



## Michael Nowak

January 14, 2014

June 29, 1953 – Jan. 14, 2014

Michael Nowak, of North Tonawanda, who used his love of skydiving to raise money to help people with multiple sclerosis following his own diagnosis, died Jan. 14 in DeGraff Memorial Hospital, North Tonawanda. He was 60.

Born in Niagara Falls, Mr. Nowak was a graduate of LaSalle High School. The former truck driver was diagnosed with multiple sclerosis when he was in his mid-20s.

Mr. Nowak was in the first trial of Dr. Lawrence Jacobs in the use of interferon for the treatment of MS. His condition improved enough that was able to leave his wheelchair and walk with a cane.

A member of Frontier Skydivers, he had made 35 jumps in two years before he was hospitalized with MS. In his improved condition, he resumed his hobby through tandem jumps, with the legs of his jumping partner absorbing the impact.

Mr. Nowak participated in the inaugural Erie County Winter Carnival Charity Accuracy Meet at Chestnut Ridge Park in 1988. The entry fee of skydivers benefited the Multiple Sclerosis Society of Western New York, with the skydivers seeking pledges for each “fun jump” that followed.

He was a longtime volunteer for the MS Society of WNY and a member of the National MS Society.

In 1995, Mr. Nowak received the Clarkson Center’s “Courage to Come Back Award,” which recognizes ordinary people whose stories of determination in the face of adversity provides examples of hope to those who are similarly challenged.

His interests also included music, puzzles and, in recent years, sailing with Western New York Adaptive Water Sports.

Survivors include a son, Justin Rebon; a brother, Gene; a sister, Cynthia Farah; and three grandsons.

Mr. Nowak donated his body to the University at Buffalo's School of Medicine.

A memorial Mass of Christian Burial will be offered at 9:30 a.m. Feb. 1 in Our Lady of Czestochowa Catholic Church, Oliver Street and Center Avenue, North Tonawanda.

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# Tribute Wall



“ I'm so sorry of the passing of Mike. I myself have MS. I was a member of the National MS Society, which is where I met him. He will be truly missed. He would always talk about his skydiving with me all the time. I can't believe he's gone. My prayers are with him.

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February 19, 2014 at 12:00 AM



“ You're going to be missed my friend. We made many tandem jumps together which I will never forget. Thank you for your inspiration, courage and most of all, your awesome attitude.

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January 27, 2014 at 12:00 AM