



Dr. Michael Edward Manley-Casimir

June 7, 2025

December 30, 1939 – June 7, 2025

Michael (Mike) Manley-Casimir died peacefully, surrounded by love, on June 7, 2025, at the age of 85. He was a great dad, distinguished academic, dedicated teacher and mentor, and lifelong learner. He was extremely generous and was deeply committed to social justice, democracy, equality and the rule of law.

Born on Jersey in the Channel Islands during the German occupation, Mike's earliest memories were shaped by his family's strength and resilience during this difficult period. He witnessed his parents, aunts and uncles adapt and find creative ways to provide for their family. This experience shaped his deep belief in the importance of helping others through his entire life.

He emigrated to Canada in his twenties and secured a teaching job in Kelowna, British Columbia. Soon after, he was promoted to a Vice-Principal position in Ashcroft where he met and married Elsie. He and Elsie had four children - Naomi, Sean, Rachel and Kirsten. Mike was a dedicated and devoted father. In many ways, he was ahead of his time, as he prioritized family and contributed meaningfully to the domestic responsibilities and childcare. Some of his most cherished memories were of spending time with Elsie's family in Spuzzum, Ashcroft and Salmon Arm.

Mike earned a Bachelor of Education from Exeter University, a Master of Education from University of British Columbia (UBC), a PhD in Education from the University of Chicago. Although he loved his career in education, he had always wanted to go to law school so in his later years, he completed a Master of Laws at UBC. At the time of his death, he was enrolled in the last required course of a Creative Writing certificate at the University of Toronto - a testament to his lifelong commitment to learning.

Mike was an accomplished academic. He spent 24 years at Simon Fraser University as a professor and administrator in the Faculty of Education. He was especially proud of helping more than 100 graduate students finish their degrees, often making extraordinary efforts to support them to finish their theses and dissertations. He was honoured with several excellence in teaching awards throughout his career. The Faculty of Education at SFU published a wonderful In Memoriam article (<https://www.sfu.ca/education/news-events/2025/june2025/in-memoriam-dr-michael-manley-casimir.html>). Alongside Dr. Wanda Cassidy, he co-founded what would become the Cassidy Centre for Educational Justice at SFU, bringing together law, education, and advocacy. As one colleague said: "We are the proud beneficiaries of Mike's scholarship and hope that our work today lives up to the vision of justice he devoted his scholarly attention to."

He moved to Ontario to be the Dean of Education at Brock University in St. Catharines, where he spent 13 years. During this time, he continued to supervise and mentor students and to support new faculty. At Brock, he was the Dean of Education, Acting Vice-President Academic, and the Director of the Tecumseh Centre for Aboriginal Research and Education. Brock University recently published this lovely tribute to Mike (<https://brocku.ca/brock-news/2025/06/brock-mourns-former-dean-of-education-advocate-for-educational-justice/>). At Brock, Mike met Susan Drake with whom he shared over 27 happy years. Susan was at his bedside as he passed away peacefully.

During his career, Mike made a significant contribution to academic scholarship, focusing on administrative discretion in educational contexts and the intersection of education and the law. He published dozens of articles in academic journals and authored and co-edited several books including *Development of Moral Reasoning*; *Teachers in Trouble: An Exploration of the Normative Character of Teaching*; *The Meaning of Freedom of Conscience in the Canadian Charter: A Polyvocal Cultural Analysis*; *Children and Television: A Challenge for Education*; *Administrative Discretion in Education*; and *The Courts, the Charter and the Schools: The Impact of the Charter of Rights and Freedoms on Educational Policy and Practice, 1982-2007*.

Alongside his academic contributions, Mike was an effective and influential teacher and had a significant impact on many of his students' lives. One former student, Daryl, remembered being a struggling 8th grader in Mike's very first year of teaching at Kelowna Junior High. Mike saw his potential, adjusted lessons based on the class' needs and interests and instilled in them a love of learning. That same student went on to graduate with top marks and had a long, successful career in the RCMP. He credited Mike for instilling in him "a desire to learn and succeed" and for making a life-changing, positive difference in his life.

He was a true sesquipedalian (lover of long words) and got a twinkle in his eye every time he introduced obscure words into everyday conversation. His children would frequently prepare their friends for what would happen at the dinner table by saying: "our Dad will use very long words. Don't worry, we don't always understand what he is saying either!" At dinner, he'd deliver the line, pause, define the word, and then deliver the line again—because dinner was also a classroom. In fact, he used thumbtacks to affix maps of the world to the wall at the dinner table and would pause conversation to make sure that

in learning about world affairs, we could point out the city or country we were discussing.

Despite his many years in Canada, his British accent and habits persisted. He answered the phone with “Mike here,” referred to dinner as “supper,” and “fetched” his “youngsters” from school. Kirsten’s friend, Marina, recalls how he always called her “Mariner,” and how funny we all thought that was.

Mike loved the beach—he spent many happy days with family on the shores of Jersey, Qualicum Beach, Cancun, and Punta Cana. He sang in choirs, acted in community theatre, skied socially (but went mainly for the après-ski snacks and cocktails), and tended beautiful gardens in Coquitlam and St. Catharines. Mike spent his last nine years in Toronto living with Susan at the Manulife Centre where he made new friends and frequently spent time with family.

Mike is survived by his spouse Susan Drake,, his first wife Elsie and their children Naomi (Oscar), Sean (Lula), Rachel (Neil), and Kirsten (Robby), his stepson Scott Paterson (Sarah) and his beloved sister Susie Furniss (Valentine) and their children. He was Grandad to Natalia, Diego, Isabel, Michael, Jayden, Maya, Taiga, and Masami, and Grandpa Mike to Adeline, Katy, Jack, Odessa, Max, Priscilla, Penelope, and Pheadora. He also leaves behind many nieces, nephews, extended family, colleagues and generations of grateful students. We are deeply grateful for the care of Dr. Rezmovitz, Gelila Tadesse and his other dedicated compassionate personal support workers.

Mike lived a life full of purpose, humour, intellect, and generosity. His passion for social justice ran deep, and he gave generously to charitable organizations - in some cases providing consistent support for them for over fifty years. If you’d like to honour his memory, please consider a donation to the Canadian

Cancer Society, Amnesty International, First United Church in Vancouver, or the charity of your choice.

A celebration of Mike's life will be held:

Sunday, July 20, 2025 at 1:30 PM Eastern (EDT)

Toronto Lawn Tennis Club, 44 Price St., Toronto, Ontario

Livestream: <https://arizona.zoom.us/j/88668013222>

Bring your best vocabulary and stories. He would have loved that.

Tribute Wall

OW

“ My condolences to Susan and the entire family. Michael took me under his wing as a Master's student at Brock. He always sought to challenge me, and at the same time he was never afraid to be challenged. I will never forget my first class with him when a fellow student asked, "how will you grade us?". He responded, "I can give you whatever grade you want - what matters at the end, is, 'What have you learned?'" I have taken this focus on learning into my career. I am forever grateful for how Michael always advocated for me and his other students. He always sought to get to the heart of education: learning. He did this while seeking to create just environments for all learners. Thank you.

- Owen Webb

Owen Webb - September 27, 2025 at 10:59 PM

JT

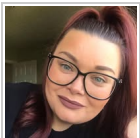
“ *My condolences to your family. I did not know Michael, but came upon his words quite by chance when looking through a 1967 Ashcroft Secondary School annual this past weekend.*

I was struck by the eloquence of Michael's words and his uncanny foreknowledge. His message to his students rings as true in 2025 as it did nearly six decades ago, as does his call for them to search for truth, honour, and humanity through education.

Having read just these four short paragraphs, I was able to resolve that Michael was likely to have become quite a person in this world, and that certainly seems to be the case. I had intended to reach out and thank him for his wise words but unfortunately I just missed him, so I will instead pass my thanks on to those who follow him.



James T. - August 12, 2025 at 02:52 AM



“ *My condolences to Susan and the entire family. The Tecumseh Centre crew is deeply saddened by this loss, to us he was MMC and he will be missed.*

Erin Hodson - July 22, 2025 at 02:04 PM

JK

“ *My condolences to Susan Drake and to the family on the loss of a remarkable man and scholar.*

Julian Kitchen

Julian Kitchen - July 14, 2025 at 01:57 PM

HF

“ Please accept my sincere condolences on the passing of Michael. He was a kind and encouraging colleague.

Hope Fennell

Hope Fennell - July 13, 2025 at 06:09 PM

SW

“ I was both surprised and saddened to hear of Michael's passing: surprised perhaps because we shared the same retirement party; saddened because we shared so many professional experiences in the development of the Brock Faculty of Education. Michael was not just for teaching; he was about the development of educated persons to be educators and "public intellectuals." I think of him whenever I hear that term -public intellectual - and whenever I think of people who may qualify as such. He has done his work and has moved on to everlasting peace.

Sybil Wilson, Professor Emerita, Brock University

Sybil Wilson - July 11, 2025 at 08:52 PM

DP

“ I was saddened to hear of Mike's passing. He was so highly respected at Brock University and I enjoyed a number of discussions we had about the importance of Niagara College and Brock University working together. I always thought it would have been wonderful to have had him as a teacher. It certainly is reassuring that during my tenure at Niagara College, he was always a great supporter and know he will be missed by so many people but leaves behind a wonderful legacy to students and colleagues in higher education.

Dan Patterson, President Emeritus, Niagara College

Dan Patterson - July 08, 2025 at 10:26 AM

DD

“ Mike was a board member and good friend of the *Education and Law Journal*, which I began in 1988 and of which I have been editor in chief ever since. I always knew I could count on Mike to say "yes, of course" when I needed a manuscript revised---even on short notice---for publication. He never once let me down! I also very fondly recall attending a meeting of the Canadian Association for the Study of Law in Education and sitting down at a table with a group of colleagues. But one of them whom I didn't know kept glancing over at me. Finally, he said, in his velvety English accent, "Hi I'm Mike Manley-Casimir." Of course I had known Mike for many years but had not recognized him because he had shaved off his trademark salt and pepper beard! We all had a good laugh---especially Mike.

---Dr. Greg Dickinson, Professor Emeritus, Western University

Dr. Greg Dickinson - July 03, 2025 at 01:16 PM

PS

“ I was so saddened to hear of Mike's passing! He was a truly lovely human being, and it was a genuine pleasure to work with him. My heartfelt condolences to Susan and to all of his family. May God give you peace and bless your memories of this sweet man. With love from Phyllis Stanley 💕

Phyllis Stanley - July 01, 2025 at 10:23 AM

BS

“ 2 files added to the tribute wall



Behsat Savas - June 29, 2025 at 05:04 AM