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In Memory of Michael Strayer

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Michael Paul Strayer, a senior veterinary medicine student at Iowa State University, died on November 10, 1991 of a cocaine overdose.

Michael was born on September 14, 1960 to Dr. and Mrs. Paul Strayer in Cresco, IA. He moved from Waterloo 10 years ago to Ames and was a student at Iowa State University. He married Holly Hunt on August 24, 1991, in Nevada, IA.

Mike was a man of many lives. He amazed us as a magician, and often performed at church functions, for disabled children, and for his friends, adding an extra flair to a night on the town. As a disc jockey he spent many weekends bringing music and entertainment to weddings, parties, and several Vet school functions. As a loving father and husband, his private joy could be reflected through his wife Holly and son Jason. And like his father before him, he aspired to become a member of the veterinary profession.

His compassion and talent would have added to the field, and like many students he loved the medicine, surgery, and patient care. Long hours started to take their toll and juggling all these many lives proved to be more than he could handle. Rather than turning to his friends, he turned to drugs. The drugs provided a false sense of control, but in fact his life was getting out of control. One thing this tragic event reminds us of is the importance of coming to your friends in times of need rather than denying your problems and disguising them with chemicals.

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Editors note: The following is an excerpt taken from thoughts shared by Timothy Thunell, VMIII, at Michael's Memorial Service.

The traits about Mike that I will remember the most were his creative mind and his friendliness to other people. Of all the things we did together the most memorable were the acts for the SCAVMA Winterfest and our group, "The Royal Flushes". Mike’s creativity really came to life here. We were in the process of putting together our third act when Mike died, so the act was dedicated to him.

Mike was always upbeat and enthusiastic. He was a good person and friend; I am very glad I had the opportunity to know him.

In 1985, my brother committed suicide and for a long time that one event stuck out in my mind. As the years passed, those painful memories were replaced by happy memories. I want to share this with Mike’s widow, Holly, his family, and his friends so that they, too, can hope for a time when good memories will help lessen the pain of the sad ones. Mike would certainly want us to remember the positive things; that’s the way he was.