



It is in profound grief that the Patients Rights Council must announce the death of our beloved president, Mike Marker, who succumbed to liver cancer on December 31, 2021, at the age of 84. Mike was married to Rita Marker, the PRC's executive director, for 61 years. He is survived by Rita and their seven children, 27 grandchildren, and 12 great-grandchildren—a life truly and fully lived.

He will be remembered as a truly affable man, outgoing, friendly, with a sarcastic wit, who had a great faith and deep love for his family and loyalty to friends.

Mike enlisted in the Air Force after graduating from high school, and was the chaplain's assistant at Fairchild Air Force Base, where he met a college student who was the organist and director of the men's choir. They fell in love and became engaged. But there was one small hitch. "After accepting his proposal, I got cold feet and gave him back the ring," Rita recalled, "He didn't get mad, but told me I would have to ask for it back. And guess what: I soon did!"

After the Markers married and Mike left the Air Force, they eventually settled in Snohomish, WA, where the couple lived and raised their young family for 17 years. Illustrating Mike's life-long commitment to public service, while in Snohomish, he served as a city councilman, Mayor Pro Tem, and a volunteer firefighter.

After co-founding the Patients Rights Council, the couple resettled to Steubenville, Ohio. The organization purchased an old building, which Mike remodeled into the organization's headquarters. "Mike could repair, remodel, and build anything," Rita said. "He was the handiest person I have ever met."

As the PRC's first president, Mike was committed to the fight against euthanasia and assisted suicide, while advocating for the right of the vulnerable to receive medical care, and to the dissemination of ethical advance medical directives, a state-specific legal form published by the PRC, known as the Protective Medical Decision Document.

In the early years of the PRC, Mike did most of the talking for the group. But he helped Rita overcome stage fright and eventually turned over the "public face" of the PRC to her, continuing behind the scenes to manage the organization, raise funds, make friends for the work, and participate in strategic planning. "He was our soul and our backbone," Rita says. "He had the grit to stand steadfast for the cause in which he believed so deeply, whether in good times or bad."

Mike's death culminated a heart-breaking 2021 for the PRC, which also lost its senior researcher, Kathi Hamlon, from the effects of COVID in the summer. But even though both will be deeply missed, the work will continue. Both Mike and Kathi would insist.

*Wesley J. Smith*