

RIP Mike Riley — Joy FM Overnight DJ Passes Away



By Brian Russel 5 hours ago

Late Monday night/early Tuesday morning (January 7/January 8), Mike Riley, beloved overnight DJ for almost 20 years on Joy FM, passed away unexpectedly at the age of 55. He fell ill on Sunday and sadly was unable to recover.

Mike was an avid reader and an incredible blog writer and on-air personality for us. He was an important part of our family at Joy FM and Townsquare Media Buffalo, and he will be missed.

Calling hours for Mike will take place on Saturday, January 12, from 4 p.m. to 8 p.m. at Otto Redanz Funeral Home (2215 Military Road, Niagara Falls, N.Y.). For those interested in making a donation in Mike's memory, the info will be released with his official obituary in *The Buffalo News* on Friday, and we will post it here as well.

All of us at Joy FM and Townsquare Media Buffalo send our deepest condolences to Mike's family and friends. Please join us in remembering Mike below.



90.5 WERG, Facebook

From Mike's Facebook: Mike and the WERG-FM team at Gannon University (then College) in Erie, Penn., circa 1977. Mike is in the back row, with wire-rimmed glasses and thick sideburns.

Clay Moden, morning show host on our sister station, WYRK, took this video just about a year ago. It's a good remembrance of Mike's personality.

On Mike's Facebook, comments from former co-workers and friends have been coming in as well:

“ He was quiet, unassuming. Intelligent, a voracious reader, with an offbeat sense of humor...and he was a friend. Someone I saw every workday for 20 some years. I hired him, not once, but twice. You probably heard Mike Riley doing overnights on 96.1 JOY FM. He was your friend in the night, the voice that helped you when you couldn't sleep. The guy on the other end of the phone when you called the radio station. He was a blog master! Did you ever read any of his posts at 961joyfm.com? You can they are still there. He was as loyal as they come, and he never asked for much. He will be missed on the air in Western New York for his style. And I will miss him because he called me "friend". Rest in Peace Mike Riley, you meant more to us than you ever knew.

“ Fondly recall listening on the overnights when Snowplowing for 12 years, or working overnights in law.. calming effectiveness... such as you were in daylight hours.. when the snow was otherwise maddening in the overnight , or the toils of a job that took one away from his family when he should have been home... Now, HE is Home... Sympathies for your loss of a close friend... Godspeed.

– Daniel Harig

“ I remember getting there in the middle of a Blizzard the overnight guy called off and Mike was there early Sunday morning working a double now into a triple. The cancellation list was so long we traded off announcing them both on WECK and WJYE. I gave him a ride home that morning as the busses were down. He never once complained about all the extra work. He was shocked when I arrived because nobody expected me to make it. Joe you relieved us both just before noon. RIP Mike!

– John Morrissey

“ I worked with Mike when he was doing mornings at WBFO in the early 1980s. I hadn't see him in person for a long time, but I am grateful that we were able to reconnect in recent years through Facebook. Rest in peace, Mike!

– Mark Wozniak

“ Before I worked in radio, Mike got me through some long nights as a newspaper editor. He was the perfect overnight jock, and I loved his quirky sense of humor, and every once in a while he would give a glimpse of it to listeners. He was also a rock. So dependable. He just did his job. He was also the only guy who made it into the station during the blizzard in 02'. Well, him and me. Still remember finally getting a hot meal with him after 3 days without food. You will be missed, Mike. God Bless.

– Joe Russo