

Joseph Myron "Mike" Trautman, 96,

of Sarasota, FL, formerly of Champaign, IL passed away peacefully on Thursday, March 13, 2025, surrounded by family and loved ones.

Last Christmas, he often said he was the luckiest man alive - grateful to have had two extraordinary women in his life; a large, loving family; lifelong friendships; and countless travel adventures.

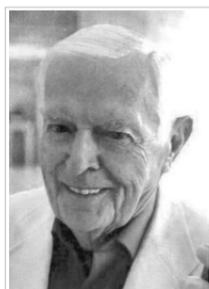
Mike was born Sept. 17, 1928, in Lisle, IL to Herschel and Beulah Trautman. He was the younger brother of James Herman Trautman, who served in the South Pacific (Guadalcanal) during World War II.

Having grown up during the Great Depression, Mike liked to tell his kids about walking to school with holes in his shoes and socks an early example of the grit and determination that shaped his life.

As a young man, Mike joined the U.S. Air Force and was stationed in France (Bordeaux) during the Korean War. Ever resourceful, he often traveled to Paris, where he bought goods and sold them to officers for a profit. He was assigned to a colonel who, as he liked to say, was frequently "busy with the bourbon", leaving Mike to handle business. After returning home, he used the GI Bill to attend college, working jobs like driving a taxi and digging graves to support himself. He studied at William & Mary and Northwestern before finishing his degree at the University of Illinois as a member of the Phi Kappa Chapter of Alpha Chi Rho. There, he met his wife, Chloe Reichard. He sent his parents a telegram announcing that the "passing fancy" they had met had become his wife.

Mike and Chloe built an ambitious life together, raising six children and establishing successful careers and businesses.

Mike began his career with Prudential Life Insurance, quickly rising to management, and later was recruited by Transamerica as a general agent for southern Illinois. He was known for his skill in helping farmers and families understand the benefits of life insurance, and he earned numerous awards and trips to conventions over the years.



Alongside his career, Mike and Chloe invested extensively in real estate, purchasing and managing rental and farmland property in Champaign County.

A pivotal time in Mike's life came in his 40s, when he was diagnosed with a rare tumor in his right ear. He underwent a complex 10-hour surgery in Chicago that saved his life but left him without hearing in his right ear. Despite living with significant hearing loss for the next 50 years, he never let it slow him down - a quiet, heroic act of resilience and strength that defined him.

Mike and Chloe raised six children: Michael Trautman (Jo Lenora Trautman), Charles Trautman, David Trautman, Michelle Trautman, Phil Trautman (Peggy Emkes) and Babette Paige (Rick Paige). Family life was lively, with many challenges and joys. Mike and Chloe remained partners in raising their family, running their businesses and creating a secure foundation for the next generation. Chloe passed away in 2017, but her impact on Mike's life and family remained strong.

In his final years, Mike found companionship and love with Karen Bush. They shared good times, happiness and mutual growth and traveled extensively, seeing the world and enjoying new places. Their relationship brought renewed joy to his life, and Karen's care and intelligence gave him unwavering support during his later years.

Mike took great pride in his family, which continued to grow with grandchildren P.J. (Phil Jr.) Trautman; Joseph "Jake" Trautman (Hannah) and their child, Quinn; Josh Paige; Reece Paige; and Chloe Long (Chris Long) and their child Forrest.

He was proud of being a great-grandfather, embracing each new generation with pride and joy.

Mike lived a long, complete and imperfect life marked by ambition, determination, love and friendships. He soldiered on and left a lasting legacy through trials, triumphs and change. In the end, he did it his way.