With a life that spanned nearly a century, John H. “Mick” Michalowski made a significant impact in the lives of so many who were within his reach. He was kindhearted and giving, loving and generous to those around him. Completely devoted to the community he loved, Mick was the sort of man who was a stranger to none and a friend to all as his zest for life drew others near with ease. With his impeccable work ethic, he was an inspiration since it was so easy to see that John was a firm believer in the notion that anything worth doing is worth doing well. The memories he leaves behind will be lasting treasures in the hearts and lives of his friends and loved ones.

Life was drastically different during the 1920s from the life we know and love in America today. This was a vibrant time often referred to as the Roaring Twenties when the innovative American spirit was taking us places we had never been. Cars became more affordable while Amelia Earhart and Charles Lindbergh forever transformed the world of flight. Not only was it the peak of Broadway during this time, but it was also the decade that legends Babe Ruth and Ty Cobb electrified the world of baseball in stadiums from coast to coast all across our great land. It was during this exciting time that a bustling family from Winona, Minnesota, was filled with vast amounts of emotion as they were thrilled to welcome a healthy baby boy into the fold on December 18, 1921. John H., or Mick as he was often known, was the 12th of 13 children born to his parents, John and Augusta (Fischer) Michalowski. Life was a constant flurry of activity in the Michalowski home as John was raised alongside his five brothers and seven sisters. He was a student at local schools who went on to graduate from Cotter High School where he was popular among his peers and elected senior class president. John was also a member of Basilica of St. Stanislaus Kostka Parish throughout his entire life. Although hostilities had been brewing overseas since the mid-thirties, it wasn’t until WWII landed on our doorstep on December 7, 1941, that America became involved in the fight for the preservation of our freedoms. With a desire to serve his country during this time of great need, John enlisted in the United States Air Force. He was a true patriot who was proud to serve in this way. One of his most memorable moments in the military was when John attended a USO show and was selected from the crowd to dance with Ginger Rogers. He always beamed about how his arm went all the way around her and that she smelled so good!

For several years John worked at UBC. He later accepted a position as director of the Winona State University Print Shop. In addition, Mick ran The Lantern Tavern, which was a hometown gathering place for family and friends of the Basilica of St. Stanislaus Kostka. In fact, he was a vital part of his community in other ways as well. His Polish heritage was of great significance to him, and as a result John traveled to Poland on two separate occasions. He loved sharing his passion for his ancestry with his community as he was an integral part of establishing the Polish Heritage Society in Winona. While living at St. Anne’s he was known as “The Don” of the 3rd floor Polish Heritage Group. John was an active member of the Winona Eagles Club, the Winona American Legion Club, the Winona Athletic Club, and the Winona Polish Heritage Society, where he also served on the board of directors. There were many things that John loved, and his interests greatly enriched his life. He was an avid sports fan, especially when it came to the Green Bay Packers. John was a fantastic baseball player who was drafted by a semiprofessional league during his younger years. While on the team he was their star first baseman. John always said that he could have made the big league if his legs weren’t so short! After his tenure with the semiprofessional team, he returned home where he continued to satiate his love for the game by playing with the PNA and the Winona Chiefs. As
his friends and family can attest, John loved Milwaukee. A great day in his book was staying in the city at the historic Pfister Hotel.

One of the things that made John such an extraordinary man was his generous spirit. He was someone who would do whatever he could for someone else in ways both great and small. Throughout his life he helped mentor several young men including Colin Verding who was like a son to John. It was not uncommon for him to pick up the tab when out for dinner at a couple of his favorite places, Hillside and Hot Fish Shop. John was also an excellent cook himself. Outgoing, intelligent, and genuine, John H. “Mick” Michalowski was a true gift in every way. He was dedicated to everything he did and was always looking for ways that he could help others. John loved from the bottom of his heart and inspired all who knew him to be their very best. Life will never be the same without him here, but those who were blessed to know him are forever changed because of his touch. John H. “Mick” Michalowski of Winona died at St. Anne Extended Healthcare, July 3, 2013. John’s family includes his sister and brother-in-law Jeannie and Patrick Smith as well as numerous nieces, nephews, cousins, and great friends. John was preceded in death by his parents; five brothers, Harry, Joseph, Ted, Stephen, and Richard; and six sisters, Frances, Gertrude, Margaret, Modesta, Bernice, and Mary. A Funeral Mass will be 10 a.m. Monday, July 8th at Basilica of St. Stanislaus Kostka. The Reverend Monsignor Roy Literski will officiate. A visitation will be held from 9 a.m. Monday until time of services at the basilica. Interment will follow at St. Mary’s Cemetery with military graveside honors provided by American Legion Leon J. Wetzel Post 9. Hoff Celebration of Life Center – Winona Goodview is assisting Mick’s family with arrangements. Please visit www.lifestorynet.com where you can leave a memory or sign the online guestbook. Pallbearers: John Rybarczyk, Dan Kohner, Sean Burke, Jeff Michalowski, Brian Burke, Joe Mantel, Colin Voerding, Dave Ritter.