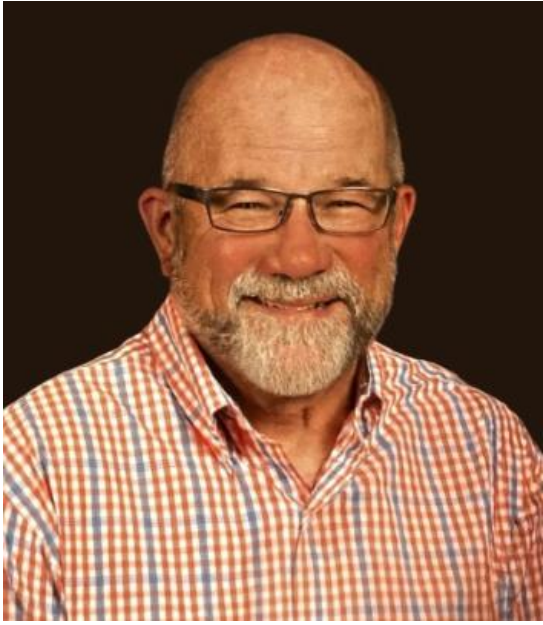




Michael Roy DeNike, of Corralitos, died at his home on Sept. 20, 2025 from Parkinson's disease. He was 75. Mr. DeNike was born in New Jersey on Nov. 22, 1949 to Michael Nicholas DeNike and Irma Jo DeNike (nee Selby). Mr. DeNike spent his early years living in New Jersey and Florida before his mother moved the family to Santa Cruz County where he would spend the majority of his life. He was a graduate of Santa Cruz High School in 1967 and attended UC Santa Cruz in the mid-1970s.

Ever eager to explore the world, one of Mr. DeNike's first jobs out of high school was as a research assistant on a vessel that spent six months in Antarctica — which at that time had been visited by only a handful of people. He was just 17 years old when the ship set course, and this adventure coupled with his time in the U.S. Navy during the Vietnam War would profoundly shape Mr. DeNike's view of the world. As a veteran, he staunchly defended the country's freedom while eloquently speaking against the atrocities of war.

Closer to home in Santa Cruz County, Mr. DeNike extensively explored the state throughout his life on numerous outdoor adventures camping, snow skiing, water skiing, and boating. He enjoyed water sports and was a competitive swimmer in high school.

As an artist, Mr. DeNike studied sculpture in Italy in Pietrasanta, famed for its marble quarries, and at UC Santa Cruz under the tutelage of Jack Zajac. He became fascinated with bronze work after meeting and studying under Holt Murray at Cabrillo College in the 1970s, and was instrumental in building Mr. Murray's foundry at the college.

His lifelong passion for craftsmanship led to a career as a fine cabinetry and furniture maker. Mr. DeNike's works were dazzling, and those lucky enough to receive them marveled at both their durability and originality. He is fondly remembered as someone who could build or fix anything, and that do-it-yourself ethos guided him throughout his life. Mr. DeNike was always eager to help family and friends no matter the project, and he had a knack for showing you why something had to be done a particular way. In his later years, he built the home in which he resided with his one true love and wife of 31 years, Kathryn DeNike.

Mr. DeNike was a devoted Catholic parishioner at Holy Eucharist in Corralitos, where he was active in the church community for over 30 years. He was a member of the choir, led youth programs, and helped refurbish the church grounds while also installing wood carvings made by his own father.

In addition to Mrs. DeNike, Mr. DeNike is survived by his sons, Emmanuel DeNike (Migdalia DeNike), Max DeNike (Marija DeNike), and Matthew Lawton (Hailey Lawton); grandsons Luka DeNike (Max) and Noah and Mason Lawton (Matthew); granddaughters Gabriella and Julianna DeNike (Emmanuel); sisters Jennifer Bettencourt, Sherry Mowatt, Lisa Gregory, and Tina Talbot; step-siblings Sharon Shulman and Tom Wright; and numerous cousins, nephews, nieces, and in-laws. He was preceded in death by both of his parents.

Memorial services will be held at 11 a.m. Oct. 14 at Holy Eucharist, 527 Corralitos Road in Watsonville. Per his request, Mr. DeNike will be cremated and his ashes spread at sea. In lieu of flowers, please make donations payable to Hospice of Santa Cruz.