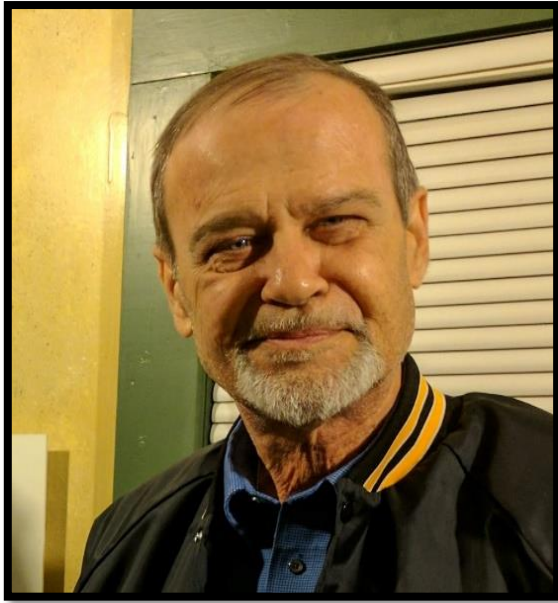


## In Memoriam

# James Michael "Mike" Hobbs

December 28, 1948 - March 15, 2023



Since 2007 Mike had served on the Board of Directors of the Carl Sandburg Historic Site Association. In 2009 he became the editor of *Inklings and Idlings*, the Association's quarterly newsletter and served as editor through the most recent Winter 2022-2023 issue.

Many people have written in to express their thoughts and memories of Mike and we thought it would be nice to share them all with our readers.

Mike had the unique ability to identify and effectively persuade friends and strangers who he thought had something of value to contribute to the newsletter. He made many friends across the U.S. and in Sweden for the Association through his efforts. We are indebted to Mike for his many years of tireless service. He will be greatly missed. --**Rick Sayre, CSHSA Board Member**

I first met Mike when he encouraged me to submit an article about the Sandburg family dogs, saying the readers who love it. Over the years, we worked together on other articles and a zoom presentation, and he wrote the foreword to my book, *Discovering Carl Sandburg*. Mike's keen editorial sense, humor, and love of Sandburg made his relationships with the Sandburg faithful special. --**John Quinley, Hendersonville, NC**

I knew Mike from a distance. We chatted only twice: in a zoom and once after he became critically ill. He seemed eager to publish excerpts from my book, *Carl Sandburg, Poet, Politician, and Prophet*. --**Lawrence Webb, Anderson, SC**

I so enjoyed when Mike and other C.S.H.S. A. board members and Master Gardeners came to the site to participate in the various workshops and the many projects undertaken by the board. Talking with Mike was always a real treat! I especially loved hearing his railroad and sports stories—he was a real raconteur. Mike will be missed. Rest in Peace, my friend. --**Matthew Swanson Carl Sandburg State Historic Site Interpreter 2015-2018 (Statesville, NC)**

Mike was such a valuable member of the Carl Sandburg Historic Site Association board, always willing to approach any task or project. Anything Mike participated in was done so with great enthusiasm and passion. He loved history and admired the Sandburg family. His dedication to *Inklings and Idlings* was beyond reproach. He was professional and relentless in pursuit of interesting and educational stories. Personally, I enjoyed Mike's friendship and our frequent visits about everything from Sandburg to railroads to the Civil War to Silver Streak and Commando basketball were always entertaining and informative. His knowledge of all those topics and more was extensive. Mike will be missed, but my guess is, even as I write this tribute, he will be somewhere up there in the Great Unknown swapping tale tales with Carl, Paula, and Helga Sandburg, Penny Niven, and a host of his many friends. Rest in Peace, my friend. --**Barry Swanson Past President, Carl Sandburg Historic Site Association (Statesville, NC)**

I worked with Mike at the railroad, and even after I moved around the country, every time I came home and ran into him, the conversation was as if we had just seen each other the day before. Great guy, even better friend! --**David Howland (East Galesburg, IL)**

These qualities come to mind when I think of Mike. I think of kindness, caring, generosity and compassion. Three more qualities I think of as equally important, again I think of Mike, is to stand up for what is right, be on the side of justice and seek the truth. No greater tribute can I pay to a person than to say that Mike was outstanding in all these qualities. Mike and I go back about 25 years, enjoyed some travels together in the local area, discussions over lunches and the Civil War Roundtable. But, most of all it was our shared devotion to promoting and preserving the legacy of Carl Sandburg and to supporting the Carl Sandburg Historic Site Association. Mike did an amazing amount of work for us and heroically got out that last "Inklings & Idlings" when he was seriously ill. Enjoy Eternal Peace, Mike, you more than paid your dues on earth. --**Rex Cherrington (Galesburg, IL)**

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We were fortunate to have Mike as a longtime family friend. As such, he was a part of some of our most cherished family events, as well as some of the goofiest. And I always admired his activism. Mike was deeply committed to our communities, both Galesburg and Abingdon. His involvement is sure to be missed. Most of all, I loved Mike's stories! Whether talking about high school hijinks or local history, his mind was like a steel trap. His phenomenal memory allowed him to dredge up long forgotten details that were sure to entertain his audience, even those called on the carpet for their antics! RIP, my friend. You've earned it. **Elaine Swigart**

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Mike was an exceptional man--thoughtful, kind, generous, and active in so many causes that I respect. Every correspondence and meeting that Will and I had with him since our arrival here in Galesburg in 2008 was a pleasure. We will miss him very much. --**Luz Nuncio Schick (Galesburg, IL)**

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Interesting is a word that will be used throughout this tribute because Mike Hobbs was definitely interesting. He knew so much about so many things. It was a pleasure to get to know him, even a little bit, and the conversations were always interesting. --**Naomi Law (Galesburg, IL)**

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Mike was one of the most subdued but interesting men I had the chance to know. He was certainly the long time force behind our Civil War group. He had fascinating insights on many subjects and I never tired of sharing a chat with him. --**Tom Best (Monmouth, IL)**

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Mike gave of his time, his words, his opinion, his friendship, his historical perspective, his quirky sense of humor, his energy, his loyalty, and his generosity. He always did what he said he would do...always. I was lucky to have been in his orbit. --**Pat Kane, Current President, Carl Sandburg Historic Site Association**

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Mike was dedicated to protecting, preserving, and promoting the legacy of Carl Sandburg. He faithfully did an outstanding job as editor of *Inklings and Idlings!* He had a real interest in all railroad activities in Galesburg and a desire for the railroad to grow and thrive and provide good jobs for the area. Mike was about making Galesburg a better community. He will be missed! --**Don Moffitt, CSHSA Board Member**

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I only met Mike through email and *Inklings & Idlings*. He very generously posted an article about my project that involved Sandburg and was very supportive of my idea. I always renewed my membership, because I remembered how nice he was to me. --**TG Jamroz, Director The Murals Documentary (Chicago, IL)**

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Mike was a terrific guy. he was always so personable and friendly, ready to engage in conversation, and he always treated me like we were great friends—even if we had not run into each other for a while. He leaves a legacy for all of the work he did for the Carl Sandburg Birthplace Association. Without Mike's untiring persistence and efforts, the Association would not be as strong as it is today. RIP, Mike! You left us too early. --**Terry A. Bruner (Galesburg, IL)**

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Mike's love of history was genuine and life-long. Junior high was the first time he could take a real history course and he relished it. He read history, eagerly raised his hand in class and was on the history quiz bowl team. Mike was one of those people that I have literally known my entire life. We grew up together in "The Number One City in The State of Illinois" - Abingdon and he was very proud of our hometown. Mike and I often found ourselves on opposing sides. He was a White Sox fan and an ardent Democrat. I was a Cubs fan and just as staunchly a Republican but we shared a common love of history. Ask Mike the meaning of a date like 1820 or 1898 or a location like Pittsburg Landing or Sharpsburg and he could tell you what they meant. He spent his whole life sharing with others his knowledge and excitement for history and Knox County was lucky to have him. --**Harry Bulkeley (Galesburg, IL)**

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Nancy and I first met Mike through the Civil War Round table. We soon realized that he was a gem among men; soft-spoken yet eloquent, and knowledgeable in so many areas. A good leader and motivator as well. We were grateful to have earned his friendship. --**Rich Hanson (Monmouth, IL)**

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It was not long after I had become responsible for the Carl Sandburg State Historic Site that we were sharing what drew us to Sandburg at a board meeting of the Carl Sandburg Historic Site Association. Going around the table his prairie poems, his Lincoln biography, his being a Galesburg boy were most often mentioned. When it was Mike's turn he said, "I like Sandburg's politics." That statement sums up the Mike Hobbs I knew. His opinions were based on reading, study, life experience, and serious thought. His knowledge and insights reflected his broad range of interests—the Civil War, railroad, current politics, Sandburg, and more. I always listened when he spoke as did others. He was dedicated to preserving Sandburg's legacy. And Mike always was on the side of "The People Yes." I am grateful I had the opportunity to get to know Mike Hobbs. He truly was a genuine and good man. -**Martha Downey Site Supt Emeritus (Bishop Hill, IL)**

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I didn't know Mike Hobbs well, but he reached out to me and invited me to write for the Inklings & Idlings newsletter, which I did twice. Mike invited me & several others to lunch at PZs, his treat, a year or so ago; he was a very generous, encouraging person, and fun to talk with. I'm only sorry that I didn't get to know him better. I know he will be missed by many, me included! --**Trish Forsyth Voss (Victoria, IL)**

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Mike was like his voice - deep, resonant, thoughtful and kind. He was a truly good person, and one whom I feel lucky to have known. --**Laurie Muelder (Galesburg, IL)**

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Mike was a deeply caring person about issues and their effect on others. His patience and reasoning were noticeable in his letters to the Register-Mail. It was a very special day when Mike came to visit my husband Rod Davis, at the nursing home. He did this often and the discussions were stimulating and very much appreciated. - **Norma Davis (Galesburg, IL)**

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A gentle soul

Determined

Calm

Kind

Intelligent

Wide acquaintance

Loved cats

Enjoyed Mexican food

In my mind, these words describe Mike. Every so often we met at Jalisco Restaurant for lunch. We would talk about Galesburg history, Carl Sandburg, politics and an endless list of other subjects. He was a man of many parts and I miss him. --**Barbara Schock (Galesburg, IL)**

**Many thanks to those who have generously donated to our Mike Hobbs Memorial Fund which now stands at \$2,450!**

# James Michael Hobbs

## (Dec 28,1948 – Mar 15, 2023)

### Obituary

Mr. J. Michael "Mike" Hobbs, 74, of Galesburg, Illinois passed away at 4:56 pm Wednesday, March 15, 2023 at his home. Mike was born December 28, 1948 in Galesburg the son of James C. "Pete" and Helen Rebecca (Kearns) Hobbs. He married Joan Thorngren in 1980 and later married Lois Bell in 1990. Mike is survived by cousins, Steve Hughes, Christine Morris, and Mary Jo Strader. He is preceded in death by his parents, and his cousin Kathy Karns.

Mike graduated from Abingdon High School in 1967 and Western Illinois University in 1971 with a bachelors in history. He later earned his master's degree. He was a past president of the Phi Alpha Theta, History Honor Society at WIU. Mike retired from Burlington Northern Santa Fe Railroad after 32 years of service. After his retirement he continued working as a substitute teacher for the Abingdon and Galesburg school districts. He also worked for Briggs Manufacturing Company, the Abingdon Brass Factory, Gates Rubber Company, Gale Products and Rockwell International and New York Life Insurance Companies.

Mike was extremely involved in the community, serving on numerous boards. He was a member and past protective committeeman, recorder, financial secretary, treasurer and president of transportation communications union. Mike was a past member of the Galesburg Solidarity Coalition and past president of the Knox County Right to Life and past Grand Knight and President of Columbian Home Association and a member of the Knights of Columbus.

Mike founded the Civil War Discussion Group in 1995, was a local historian and contributor to The Zephyr. He was a past committeeman for 773rd field artillery battalion reunions (Fathers of the WWII Army Unit). Mike also served as a board member of the Galesburg Railroad Museum and the Carl Sandburg Historic Site Association. Mike enjoyed sports and was a former IHSA Basketball official. Mike wants to thank OSF St. Mary's Hospital Home Health Care, Caring Senior Services of Galesburg, OSF St Francis Medical Employees, as well as selected employees of the University of Iowa Research Hospital.

Visitation: Monday March 20, 2023, 5:00 PM to 7:00 PM at Hinchliff-Pearson-West Abingdon Chapel. Funeral services: Tuesday March 21, 2023 at 11:00 AM at Hinchliff-Pearson-West Abingdon Chapel with Deacon Robert Rodriguez officiating. In lieu of flowers memorials may be made to the Carl Sandburg Historic Site Association. Online condolences may be made to the family at <https://www.h-p-w.com/obituary/MrJamesMike-Hobbs>

