist, and Leader of the Applied Superconductivity Group at ORNL.

Afterward, Mike re-entered the U.S. Navy in reserve officer status, in which he served proudly until his retirement, as a captain, in 2004.

Mike discerned a new call in his life for service in the Catholic Church. He had become active in the Knights of Columbus in 1984 at Sacred Heart, serving in various roles over his lifetime. In 1989, he founded a conference of the St. Vincent de Paul Society at the Cathedral of the Sacred Heart. He was known for his passionate love and care of the poor, those in need, and his unfailing support of the dignity of human life in all stages. He began studies for the permanent diaconate in 2003 and was ordained a deacon of the Catholic Church in 2007. In 2007, he also began a St. Vincent de Paul conference at St. John Neumann. Ultimately, he served as the first spiritual advisor of this charitable organization for the diocese of Knoxville. With his unabated love of learning, he then pursued and received his master's in theology from the University of Dallas in 2014. The title of his thesis was, "Time, the Second Law of Thermodynamics, and Paul's Letter to the Romans."

Mike was a member of Sigma Pi Sigma, American Physical Society, and the Cryogenics Society of America. His awards included the best student in physics and electrical engineering in the Class of 1973, U.S. Naval Academy; from the U.S. Department of Energy, "Engineer of the Year" award in 2000 from ORNL for the superconducting cable program, and the "ORNL Science and Technology Group" award in 2006. He also received the Navy Meritorious Service and Navy Commendation (2) medals for command of two naval reserve units.

Mike was a man of many interests, because he never stopped being in wonder of all of creation. His tenacity for truth, and learning were exhibited in questions that were incisive. He was a man of details and enjoyed keeping maintenance of home and yard. Anything nautical provided great interest, as well as leisure for Mike. Any trip that was in the vicinity of a maritime museum would weave in a stop to linger at the exhibits. One of his greatest pleasures was sailing, from his years as a midshipman, to later years with his own sailboats.

His attentiveness to details and task management were balanced by a corny sense of humor, and strong appreciation of family and a humility that grew in him over the

years. Mike deeply loved his wife, Anita, and their four children. Favorite family times were enjoyed with road trips around the country, visiting many a state park or national park. Also important were the simple times at home with family and friends. He loved to recite poetry! Mike could not carry a tune, but cheered others with his delight in singing! His work as a physicist had brought much travel, in the U.S. and abroad. He and Anita were able to attend the beatification of Saints Louis and Zelig Martin in France.

He devoured books and learning all his life, even in his last months, when so many abilities had been lost. Mike never lost his trademark trait of being fully engaged, curious and thinking one step ahead. His last new book was a newly published one of science and faith. Even in his decline through years of suffering with Parkinson's and Lewy Body Disease, he held on to his dignity and vocation of being husband, father, grandfather, and brother, with remarkable rootedness in faith and deepening love with humble perseverance. He was greatly blessed in his very difficult last two years with the amazing outpouring of visitors who stopped by, and no matter how he felt, giving ever more blessings.

Mike was preceded in death by his parents, Floyd W. Gouge (from Erwin, TN), and Violet C. Gouge. He is survived by his devoted wife of 48 years, Anita, and their four children: Kevin Gouge, Lenore (John) Pacitti, Daniel (Christina) Gouge, and Tim (Chelsea) Gouge. He is also survived by his grandchildren: Dominic, Rosemary, and Cecilia Gouge; Claire, Nicholas, and Lucy Pacitti; and his siblings and spouses: Susan (Bill) Carter, Sandy White, Sharon Gouge, and David (Lynn) Gouge.

Special thanks go to Northshore Heights Senior Living and their staff; Cornerstone Caregiving with their help in his final weeks, and loving family and friends, so attentive in visiting and prayerful support; among them, those who were so generous in frequently bringing the Eucharist.

Fr. John Dowling – main celebrant, with Fr. John Orr concelebrating; other priests and deacons.

In lieu of flowers, charitable donations may be made to: St. Vincent de Paul Society, Franciscan University of Steubenville, St. John Neumann Catholic Church Faith Formation or Building Fund, or another charity in the Diocese of Knoxville.



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