



## Elton Woodrow "Mick" Ringsak

February 8, 1943 - June 23, 2026

Elton "Mick" Woodrow Ringsak Jr passed away on Tuesday, June 23rd, 2026 after a battle with cancer. Mick lived a life full of service, to the U.S. Army, to his community, state and country, and, most of all, to his family and friends.

Mick was born at Fort Snelling in Minnesota in 1943. Growing up the youngest son of a highly decorated veteran in Grafton, North Dakota, greatly influenced Mick. He learned about farming and hard work from the Grafton community, about service and civic engagement from his father, and he learned about the bigger world by smuggling cans of soup from his parents' pantry to the hobo encampment outside the Grafton train station.

Following in his father's footsteps, Mick enlisted in the Army, where we went on to join the Corps of Engineers and attained the rank of Major. In the Vietnam War he led the construction of a road from the city of Hue west through steep jungle into the A Chau Valley to intercept the Ho Chi Minh Trail. After the Vietnam War Mick was assigned to a relief effort in Tunisia responding to a major flood. He was charged with rebuilding three critical railroad bridges. The effort was expected to take years, but Mick and his engineers completed it in months. This success led to him being formally knighted by the Tunisian government.

While stationed in Germany in 1971, Mick met and married Claire Miller of

Butte, a teacher at the base school. Mick retired from the service in 1975, and in 1979 he and Claire moved to Butte, which became Mick's much-loved hometown for the rest of his life. He took over the family business, Miller's Boots & Shoes, from Claire's father Carl, and together with his brother-in-law Dan McElroy ran it until 2014.

Among too many community projects and advocacy efforts to list, Mick was instrumental in starting the Tripwire support group for Vietnam Veterans, in construction of the Butte Community Ice Center, in promoting music and the arts in Butte schools, in advocating for environmental cleanup and restoration, and in supporting business and economic development, especially small businesses in Butte's historic uptown. At the state and federal level he was a champion for veterans, and took a break from his time at Miller's to serve from 2000-2008 as the Regional Director for the Small Business Administration, a role that took him all over the west, and through which he helped countless local businesses in Montana, his native North Dakota, and elsewhere.

Mick was able to accomplish so much for his community thanks to the tireless support, patience and love of his wife Claire. Mick was also an amazing father, supporting and encouraging his three sons, Quint, Justin and Zach, in pursuing their own passions, whether that was science and technology for Quint, music for Justin, or hockey for Zach. Almost everyone liked Mick - even those who didn't agree with him - because, regardless of your opinions or background, he listened to and respected the humanity of everyone he met, and he was always trying to bring out the best in people and in his community.

Mick is survived by his wife, Claire; his sons Quint (Clacy), Justin (Karen), and Zach; brother- and sister-in-law Dan and Linda McElroy; sister Ruth "Toni" Glover; nephews Beau (Kris) Bateman, Courtney (Yovana) Bateman, and Ted (Deanna) Glover; nieces Marion (Michael) Bateman Stenger, Lisa Nicholson and Karen Ringsak; sisters-in-law Denise Remick and Beverly Ringsak; and

many extended family and friends. He was preceded in death by his parents Elton and Ruth (Baker) Ringsak; siblings Russell Ringsak and Suellen (Ringsak) Bateman; and nephew Hans Ringsak.

A remembrance service for Mick's family and close friends will be held at Wayrynen-Richards Funeral Home on Friday, July 17 at 11:00 a.m., followed by a reception at 1:00 p.m. at The Depot, 818 S Arizona, where all are welcome to share stories and come together in celebrating Mick.

# Upcoming Events

## Memorial Service

JUL 17. 11:00 AM (MT)

Wayrynen-Richards Funeral Home  
1800 Florence Ave  
Butte, MT 59701  
(406) 723-3221  
<https://wayrynen-richards.com/>

## reception

JUL 17. 1:00 PM (MT)

Butte Depot  
818 S. Arizona  
Butte, MT 59701

# Tribute Wall

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“ *The world lost a great man!! I will be forever grateful to Mick for the love, compassion and support he gave to my brother Frank!! ❤️ The world needs more Micks, I'm so sorry you lost yours! He was the Best! Fly High Mick! God Speed!*  
*Colleen Grady Riley*

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**Colleen Grady Riley** - 2 hours ago