



Michael Solomon

September 28, 1988 - January 25, 2026

Michael Dowd Solomon, 37, died Sunday, January 25, 2026, surrounded by family, after fighting cancer bravely for a year.

Mike was born in San Diego on September 28, 1988, to Nancy Dowd and Howard Solomon, the youngest of three children, following his brother Brian and sister Dani. As a child, he was adventurous and creative. He was a skilled athlete on the traveling soccer team, a budding artist, and an honorary Girl Scout, thanks to his mom being a leader of Dani's troop. The imaginative play of his early childhood gave way to creative writing in his teenage years.

Mike attended Westview High School in San Diego, where he grew his love for the arts, particularly books, film, and music. He loved sharing his tastes with his friends, and was considered someone who could always recommend something worthwhile. Mike was also an avid writer during this time, and wrote stories, poems, and songs.

Upon graduating, he entered Arizona State University, a college full of sunshine and parties, and he hated it. Instead, he transferred to the University of Oregon in Eugene, where he deepened his love of gloomy climates and Pacific Northwest indie music, and received a bachelor's degree in journalism.

After school, he moved to Chicago on a whim with a friend who needed a

roommate, determined to find a career in which he could help people, not simply make money. He tried journalism in full only briefly, interning at Chicago Magazine and In These Times, but read widely and wrote often, took part in protests toward a more just world, and began his professional career as a social worker at Thresholds.

Within a few years, he realized that social workers, despite being charged with helping impoverished people, are often paid little more than poverty wages themselves. So he decided to go back to school at the University of Illinois (UIC) for a master's degree in nursing in 2016, focusing on psychiatric mental health.

In addition to his studies at UIC, he was president of Student Nurses for Social Justice and helped many patients in the hospitals and clinics where he worked, which included Northwestern Memorial Hospital's Adult Inpatient Psychiatric Unit and UI Health's Mile Square Back of the Yards Clinic.

He found his passion and earned his Doctor of Nursing Practice in December 2021, and continued to work at UIC in a dual role, both as a practitioner at Mile Square—providing psychiatric evaluations, administering treatments, and supervising students—and as a Clinical Assistant Professor within the College of Nursing.

His contributions to his field were recognized widely. In 2023, he received an award at the 25th Annual Conference of the International Society of Psychiatric-Mental Health Nurses for his work, Decreasing Anxiety in Adult Psychiatric Outpatients Using a Mobile Mental Health Application. In 2025, he was honored with the Illinois Nurses Foundation's 40 Under 40 Award (<https://www.illinoisnurses.foundation/2025/08/18/inf-40-under-40-awardee-michael-s-olomon/>) .

He was a published author and delivered presentations at the national level. His final piece, Five Ways to Create a Restorative Rest Rhythm (<https://www.bps.org.uk/psychologist/five-ways-create-restorative-rest-rhythm>) , was published on the British Psychological Society's website in December 2025. His employer wrote that he "embodied the essence of nursing through his steadfast presence, clinical expertise, and capacity to heal not only with knowledge but with genuine empathy."

Mike's capacity to love was large. Throughout his time in Chicago, Mike created many deep and lasting friendships from all areas of his life. Friends of friends, coworkers, mentors... all of these and more became lifelong friends. He loved long heart-to-hearts, as well as a good gossip session and being in the circle. And in an echo of his early Girl Scout days, he was often invited along on girls' trips or girls' nights out.

He became a talented amateur photographer, documenting the city and his loved ones with an affectionate eye for detail. He biked often around the city and took lengthy bike trips, including a week-long, 300-mile journey from his Chicago apartment to the Mississippi River, and most recently an overnight trip in June 2025. And with his friends, he held countless movie nights, where he devoured rice cakes and popcorn, sometimes with comical speed.

In January 2018, he met Joy Menhennett, who quickly became the love of his life. In true Mike fashion, he not only fell deeply in love with her, but also forged close friendships with Joy's friends, family, and community. He and Joy loved to travel to National Parks, including Death Valley, Olympic, Smoky Mountains, and Joshua Tree. They married in August 2024, and in July 2025, he was overjoyed at the birth of his daughter, Winifred Sloan Solomon, having always wanted to be a dad and having banked a lot of hours as a favorite uncle to other kids in his life. No one could make Winifred smile or laugh as

much as Mike.

He is survived by Joy and Winifred, as well as his parents and siblings, and will remain beloved by his family—including sister-in-law Ashley, and nieces and nephews Nathan, Arthur, Lenny, and Paige—and numerous aunts, uncles, and cousins, along with his friends and community.

Though his years were cut short, he was grateful for the life he lived; the family, friends, and community he made his life with; and all that he was able to accomplish with his time.

Details for a celebration of Mike's life will be available at a later date.

In lieu of flowers, consider contributing to a fund for his daughter, Winifred Solomon. Contributions can be sent via Zelle to j.menhe@gmail.com.

Arrangements by Inclusive Funeral Care, 773-318-1305 or www.InclusiveFuneralCare.com.

Tribute Wall

GG

“ *The UIC College of Nursing lost a beloved colleague. We have all lost a friend and an inspiration to our desire to make this world more just and tender.*

Gerry Gorman, RN, PhD

Gerry Gorman - February 20 at 01:59 PM

MM

“ *So sorry for your loss. Dr. Solomon was my professor in the PMHNP program, and was truly a passionate and caring individual. He opened my mind to how to approach mental health and he will sorely be missed. His compassion and empathy was an inspiration to many. My sincerest condolences to his family.*

Mackenzie Morgan - February 09 at 03:24 AM

CH

So sorry to hear that you passed! Thank you for being more than my doctor! You listened to me about all the things that I dealt with being my mom's caretaker! I will miss you! I am pretty sure you have a full caseload in heaven! Rest easy my friend!

Corey Hawkes - February 10 at 01:41 PM

ME

“ *RIP Michael*

Truly an amazing soul and blessed to have crossed paths, even if it was when we were kids. It is no surprise he went and did amazing things and touched so many lives for the better!



Melissa - February 05 at 03:08 PM

CK

“ *I worked with Michael in my capacity as Standardized Patient Coordinator at UiC College of Nursing. We conducted Simulations to train Psychiatric Mental Health Nurse Practitioners. He was extraordinarily collaborative, acute, and passionate about the mission. He had high standards and was honest, but never disrespectful. The quality that first comes to mind for me when I think of Michael is INTEGRITY. All of us in the Simulation Dept. are deeply saddened and will miss him a great deal. Deepest condolences to partner, daughter, family, friends, and colleagues. He didn't discuss his illness with us, but bore it bravely and with great dignity. Chris Karczmar*



Chris Karczmar - February 02 at 05:50 PM

DO

“ Dr. Solomon was my professor at UIC, and in the short time I knew him, I found him to be both deeply knowledgeable and truly inspiring. This is such a tragedy, and I am sending my most sincere condolences to his family. I pray that you find comfort and peace as you navigate this difficult moment. May his soul rest in eternal peace.

- Dr. Debbie Olasode

Deborah Olasode - January 30 at 01:24 PM

JG

“ Michael, or Dr. Solomon, was my professor in the PMHNP program at UIC. He was knowledgeable, passionate, supportive, and kind. He helped me on a similar path to pursue a similar path as a PMHNP. It was my pleasure to know Michael and learn from him. I am deeply saddened by his loss! While his life was cut short too soon, he really lived the life he had. His wife, daughter, and family are in my thoughts and prayers.

Josh Gregory DNP, PMHNP, RN, LCPC

Joshua Gregory - January 29 at 09:11 PM