



Michael Charles Polis

November 19, 2022

Michael is the beloved youngest son of Gregory and Denise Polis and cherished brother of Steven and Andrew. He is the loving grandson of Georgia Polis, adored cousin of Taylor Small, and treasured nephew of Denise and Duncan Small, Kristin Polis, and Louise Friscia. As a young child, Michael was always smiling and laughing. We said he was born with the “happy” gene. He possessed a high intelligence, a charismatic personality, and a great sense of humor. His warm heart tied these gifts together and sealed the “whole package.” We believed we would never have to worry about him; Michael was destined for success and happiness in life. Michael had an uncanny intuition and an ability to read people at an early age. With a compassion for others, he was sensitive and felt his emotions deeply. He loved making people laugh and was the class clown and teachers’ pet. He also had a very independent nature. When his brothers decided they were Yankee fans, Michael decided he was a Mets fan. When his brothers decided to study Spanish and Italian, Michael decided he would study French. Although Michael was extremely intelligent, he didn’t enjoy school. He was a free thinker, and he pondered everything deeply and critically. He didn’t want to simply memorize facts and figures; he wanted to know the meaning behind everything. “Why?” was still his most frequent word, challenging everyone and everything. He enjoyed intellectual sparring with his brother Steven. The two of them would debate various topics, such as faith, eschatology, etymology, and the meaning of life, with the common goal of uncovering truth. Hence, he

chose to major in Philosophy and Psychology at Florida Atlantic University in Boca Raton and enjoyed skateboarding around campus.

Michael and his brothers were close in age and did everything together when they were young—they built blanket forts, played Guitar Hero, had Nerf wars, and so very much more. They were always a dynamic trio. Annual skiing was a highlight for the three brothers and a favorite activity of Michael's since he was 4 years old. Always different than his brothers, Michael eventually chose to snowboard while his brothers skied. This past March, the three brothers went to an obstacle course high in the trees outside of Sarasota, Florida. They had the usual friendly brotherly competition during the incredibly challenging 5-hour course. They joked, laughed, encouraged, and ribbed each other, and in the end, they all completed the entire 5-level course together, something few people can accomplish. Michael was athletic. He excelled at baseball and also enjoyed basketball. He made the tennis team at Manhasset High School and was a pole-vaulter for the track and field team. If you knew Michael, you know he was a ping pong champ, having taken lessons from an Olympic table tennis master. He made more than a few dollars betting with friends and classmates at his college apartment complex over games of ping pong. Michael loved music. When he was in 4th grade, his music teacher originally assigned him the French horn. Michael was not happy with his teacher's instrument choice for him and badgered him until he agreed to let Michael play percussion. Michael was amazing at negotiation and rarely gave up when he wanted to do something. He went on to play drums in the Manhasset High School band, marching band, and jazz band and excelled at it. He enjoyed sharing his new favorite songs and artists with his brothers and friends that communicated his emotions. Michael also loved impromptu rap freestyles, where he would express his wit and creativity. Michael was able to accomplish whatever he set his mind to. Notably, in the tenth grade he chose to become a lifeguard, despite being an average swimmer. Upon making this decision, he practiced swimming for weeks with his brother Andrew, who coached him in the public pool to improve his timing and endurance. Shortly after, Michael

passed his swimming test on the first attempt and became a lifeguard at Strathmore Vanderbilt Country Club. Most recently, Michael decided to become a licensed motorcycle dealer. He studied, tested, received his dealership license, established an LLC, found the appropriate commercial space, and ultimately set up the entire business on his own. He made his first sale three weeks ago. Michael loved animals. He took care of a stray cat where he once lived in Florida. He missed his cats back home and would ask us to send pictures and videos of them frequently.

Through all this Michael was struggling. Obsessive compulsive disorder (OCD) began when he was a young child. In elementary school he began to experience anxiety and frequent headaches. By early adolescence, Michael was becoming more distressed, anxious, and withdrawn. In high school, Michael was showing signs of depression, along with existential OCD. And at age 18, Michael was diagnosed with bipolar disorder 1 in addition to the other diagnoses. For the past six years, Michael was treated around the country with every available therapy and medication. He put in a Herculean effort throughout his life to try to manage his illness. He was a warrior. Recently Michael had experienced what seemed like the best 16 months of the last 10 years of his life. His illness seemed to be in control, and he was thriving. He lived in Delray Beach for the last 3 ½ years and developed a wonderful, loving, supportive community with loyal friends. He enjoyed the weather, the beaches, fishing, swimming, playing pickleball, tennis, bowling, going for daily walks, playing the drums, painting, doing yoga, meditating, riding his motorcycle, working part-time, shooting pool, and going to college in Boca Raton. He attended many support groups and helped others while working at a rehab facility. He was Vice President of the Recovery Community at FAU and led motivational meetings to encourage others all over the Delray Beach area.

He loved people and wanted to help everyone who struggled. Just one week before his passing, he was concerned about friends of his. He was advising

them with their personal problems and checking up on them, while he himself was battling the pain of his mental illness. He was a shining light, a joyous energy, and an inspiration in the community. He touched and transformed lives. He gave joy even when he was struggling and left a permanent engraving on everyone's heart. A former therapist of Michael described him as the most genuine, authentic, likeable, special person he has known. Friends are saying that Michael's impact was beyond their comprehension, touching their heart, soul, and minds. "A light to so many people. Such a good person." "He charmed us all. He was so loved. Inspiring, driven, and so loving. Always wanted to see us happy." "He transformed our lives." "He was all around amazing." "His smile and laugh will be missed." "Michael was such a precious soul...I'll remember him and love him always." "He was always so kind and brought so much love and light with him wherever he went." His family feels the same way and is so grateful that so many others have shared in Michael's incredible humanity.

Recently the symptoms of Michael's illness broke through, seemingly quickly and with a vengeance. He chose not to continue this battle any longer. We are devastated. Completely heartbroken. We all miss him tremendously. Michael changed every life he touched for the better. He taught us strength and courage. He taught us unconditional love, patience, compassion, empathy, and kindness. We are so grateful to God for having had him in our lives for almost 22 years, giving us the last several years to truly understand Michael profoundly and love on him every day. We are so proud of Michael and how he chose to live his life...his way.

In lieu of flowers, please consider a donation to Treatment Advocacy Center in Arlington, Virginia.

Their mission is to improve mental illness treatment laws:

- To stop the criminalization of mental illness -- whereby prisons are used to store the mentally ill instead helping them through treatment facilities and hospitals.

- To pressure our lawmakers to reestablish long-term facilities for those with severe mental illness.
- To enact legislation that allows medical intervention for those with severe mental illness who lack insight into their illnesses.
- To increase hospital beds for those in need of treatment.

<https://interland3.donorperfect.net/weblink/WebLink.aspx?name=E49040&id=70>

8.8 million Americans suffer from a severe mental illness, including schizophrenia and bipolar disorder.

These are chronic, lifelong medical brain disorders.

This past Mother's Day Michael sent a plaque to his mother with a photo of them together.

The engraving says, "Together We Will Change the World".

His mother knows they will.

Previous Events

Visitation

DEC 4. 1:00 PM - 6:00 PM (ET)

Roslyn Heights Funeral Home
75 Mineola Ave
Roslyn Heights, NY 11577
(516) 621-4545
roslynheightsfh@gmail.com
<https://RoslynHeightsFH.com>

Prayer Service

DEC 4. 4:30 PM (ET)

Roslyn Heights Funeral Home
75 Mineola Ave
Roslyn Heights, NY 11577
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roslynheightsfh@gmail.com
<https://RoslynHeightsFH.com>

Tribute Wall



“ *Peaceful White Lilies Basket was purchased for the family of Michael Charles Polis.*



December 03, 2022 at 11:05 PM



“ *Victoria & Kevin Driscoll purchased the Rose Garden Heart for the family of Michael Charles Polis.*



Victoria & Kevin Driscoll - December 02, 2022 at 11:23 AM