



## Michael John Zimmerman

September 12, 1963 - November 23, 2021

Michael John Zimmerman at the young age of 58, passed away from throat cancer on Tuesday November 23rd at Duke Hospital in Durham, NC surrounded by his loving wife Wendy and his two children Brock and Baileigh. Michael was born in Vicksburg Michigan September 12th, 1963 to Theodore and Mary Zimmerman.

As he was growing up, he enjoyed spending his summers fishing at Mud Lake almost everyday as a child. In the winters he spent his time deer hunting with his brothers and father. Michael served in the US Army and told amazing stories of his times in Alaska. Michael started his career at Upjohn in Kalamazoo as a Chemical Operator in August of 1991. Michael met his wife Wendy while shooting pool at a local establishment and a good friend introduced them and the rest is history. They got married on May 18th, 1991. His first son Brock was born on December 2nd, 1992. Followed by his daughter Baileigh January 12th, 1994. Growing up his children have fond memories of fishing with him at Sunset Lake, him coaching our T-Ball and Basketball Team, watching scary movies, and playing video games in our living room. He enjoyed visiting his favorite in-laws Gary & Rita Dempsey in Texas where he would go golfing with the guys, have happy hour with the many friends he made and always go on a deep-sea fishing trip and enjoy big shrimp from Dirty Als'. Michael enjoyed many vacations with his wife Wendy to Cancun, Jamaica, and many other tropical paradises throughout the years (He always said in his times of illness he was blessed to have taken the time to travel and enjoy his experiences over the years and not wait for retirement). In 2007, his career with Pfizer took him and his family to St. Louis. Michael was so close with his in laws (and such a talented handy man) that over the years he finished 3 separate basements for them to live with the family in the summertime in Kalamazoo, Ann Arbor, and finally in St. Louis. Shortly after the move, he took up golfing and it has been his passion right up until the end; he truly excelled on the Pfizer League and with the many friends he got out with each weekend. You could always find him golfing on weekends or watching a NASCAR race on Sundays while enjoying some wings and Crown Royal. Michael had so much ambition when it came to his career, he worked his way up through the company over the years from Technician to Manager in St. Louis. He loved managing and he loved helping his direct reports reach their full potential. He loved working for Pfizer and making a real impact working on

pharmaceuticals that would make a difference in people's lives. In 2020, he decided it was time to move his career with Pfizer to Chapel Hill, NC as a Research Scientist for warmer weather and the ability to golf year-round. He loved to laugh and anyone that knew him could never forget his witty humor and dad jokes. In August of 2021, he was able to take one final road trip in his red Chevy Camaro (his dream car he was finally able to purchase in January 2021) to Michigan where he was able to see all his old work colleagues and friends from over the years. During that trip he was able to fish in a bass fishing tournament with his dear brothers Ken and Steve at Austin Lake. Close to the end, his children moved to North Carolina to be nearby. He enjoyed watching Squid Games with his son, Brock. The one thing that always stayed with him through the years and treatments was his sense of humor, his daughter Baileigh enjoyed laughing and watching Family Feud with him till the end. He spent his final weeks with his brother-in-law Jack Dempsey and friend Phil making fond memories on the golf course.

Michael's battle with cancer started in Kalamazoo in 2004 where he was diagnosed with stage 4 throat cancer. Nearly 13 years later he was diagnosed again with the same throat cancer in St. Louis, MO. Over the years with family by his side, he battled with numerous tumors doing surgeries, chemotherapy, and radiation. In the end, Michael's tumor was inoperable although he did fight till the very end as he was undergoing immunotherapy treatments. In the very end the tumor was too aggressive and too large to overcome.

Michael passed peacefully in the hospital with family by his side just the way he wanted it. He is survived by his wife of 30 years, Wendy Dempsey-Zimmerman, their 2 children son Brock Michael Zimmerman and daughter Baileigh Alyssa Zimmerman and his beloved dachshund Buddy Zimmerman. He has another daughter Mindy Lynn Zimmerman from his first marriage. He is also survived by his brothers Kenneth (Melody) Zimmerman in Goodrich, MI and Steve Zimmerman in Vicksburg MI. He is preceded in death by his parents Theodore and Mary Zimmerman of Vicksburg, MI.

The family will be planning a Celebration of Life in the Spring of 2022 in Michigan. For details on the celebration of life contact [wldempse@hotmail.com](mailto:wldempse@hotmail.com).

Michael had a big place in his heart for helping people and making a difference, so no other family has to go through what he did. Michael had amazing care at Duke University Hospital, instead of sending flowers the family would ask his friends and family to donate to the Duke Cancer Institute "DCI Head and Neck Cancers Fund" in memory of him and in honor of the amazing care that he received under Dr. Walter Lee (ENT, Surgical Oncologist), Dr. David Brizel (Radiation Oncologist) and Dr. Jennifer Choe (Chemo/Immunotherapy Oncologist) and to help the future of patients and families battling this illness.

<https://www.gifts.duke.edu/dci>

# Comments

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“ Mike was a classmate at Vicksburg Middle School and High School. I am very sorry to hear of this. He will be greatly missed by many, including his classmates here in Vicksburg (Class of 1982) - this is our 40th reunion this year and his classmates have been sharing nice stories of Mike. Condolences to Mike's family, so very sorry for your loss. RIP Mike.

**Gila Schuring** - April 07 at 01:43 PM

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“ 1 file added to the tribute wall



**Karin Anderson** - December 14, 2021 at 10:24 AM



“ Thank you so much for posting this!! It's a little blurry any way you can email it to me?  
Baileigh.zimmerman@hotmail.com

**Baileigh** - December 23, 2021 at 04:05 PM

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“ Pfizer Andover Pilot Facility purchased the Peaceful White Lilies Basket for the family of Michael John Zimmerman.



**Pfizer Andover Pilot Facility** - December 06, 2021 at 02:54 PM

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“ Mike was an incredible guy, a great golf partner and a dear friend. My memories of Mike are either on the golf course or at the clubhouse for drinks after 18 holes of golf. They are happy memories. I played golf with Mike almost every Friday afternoon during the summertime in STL and he was just a wonderful guy to be around. He was kind, patient and was so good at finding my "lost" golf balls which were many. Mike was by far the best golfer in our foursome.

Even in his battle with cancer, Mike often came out to golf with us, and he was always positive, hopeful, and pragmatic about his cancer. He would often say that he has had a good life. His courage and humility inspired us all.

I will miss Mike and our many golf outings together. I am grateful to have known him as a colleague and a dear friend.

May God's Peace be with him.

You lived well, Mike. You lived well.

Take care,

Paul M.

**Paul Mensah** - December 05, 2021 at 02:54 PM



“ Thanks for the kind thoughts. I know he enjoyed golfing with you!

**Baileigh** - December 06, 2021 at 12:55 PM

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“ I'm so sorry to hear of Mike's passing. I loved chatting with him in the halls at work and he was a great guy. Thoughts and prayers to Mike's family. -Tim Gryseels



**Tim Gryseels** - December 03, 2021 at 03:17 PM



“ Tim thank you so much for sharing this photo! He had such a passion for his work!

**Baileigh** - December 06, 2021 at 12:54 PM

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“ Mike was always a gentleman and so kind to his friends. I enjoyed golfing with him in Saint Louis many rounds where he rarely failed to find my lost balls (and many others to boot). He was a mentor to my son at work and I will always appreciate the impact his life has on so many. Will miss my friend and his ready smile, but never forget him.

**Ned** - December 01, 2021 at 08:44 PM



“ Ned thank you for the kind thoughts. I know he enjoyed working with you too!

**Baileigh** - December 06, 2021 at 12:55 PM

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“ I am so sad to hear of Mikes passing. I enjoyed working with him in St. Louis and hearing about his home projects and his roller-coaster golf outings. I had the opportunity to play with him when he was recovering from his surgery. I figured I could surely beat him in his condition. I was wrong. Very wrong, if I recall.

As I get older, I realize the importance of family and of treating each other with love and respect. I can thank Mike for setting an example for me. I'll be having a Crown tonight in his memory. Rest in peace. You did good.

Wayne Niehoff

**Wayne Niehoff** - November 30, 2021 at 02:42 PM



“ Thanks Wayne for the kind words! I know he really enjoyed working with you as well!

**Baileigh** - December 06, 2021 at 12:54 PM

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“ For as long as I knew Mike, he was always willing to lend a hand, and help out anyone with anything. His love for golf was infectious, and he never missed a chance to take a half-day if the weather was even remotely. I am a better person for having known him, and that is a testament to his influence. He will be missed.

**Judy Glynn** - November 30, 2021 at 08:33 AM



“ Thank you for the kind words Judy! I know he really enjoyed working with you!

**Baileigh** - December 06, 2021 at 12:53 PM

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“ Michael was a great man-I enjoyed his company the short period of time working with him! I will miss you sir-rest easy!!

Corey C. - November 29, 2021 at 04:21 PM

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“ Jason Lioy and the People Team purchased the Caring Condolences Sympathy Basket for the family of Michael John Zimmerman.



Jason Lioy and the People Team - November 29, 2021 at 08:01 AM

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“ Beautiful in Blue was purchased for the family of Michael John Zimmerman.



November 28, 2021 at 01:28 PM

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“ Wendy, Brock and Baileigh, Jeanne and I send our deepest condolences, Mike was an awesome man who lived life to its fullest. I've known Mike over 20 years and can't remember him ever being down, always upbeat, finding the good in everyone he came in contact with. I have so much respect for him and admiration of his strength and willpower, just an amazing guy.

Jeanne & Dale Vanderbor - November 27, 2021 at 09:13 PM



“ Thank you for sharing kind words!

Baileigh - December 06, 2021 at 12:52 PM

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“ Could not ask for a better Son In Law. More like another Son to us. We have been able to share our summers with him because of the apartments he made for us in his homes. We fought the hard battles Mike went through. We have always been there to take care of each other. Remember one year Mike was just out of the hospital with his many tubes hanging from his body and neck. We had to call an ambulance for my husband. When the EMT got to the door Mike answered it, they took one look at him and thought he was the patient. He told them not me my father in law needs help. Not funny at the time, but like all things in life you find some humor later in life. Mike did and had a good laugh how they thought he was the patient, because he looked like he was. Yes he will be missed. Now all we have are our memories. .That is all life gives us in the end

Rita **DEMPSEY** - November 27, 2021 at 08:26 PM

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“ I'm so blessed to have had such a wonderful brother in law for over 32 years. Thank you God! Rest in Paradise Mike!

Melody **Zimmerman** - November 27, 2021 at 07:01 PM

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“ 38 files added to the tribute wall



Baileigh **Zimmerman** - November 27, 2021 at 06:20 PM

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“ Medium Dish Garden was purchased for the family of Michael John Zimmerman.



November 27, 2021 at 02:46 PM

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“ 78 files added to the album Memories of Michael John Zimmerman



**Baileigh Zimmerman** - November 26, 2021 at 10:12 PM