



MIKE MILLER



80th Birthday Wishes
Recollections & Tributes

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Party Speeches

1

More Birthday Wishes,
Tributes & Recollections

40

Party Attendees

83

Appendix

90

Party Photo Gallery

PARTY SPEECHES

(Note from Mike: Just to set the stage a bit, the party started at 2:00 with people arriving at the Mission Language & Vocational school (MLVS), whose recently deceased Executive Director, Rosario Anaya, was a friend of mine and had served on the San Francisco Board of Education.

My friend since the early 1970s, Tony Fazio, is now chairman of the Board of MLVS. Tony arranged for us to have the party there, and for it to be catered by the MLVS culinary academy. At 5:00 p.m., Tony hit the figurative gavel on the podium, welcomed everyone, made his introductory remarks about our friendship, and our formal program began.)

TONY FAZIO

(BIO: Tony Fazio worked with Mike as a community organizer in San Francisco's Visitacion Valley neighborhood, and in the statewide Citizens Action League. He was an organizer for ACORN. A political consultant and strategic communications specialist, he is the founder and President of Winning Directions, the nation's leading Democratic direct mail firm. He is also Chairman of the Board of the Mission English Language and Vocational School.)

REVEREND CLARENCE JOHNSON

Hello, my sisters and my brothers!

Guess what day it is???

It's the day we have gathered to celebrate Mike's 80th BIRTHDAY!!!!

Let's say HAPPY BIRTHDAY, MIKE...now put your hands together and give him a rousing round of APPLAUSE.

Let's show our appreciation for our dear friend Mike Miller.

Please turn to someone near you and tell them, "at Mike's Birthday celebration YOU are the justice, peace & love, I've been looking for!"

Mike asked me to offer the Invocation, to invite into our gathering the presence of love and the spirit of justice.

There is a lot of love in this place and space for grace.

Let's call out the names of others who are not here and bring them IN with US now...just call out the names!

I invite you to join me in a Quaker Practice of "CENTERING!" Spirit of justice and peace, love and light, equality and opportunity, freedom and human dignity, we gather at this unique time in history to celebrate with our friend and brother, MIKE MILLER, with family, fun, food, fellowship and in solidarity.

We are grateful for his courageous example to all of us of what it means to be committed to the "cause of social justice for a lifetime!"

For 8 decades (80 effective, 80 encouraging and 80 energizing years)..from SLATE and the Free Speech Movement at Cal-Berkeley, to SNCC and the Civil Rights Movement in Mississippi during the 1960s, to community organizing thru OTC...and through it all he has remained consistently faithful to the proposition that the experiment in democracy can lead to the formation of a more perfect union...for all people in our society.

By the sheer force of his magnetic personality, intellect and moral underpinning, he has aided in the transformation of lives and communities thru organizing, voter registration & education in the belief that the power of the people will move all of us toward building a nation, indeed a world, which cares as deeply about fairness & justice as he does.

We are grateful for the power of his magnetism, genius, gifts and tender heart, which expresses his love for those in this room and beyond.

So we invoke freedom, justice and peace into our thoughts & hearts in deep and profound gratitude for this magnificent expression of humanity, we simply call MIKE, who has touched our lives in remarkable ways.

We shall be eternally grateful...

Mike has taught us how to be FREE, a lesson captured beautifully in the lyrics of a Song by Nina Simone titled, "I Wish I Knew How It Would Feel To Be Free."

*I wish I KNEW how it would feel to be FREE.
I wish I could break all the chains holding me.
I wish I could SAY all the things I should SAY.
Say 'em loud, say 'em clear for the whole round world to hear!
I wish I could SHARE all the LOVE that's in my HEART,
Remove all the BARS that keep us apart.
I wish you could KNOW what it means to be ME,
Then you'll SEE and AGREE that everyone should be FREE!
I wish I could GIVE all I'm longing to GIVE.
I wish I could LIVE like I'm longing to LIVE!
I wish I could DO all the things that I can DO.
Though I'm way OVERDUE, I'd be starting ANEW!
WELL, I wish I could BE like a BIRD in the SKY.
How SWEET it would BE, if about my HEART I could FLY!
OH, I'd SOAR to the SUN and LOOK down at the SEA,
THEN I'D SING BECAUSE I KNOW HOW IT FEELS TO
BE FREE!!!*

So might it be! Amen.

(BIO: Clarence L. Johnson was a 13 year old activist in Greenwood, MS. when Mike was there as SNCC Field Secretary. He has been both a community (PICO) and union (SEIU) organizer. He is currently Pastor, Mills Grove Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) in Oakland, Ca.)

KATHY LIPSCOMB

(Note from Mike: Kathy is my partner. We've been together more than 10 years, and deeply enjoy each other's company and appreciate what the other does in the world. Kathy's passion for justice is matched by few, and exceeded by none. I love her.)

Dear Family and Friends, Brothers and Sisters, Thank you very much for coming from far and wide to celebrate Mike Miller's 80th birthday.

Actually, Mike won't become an official octogenarian until Tuesday, Jan. 24 – his real birthday.

My name is Kathy Lipscomb, and Mike Miller and I are partners. We've been together for about 11 years. Neither one of us is exactly sure of the year we met. It doesn't matter; we've had a wonderful time on our journey and he's been a special companion. We've even come to terms with each other's idiosyncrasies.

Mike is a fine, generous, warm person. He adores his children and grandchildren and they love him as well. And, it's a tribute to any man's character when he's on good terms with his ex-wives – in this case, all of them!

We have a similar political understanding of how the world works. Our favorite bumper sticker these days reads, "NOT NORMAL. RESIST." Let's do some chants. I'll say, "Not Normal" and you say "Resist."

Mike also nurtures his elderly dog, Chloe who at age 15 can only walk around the block once. Mike and Chloe exchange a lot of wet kisses. My cat, Buddy-Boy is ecstatic when Mike shows up. He somehow knows that Mike made a toy for him from pigeon feathers found on a bay-area beach. Mike actually sewed several feathers together with a mere sewing needle and put them on a wand that can be swung around as the cat jumps for joy.

Aside from an accomplished body of social-justice work over sixty years, Mike has been blessed with longevity. May it continue for years to come so we can count on him for insights in this time of national crisis.

My dear Mike, a snippet of an Irish blessing for you: May the road rise up to meet you. May the sun be always at your back.

Love always, Kathy

(BIO: Kathy Lipscomb is a former field representative for SEIU, Local 250. She is on the Executive Board of Senior & Disability Action, as well as a tenants' rights and affordable housing activist in San Francisco.)

RAMON BARBIERI

Ricardo Alva from Los Obreros, Fernando Cosio from Bolivianos Unidos and Dan Ortiz, City College student body president—we all made it to the Board of Supervisors meeting in support of Model Cities legislation. MCO organizer Eugene Royal invited us back to participate at the

Mission Community Organizing in support of Cesar Chavez boycott: De Colores/De Colores/Sevisten Los Campos en la Primavera...De Colores.

We supported Cesar Chavez's boycott.

We supported the "Shut It Down—Shut It Down" Movement at San Francisco State College.

US Veterans of the Vietnam War got organized and made it back to the Mission District as an organization to help the "Employment Committee" headed by Rich Sorro secure jobs for the unemployed veterans.

Jobs were expected to come down to the Mission District and Jim Danton—the Employment Committee Organizer—invited my friend Pete Lewis (a sociology student at SFSU and ex-baseball player on the AFICHE) back to the apartment for a possible action organized against BART, AT&T, Safeway and Bank of America.

Gift a man a fish and he would eat for one day. Teach a man how to fish and he would be insured to eat forever! The MCO Employment Action Committee convened at MCO's strategic

planning room, located on Folson Street in the basement. It was a smoky room filled with the smell of Cuban tobacco and cigarettes. Other odors filled the war room attended by the General Manager, Mike Miller. He was barking last minute instructions to his cadre of organizers: Mary Haynes; Jim Doulton; Charles Bolton; Luis Alberti, Spence and Ann Limbocker. Staff is not supposed to speak—ever.

Leadership does!

Ladies and gentleman, may I have the honor to introduce to you the first MCO President. Elected in the same room—at the Obrero's Hall—back in 1968 1968, el ano de la revolucion democratica de los Estados Unidos y la Fecha Clave de SFSU Shut Down Strike.

Mr. Ben Martinez—El Caudillo de la Mission!

Si se puede...se puede si se quiere.

(BIO: Ramon A. Barbieri, MPA, CPA, Mission Model Neighborhood Corporation, Executive Director, 1972-1975; Chairman, Mission Planning Council 1975-1976; City & County San Francisco Mayor's Model Cities Office.)

BENINO MARTINEZ

Rev. David Knotts introduced me to Mike Miller in the early sixties when the mission district community began the process of building a community power structure in the San Francisco Mission District.

What Mike, a professional organizer, brought to the community was the organizing tools to create a community power base to make the changes in the day to day issues and concerns that the community was facing. The treatment of tenants in badly maintained rental units, needed stop signs, improvement of health services, police relations, affordable housing, schools and working with private corporations for employment opportunities. A complete overhaul of all community services with input from the community.

The community was building an organized power base of and for the community to resolve the issues that the Mission District suffered. With Mike Miller's organizing experience the community was working as united to change the Mission District Community on the needs, and wishes of the community.

Thank you.

(BIO: Ben Martinez graduated from San Francisco State. He served on the staff of Arriba Juntos, a Mission District non-profit, and was the first President of the Mission Coalition Organization (MCO). He is now a high school teacher in Calexico, CA.)

MARTHA PRESCOD NORMAN

Mississippi, where I met Mike in 1963, was a scary place. When I was reviewing John Dittmer's and Charles Payne's books on Mississippi in preparation for writing the bridges for Hands on the Freedom Plow, just thinking about Mississippi some fifty years later, made me scared all over again. Then the words of the old gospel hymn came to mind with a slight change, "My soul looks back and wonders how we survived."

Wonder stuck in my mind as I continued thinking about the Mississippi Movement and the wondrous accomplishments connected to that movement. How we were able to face down such powerful oppression and achieve some level of victory.

It was a wondrous time living in those deep southern

communities as we worked with people, not for people toward freedom goals. I did not go south to help anyone. I expected the Mississippi Movement, indeed the Southern Freedom Movement, to help me, to change the racial climate throughout the nation, indeed to liberalize the country in many other ways and it did.

It was a wondrous thing to witness the strength and power of a movement propelled and sustained by people without any of the trappings of conventional social, political or economic power. This experience empowered us as young people, enabling us to see that we also had a power outside standard power.

It was a wonderful experience to participate in a super democratic and super thoughtful organization like the one I found in Mississippi SNCC. Usually in meetings, the opinions and views of everyone in the room were solicited and heard. And we were always reading and debating. We talked about Camus and Dostoyevsky and Bob hung quotes from Camus and Bob Dylan up on the wall.

On a personal level, it was a wonderful place, Greenwood Mississippi in 1963. I was only there a short time, but

forged bonds that have lasted a lifetime. We established relationships outside of the usual social norms—men and women, not romantically linked became close, and operated on equal footing. Women related to each other in a way that was not competitive and challenging, but friendly and supportive.

In that place, I felt encouraged to become a thoughtful, brave, and radical black woman. Thank you Bob and thank you Mike, for your part in creating such a wonderful space that set my life on such a firm foundation.

(BIO: Martha Prescod Noonan was a field secretary for the Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee, working in Mississippi in 1963, and a leader in the Detroit Friends of SNCC. She graduated from the University of Michigan, where she was active in Students for a Democratic Society (SDS). She is a co-editor of Hands on the Freedom Plow: Personal Accounts by Women in SNCC.)

BOB MOSES

(Note from Mike: For those of you who don't know, Bob was

the Director of the Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee's Mississippi program from 1962 – 1965. He left SNCC, spent some time in Canada where he moved to avoid the Vietnam war draft, taught in Tanzania, got his PhD at Harvard, taught math in public high schools, received a MacArthur Award in 1982, and about 25 years ago started The Algebra Project (AP). If you don't know it, please google it! Bob and I reconnected about three years ago. I'm now working with him to build a community base of support for AP and, more broadly, to bring the Ella Baker and Saul Alinsky traditions together in a common perspective on people power organizing. Needless to say, I was deeply moved by what Bob said.)

When I saw that I was asked to speak I wondered how I could say something to everyone present and to Mike as well, that was worthy of him and the life he has lived so far.

I remembered what I talked about with my two sons, Omo and Taba, when they were teenagers, about America, the land of fly-paper and how difficult and vital it was to negotiate the country avoiding its sticky fly-paper.

Once you are fully conscious of how America came to and

continues to be it's no easy thing to be an American. But Mike has made himself into such a person. An American living an American constructed life that wrestles with America.

To construct such a life, somehow, I don't know how, somewhere, I don't know where, and somewhen, I don't know when, Mike learned to avoid America's fly-paper.

When there is no fly-paper it's easy to pick up personal relationships after years, even decades have passed; Mike and I have done that since 1962, more than five such decades. It's what I love about our relationship; it's what I love about Mike.

I love you Mike.

(BIO: Bob (Robert Parris) Moses was a Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee (SNCC) field secretary from 1961-1965, and Director of SNCC's Mississippi Program and Co-Director, Council of Federated Organizations (COFO) from 1962-1964. He taught math in Tanzania from 1970 -1976. In 1982 he founded The Algebra Project, where he is now President. He has an MA in Philosophy, Harvard University, 1956-1957.)

PETER OLNEY (read Herb Mill's tribute)

(BIO: Peter Olney is the retired Director of Organizing of the International Longshore & Warehouse Union—Herb's union. He has been a labor organizer in Massachusetts and California for over 40 years. He served as Associate Director of the Institute for Labor and Employment at the University of California.)

HERB MILLS (read by Olney)

(Note from Mike: Herb is my best friend; he'll tell you some about our friendship in what follows. For those of you who don't know him, he was a brilliant PhD student in political science at the University of California when he dropped out—in 1963—to become a longshoreman. In ILWU, he held numerous leadership positions. He also wrote extensively about the union, the nature of the work and the transformation wrought upon the work by containerization. He is part of the Smithsonian Institution's permanent collection on transportation—look for it when you're next in DC!)

Michael has been my best friend for nearly sixty years.

I stood up for him at all his weddings. He stood up for me at mine.

We consulted on strategy and tactics on just about every organizing effort each of us took on.

We supported each other's hopes, goals, campaigns, projects. Shared networks and friends.

We critiqued each other's writing and played sounding board for each other's ideas.

I took the call at 2 am when he was run off the road working for SNCC in 1963 and was headed for the hospital with half his spleen.

We laughed at the absurdity of it all but never gave up.

I have eaten infinite numbers of bowls of Mike's spaghetti.

Mike has never wavered. Ever since we worked together in SLATE at Cal, I've known him to be fully committed to

organizing for social and economic justice.

He has acted on his commitments, trained countless organizers, put his experience in writing in several books, developed local leadership in each project and moved on to the next one.

He's still at it. He's made a difference in the world.

He's a prince.

(BIO: Herb Mills received a political science PhD in 1969 from the University of California where he was a leader of the early (1960-62) student movement. In 1963, he became a longshoreman and subsequently served in a number of elected positions in International Longshore & Warehouse Union Local 10, and on the statewide longshore caucus.)

PATRICIA LYNDEN

I may have known Mike longer than anyone here. We've been friends since we were 15, beginning in the McCarthy years when both of us were trying to cope with being red-

diaper kids in a world that viewed us with hostility. Mike and I attended different high schools but we dated from time to time, and occasionally had long phone conversations. They ended when Mike's mother called out, "Mike — it's time to do your homework." And Mike would say, "Okay, Mom," and we'd hang up till next time.

In 1956, after high school, Mike and I met up again at Berkeley. There were many kids from the left on campus then. We hung out together and Mike and I saw a lot of each other. I became a reporter and editor on the Daily Cal while Mike, along with Peter Franck and Hank di Suvero, was emerging as a campus leader and organizing Slate, the group that opposed the fraternity-run campus politics that were then dominant. As Slate won elections and totally upended campus politics I chronicled its growth in the Daily Cal and Mike and I became close friends; over the years, we and have grown closer. His friendship is one of the great treasures of my life.

I have two stories to tell about our friendship. One is kind of silly, but I'll tell it anyway: Mike had graduated from Berkeley and was at Columbia working for his masters degree and studying with C. Wright Mills. During that time

Herb Mills turned up at Berkeley. He was a graduate student and my TA, and we got involved romantically. But, things were not going smoothly from my standpoint, so I wrote an anguished letter to Mike who wrote back saying that he'd soon be back in Berkeley at which time he'd come and meet Herb and "straighten him out." Soon he was back, I introduced them, and they went to Robbies where Mike would "straighten him out." They returned awhile later with Mike smiling broadly. "He's a great guy!," said Mike. They became best friends, I did my own straightening out, and happily, today, we are all good friends.

The more important and telling story is this one: After I graduated from Berkeley, I moved to New York. Mike and I stayed in close touch: we wrote letters and saw each other on both coasts. Those years were the tough 1960s when Mike was almost killed in Mississippi for his civil rights work and cops were part of the established order that we on the left thought should be overthrown; they were called "pigs." But during this time I met a terrific New York City police detective and I married him. Old friends from Berkeley were shocked, some said I was a turncoat, a few wouldn't speak to me. It was Mike alone who spoke out in my favor showing his character as well as his faith in me. He said, "If Pat likes him, he must be a good guy."

So I love you, Mike. Thank you doesn't seem adequate, but thank you anyway. And happy birthday!

(BIO: Reporter and night editor, Daily Californian (UC Berkeley student daily); correspondent Newsweek; an organizer of the Newsweek women's revolt, 1970; articles editor Viva and Connoisseur; executive editor, Longevity; articles: The Atlantic, New York Times Magazine, New York Times Book Review, Town & Country, Connoisseur, New York Woman, many others. Currently an ESL teacher.

PETER FRANCK (Intro to Poem)

Mike, Hank and I met in the 1954 at Stiles Hall, then the University of California YMCA and the only place on or around the University Campus where a political meeting could be held. We were active together on a number of campus civil liberties and civil rights issues and helped start SLATE. After Berkeley I went to Columbia Law School, Hank went to Harvard Law School, and Mike went to Columbia Graduate School, all of us finding ourselves suddenly on the East Coast. Of course Mike and I returned, but Hank lives in Australia, where he is known as Henry di Suvero, and practiced as a Barrister.

(BIO: Peter Franck was one of the founders of SLATE, the UC campus political party. He was an attorney for the Vietnam Day Committee, United Farm Workers of America, and anti-draft demonstrators, and served on the National Lawyers Guild Board. He was Pacifica Foundation President (1980-84), and is on the Board of Media Alliance. He pioneered legal work for low-powered radio.)

HENRY DI SUVERO (read by Franck)

(Note from Mike: “Hank” got me into student government at UC Berkeley; he was my predecessor as the liberal voice on the Executive Committee of the Associated Students of the University of California (ASUC). The other voice was that of the Graduate Rep, Ralph Shaffer, who was followed in that position by Fritjof Thygeson; Fritjof was there during my time on “Ex Comm”. Don’t hold me to the timing here; it’s a long time ago! The poem was read by Peter Franck, soon to be an honoree at the annual dinner of the Northern California National Lawyers’ Guild. Peter and I met at Stiles Hall, the University YMCA in 1954. We were still the “silent generation”. The climate of fear created by the McCarthy era was still a very present thing. At the time,

Peter was chair of the Student ACLU. He, Hank and I were at the center of the group that started SLATE, the campus political party at UC, that was one of the early voices of the northern student movement. At the point of "Michael Row Your Boat Ashore", SLATE veteran Marv Sternberg led the assembled roughly 150 people in the song. His voice is still strong. We all loved his guitar playing, and still do.)

A Poem celebrating Mike Miller's 80th Birthday.

*Born into a family
where Left politics
was a daily discussion,
growing up in the misnamed
Sunnydale Housing Project
on the western edge
of San Fran's Visitacion Valley.
Leaving in 1954 for UC Berkeley.
Doggedly committed
in all his battles against
power structures
of discrimination and poverty.
Never forgetting his roots,
loyal son, friend, and brother.*

*The Social Action Committee
of Stiles Hall, the university YMCA,
provided an early skirmish,
resulted in eliminating
racial profiling by landlords
in the university's rental centre.
"Negroes need not apply"
wiped off the landlord listings.
A small but important victory.*

*Bursting through the miasma
of student politics at UC,
elected as a Co-op representative,
famously trashing the "sandbox"
of student politics,
with a new model called SLATE.
Openly running a slate of candidates,
laying the groundwork
for the HUAC opposition
for the Free Speech movement,
for the progressive student activism
of the sixties.
Working as a shoe store stock boy,
as a teamster, driving dump trucks,*

*also working for Building and Grounds
at his alma mater,
before heading for the Big Apple.
Going to graduate school in New York.
Hired by a Settlement House
to organize tenants in a public housing project,
Fired for being too militant.*

*Joining SNCC in their epic battle
for equality in the heart of darkness,
Leflore County Mississippi,
when being a white man assisting Blacks
was a recipe for death,
as was demonstrated
by the murders in Nashoba County, Mississippi.
of three civil rights workers,
21-year-old Black Mississippian, James Chaney, and
two white New Yorkers, Andrew Goodman, 20, and
Michael Schwerner, 24.
Becoming a SNCC Field Secretary
until SNCC embraced Black Nationalism
and asked their white comrades to leave.*

*Sitting patiently, listening
in, oh, so many meetings,*

*acting as a doctor,
assisting in the birth
of many organizations.
Always organizing,
by teaching university courses,
by writing copious articles,
by writing and editing books,
by making suggestions.
Never seeking the spotlight.
Always training natural leaders
in long range goals
as well as short term ones.
Moving on, never overstaying.*

*Worthy successor to Saul Alinsky,
the dean of community organizing,
steering clear of electoral politics,
or becoming the public face
of any community organization.
or responding to the fractious ideological
attacks on his work by ultra Left elements.
Criss crossing America,
a willing traveller,
heeding the call wherever needed,
always steadily engaged*

*in one or another project,
for over sixty years.
He still writes, publishes
and is always available
for strategic advice,
for answering calls that never stop.*

*Michael, row the boat a-shore
Hallelujah!*

*Then you'll hear the trumpet sound,
Hallelujah!*

*Trumpet sound the world around
Hallelujah!*

*Trumpet sound the jubilee
Hallelujah!*

*Trumpet sound for you and me
Hallelujah!*

*Congratulations matey!
You've run the distance*

*always holding your head high!
Still running!
Well done!*

(BIO: Henry di Suvero's was a member of the student executive committee at UC Berkeley. He graduated Harvard Law School, served as Staff Counsel of the New York ACLU, and Director of New Jersey ACLU and Emergency Civil Liberties Committee (ECLC). He is founder of the Los Angeles People's College of Law, and is now a retired barrister in Australia.)

MARV STERNBERG (sings "Michael Row The Boat Ashore")

(BIO: Marv Sternberg is a retired economics professor. He came to UC Berkeley in 1953 as a junior, and was an active member of SLATE. In 1962, he was in Chile working for the Inter-American Agricultural Development Committee re Chile's need for Agrarian Reform (pre Allende). Following, he spent 4 years with the International Labour Office in Geneva before returning to the States to teach at SUNY/Albany and then in the Bay Area. He's been a folk

singer since the 1950's and currently is a member of the SF Folk Music Club and the East Bay Fiddlin' & Pickin' Potlucks.)

RENEE MILLER

I am Renee Miller, Mike's longtime friend, coworker, and ex-wife. I met him in 1989 when I was working as a community mobilizer in Michigan and considering a move to the Bay Area. I had read about Mike and his work in Sanford Horwitt's book "Let them Call me Rebel" and hoped that I could work for him. Ultimately, we ended up collaborating on work, and much more...

I am most grateful to Mike for:

1) showing me what a life of service and dedication to social justice looks like, day after day, year after year, decade after decade, and now, spanning parts of two centuries;

2) being my friend through thick and thin for more than 25 years, far longer than I've been able to maintain a friendship with any other man. I give Mike, his patience and generous heart, all the credit for this huge blessing;

3) most importantly, loving and caring for my three children all of these years, in ways big and small, and for their six children who've all joined us over the past 7 years.

I'll let my children speak to the difference Mike has made in their lives, starting with Ember.

Thank you for all of this and more, Mike, from the bottom of my heart. I love you.

(BIO: Renee Miller worked in the nonprofit sector in various capacities for more than 30 years, most often with Mike. She was his partner/wife between 1990-2003, has 3 children and 6 grandchildren (who dearly love and are loved by Mike), and is currently retired and living on the island of Maui.)

EMBER BRIGHTLY

You might be wondering what it was like growing up with Mike as a stepfather. When I think back on it one of the things that really stands out in my mind is the family meetings. Mostly because they were incredibly, well... organized! Sitting there as a teenager in one of our family

meetings I always felt like my concerns were being heard and addressed...which, as you can imagine, was really annoying because it didn't give me any excuse to yell or slam the door to my room or anything fun like that.

All joking aside most people can count on one hand the people that made a lasting impact on their life and I, without a doubt, count Mike Miller on mine. He is one of the most kind-hearted, generous, compassionate and sincere people I know and I'm grateful everyday that he came into my life when he did.

I love you, Mike.

(BIO: One of Mike's three step-children, Ember Brightly was born in Eugene, Oregon. She currently lives in Maui with her husband and two sons and works as an emergency room nurse. In her spare time she's a photographer and poet.)

AUSTEN WARD

Mike, When I first met you in Aptos in 1992 I thought to myself, "Who's this old guy dating my mom?" That summer, you and I (how do you like that subject pronoun?!) had

stubbornly endless paddle-ball rallies on the beach; thousands of unspoken exchanges that eroded most of my skepticism of you (hahaha). It wasn't long after that that I realized we'd hit the mom's-boyfriend jackpot. The years I spent with you in San Francisco were some of the best of my life.

You have my unconditional gratitude for accepting us as your own kids; loving us, providing for us, listening to us, questioning (and disagreeing with) us, and for embodying such an inspiring standard of personhood.

Happy Birthday!

(BIO: A.J. (Austen) Ward is Mike's step-son, and a former emergency room nurse, living in New Orleans. He did his nursing study at New York University. He graduated from California College of the Arts, and was a student at San Francisco School of the Arts High School. He is currently a law student at Tulane University, New Orleans.)

TESSA STRAIT

(Note from Mike: Tessa is my youngest stepdaughter, and the child I have known the longest among the three of them. She

came into my life, along with her mother Renee, when she was five years old. AJ and Ember joined us a little later, moving to San Francisco from Michigan where they had been living with their father. They are my family, and I love all of them dearly.)

To my dad,

As I've listened to everyone speak I've heard organizing stories, ways Mike has been there on a personal level, stories of lifelong friendship and love. Our relationship is a little different, so this is who he is to me.

At 54 my dad had accomplished so much and done so many incredible things, that he decided to take on a new challenge and became a dad.

I was five when my dad came into my life, or I ran head first into his. He recalls falling in love with me the moment we first spoke on the phone. He says I was sassy, I had an attitude he could appreciate. He thought it was "personality."

A little while later my "personality" turned on him when he very innocently and in the spirit of creating some common

ground with a five year old, took me on a trip to the zoo that I'll never forget. Mostly because he won't let me. We laugh about it now but it was a turning point, a decision making moment.

I wasn't ready to be some man's daughter and Mike probably wasn't ready to be the father of a scared kid who was going to put up a fight out of what she thought was self preservation, for years and years. But he isn't ANY MAN. If you know Mike, even if you just know of him, you know that he's never thrown in the towel at the first sign of trouble. A little trouble actually motivates the man; it creates a goal that he can work towards.

He loved me more than I realized then. He loves me in a way I'll never be able to fully comprehend now, even as a parent myself.

Who knew 25 years ago that we would be here celebrating 80 wonderful years? Such an incredible legacy Mike has worked so hard to build in over all those years, a life he can look at and be really proud of.

My friends have a tradition before they introduce my dad to their parents. They start by asking me to retell a story he's

told them. They talk about his work during the civil rights movement. They ask me to pull up that famous picture with Bob and Martha and finally say something like, "he's kind of a big deal." Mike could have done anything when he first met me. He chose being a father. He did it with the same enthusiasm, confidence and Mike Millerness that he brings to everything he loves.

How incredible to be that loved.

Despite the ups and downs I hope you know that our family is strong and will be here through the years for whatever comes next.

We're a family - we've made you and mom grandparents 6 times over.

It's such an honor to call you my dad.

I love you.

(BIO: The mother of two young girls, Tessa is a volunteer in their school and a participant in regional Jiu-Jitsu competitions.)

MIKE MILLER

AT 80

*I can dimly see the end of the road.
I do not fear it.
I fear the last mile, the bumps in the road
The inability to walk, talk, see, hear or think any longer.*

*It's been a rewarding walk.
The places
The people
The learning and thinking
The joy and sorrow*

*I treasure the family, friends, wives and lovers who walked
with me.
The landscape would have been desolate at times without
you. You are the apple of my eye, the light in my heart.*

*I value the fellow organizers I've met along the way.
We did good work.
We left the world a better place because of our presence.
We made mistakes too.*

I honor the people who let me in their lives and their communities

To learn from you

To be part of your struggles:

The joy of victories

The pain of defeats

To see the unfolding of talents and capabilities

The solidarity that overcame consumerism, isolation and rugged individualism

I thank my mentors:

Theologians, pastors and lay people who live their faith

Trade unionists who live their principles

Socialists and others on the left who seek root causes

Liberals who treasure the First Amendment and equality before the law

Conservatives who fought for homeowners and small business people

'Snick' people whose struggle I was privileged to join

Quakers and existentialists

Alinsky and his people power realistic idealism

Small "d" democrats whose impact on me was the greatest

All of them justice seekers

They saw my passion for democracy and justice

They nourished it

Curiosity about what is to come makes me wish for more time.

I do plan to stick around a while

Will there be a descent into ecological chaos?

Beyond the place where my walk ends, I see that.

I fear it for my children, my children's children

For your children, and their children's children

For all god's children

To those for whom the walk remains long

Wherever your place on the path might be

If darkness is to come, there still remains this question:

Will light emerge from it?

Speak up. Join in community with others.

Act with growing wisdom.

The struggle is what makes us human.

MORE BIRTHDAY WISHES, TRIBUTES & RECOLLECTIONS

CANDACE TAYLOR

I am so proud and honored to have you in my life. I wish I could be there to celebrate your 80 years of grace, enduring love of humanity and your fierce, uncompromising fight for civil rights. You are my inspiration. As Bryan Stevenson says, "Don't ever stop beating the drum for justice." We all thank you and we all love you. Happy Birthday.

STEPHANIE LONG

*We can't wait to help you celebrate your 80th Birthday
Mike!*

Love, Stephanie, Martin, Annabel and Catie

STEPHEN MOTT

*Wish I could be there, Mike. It would be a great time. But
Happy Birthday. You are four years ahead of me!*

MIRIAM GLICKMAN

*Mike, I remember visiting you in a hospital in Mississippi.
It must have been in 1963. My memory is you'd been in an
accident and had your spleen removed. Not sure if that's
right - it's a memory from a long time ago. It's nice to think
that more than 50 years later I'll be helping you celebrate
your birthday.*

Happy Birthday!

HEATHER BOOTH

Can't come to celebrate with you, but I do celebrate you-- your years of commitment and organizing. You've done so much to make this a better and more just society--from SNCC and the Mission Organizing to ORGANIZE, Inc., union and faith work and your periodic missives advancing dignity for all people.

Warm regards and solidarity, Heather

CYNDY SHELDON

Hi Mike, Wish I could find a photo of you in Mexico with AFSC in San Nicolas de Los Ranchos! I think I was 20 so you must have been 19 at the time! That was a long time ago when we met...and am delighted we're still in contact. I won't be able to make it to your party, but will be thinking of you.

Lots of Hugs, Cyndy

FRED HIRSCH

It will be pleasure to celebrate with you on your 80th. I think you and I first met in San Francisco when SNCC was taking its baby steps - then in Mississippi when you were putting your life on the line everyday. I delivered a few donated cars, possibly to the Greenwood office. You were a leader and an inspiration then. You're no less than that now.

SUSIE ERENRICH

Happy Birthday Mike. I will be there in spirit. Wishing you the best of health and happiness and a very long life. I'm proud to call you a friend and mentor.

Lots of love - Susie

SUSAN GROSS

Happy birthday, Mike. Sorry I can't get west to celebrate with you. Have a super party.

JERRY COX

*Thanks Mike for the invite. Don't drive anymore at 91.
Will be there if I can make it.*

Jerry

DAVID J. KALLICK

Mike, Happy 80th Birthday!

*I hope this reply isn't too long, but I can't help taking a
little bit of space. It's been many years since we've talked,
but you were an important part of my early life in politics.*

*I've been following your work ever since the days when I
was editing Social Policy—in the late 1980s and early
1990s, when you were a loyal contributor.*

*On the occasion of your birthday, I took the opportunity to
pull down a few of those old articles. My favorite has to be
your reflection on the 30th anniversary of Freedom
summer. The Movement, as you wrote about it, still loomed
very large for those of us who were a little too young to*

have been part of it. Your reflections invoked not only the heroic efforts of so many, but also the complexities, the people who lost their lives, the mistakes, and the failures as well as the successes.

In that essay, as throughout your work, you enriched our way of thinking about the deep and painful and continuing lines of racial division in this country.

*You brought book reviews (including one of *We Make the Road by Walking*), and a wider cultural perspective, to *Social Policy*. And, I still have on my shelf your extended argument with Gary Delgado's book, *Beyond the Politics of Place*. That was an act of immense respect—taking Gary's thinking seriously enough to put it through its paces, to test it out, and to challenge it.*

I remember how you pushed me, too. My thinking was always richer for it. When I was writing about the importance of civil society, to take one example among many, you wrote one half of a debate we ran in the magazine about whether the category of "civil society" was a useful one, and about what kinds of organizing and organizations really matter. You were always critiquing and open to critique, debating and eager for debate, and

engaging and encouraging and generous with your time and your thoughts.

When you took on editing Social Policy yourself—after I left, and after Andy Humm served as editor for some time—it seemed like a natural continuation of that ongoing conversation.

Your commitment to the movement (I'll write it lower case) continues to inspire me, but so does your commitment to being open to new ideas, to intellectual honesty, and to continued, restless, seeking for justice and humanity.

I hope you have a wonderful birthday celebration.

All the best, David

LORIE HILL

I'm so glad that I'll be celebrating your birthday with you, Mike, and Kathy! All respect and appreciation for your lifelong commitment to the righteous fight for racial equality, social justice and peace! Lorie

SUSAN MOON

Hey, Mike- I'm sorry I can't come to your party, as I'll be in DC with a million women, but I, too, am glad to know you and I'm inspired by your work. We're pretty new friends —we met at a SNCC reunion- the 50th anniversary of "Freedom Summer" just two years ago. But it feels like we knew each other for those 50 years, somehow. And I admire you and your lifetime work with organizing, Saul Alinsky, Organize Training Center, and your life of commitment to friends and family and civil rights, and your writing. Also your humor, and your most becoming hat.

Have a great party!

DAVE HAWBECKER

Mike, It has been a long time. Wasn't sure you were still alive. You have been an important person in my life and I thank you for everything. I now live in Oregon and will not be able to make the big event. Happy Birthday. I'm just a year behind you.

Dave Hawbecker

JEAN ENTINE

Mike, sorry to miss this BIG event. We'll have to celebrate after I arrive back in SF mid February. I am struck by the ease with which you extend your circle to include newcomers like me.

Hats off to you and to a life lived fully.

Jean

MARY GONZALES

Hi Mike: Happy Birthday.

I can't be at your party but I wanted to write and wish you the best birthday ever. I still remember you attending my retirement party in Oakland and the precious poster you gifted me (it hangs proudly in my home). I have lived a blessed life surrounded by people like you. Your love of life, your passion for the people you interact with, your commitment to organize, the twinkle in your eye when you talk about your work, the smile on your face as you listen intently to whomever it may be you are talking to -

including me.

Happy Birthday old friend. May you celebrate many more and may I be able to be present at a future celebration. Greg and I will keep you in our thoughts and in our prayers as you approach this important benchmark in your life and may you never ever lose the passion you have.

Be Well!

JUDY BERTELSEN

Congratulations and Happy Birthday, Mike! Looking forward to seeing you and many friends at your celebration.

HARVEY SCHWARTZ

Happy birthday, Mike!

With admiration for your career and contributions to the party of humanity,

In solidarity, Harvey

DAVID CLISHAM

Mike: Pam and I will attend your 80th birthday party. See you then!

PETER DAHL

Early Recollections of Mike Miller:

In the summer of 1953, I was a painting apprentice and working at the old Lowell HS on Hayes St. Also working there was Ron Parshall. During lunch breaks we would shoot some hoops, and Ron could see that I was pretty good at basketball. He immediately recruited me to play on the St. James Presbyterian team . This involved in going to church and regularly practicing with the team. There I met a diminutive guard – Mike Miller! Ron played forward, Mike one of the guards, and I was the center. We won almost all of our games and just missed out being champions of the league. Mike and I hit it off quite well and after we both enrolled at UC Berkeley, where I boarded at Ridge House and Mike roomed & boarded at Cloyne Court (both Co-ops), we double dated and palled around. He and others introduced me to Styles Hall YMCA, which was a hotbed of liberal politics – I

joined, but was not very active due to the time-consuming science courses that I had to take in order to graduate from the College of Chemistry. Mike became heavily involved in campus and National politics. I met Barbara in German class my Soph. Year and we were married graduation day in 1957. Mike was my Best Man. Here are two photos of Mike at the wedding: (Photos did not show - contact me at bpdahl@aol.com to see them)

After graduation I became a teacher at Lowell High (my Alma Mater) and Mike went on to a very successful career as an Organizer for various organizations ending up with OTC. Unfortunately I will not be able to attend Mike's 80th Birthday Bash since I am expecting family then.

ROSALIE ROSS SENNETT

Dear Mike,

I'm happy to know that you are still working to save this world. We had a try at it with the Mission Council - fond memories. Stay well and happy - and enjoy your birthday.

Love, Rosalie Ross Sennett

SUZON SOLOMON KORNBLUM

Happy significant Birthday Mike! I'm delighted to be able to attend your birthday celebration. It brings up fond memories of Berkeley, my living with Judy, and just around the corner and down from you and Herb-- and, later, working (typing?) on a local democratic (small 'd') newsletter with you.

DAVID G. CARNEVALE

I always tell students about you, how you investigated what was wrong with our problems at California State Employees Association (CSEA) in getting members in action, and finding out that I was very much part of that problem: taking people out of action, developing a staff in the field in an industrial social worker mode -- fixing things for people and ignoring the power they might have on their own given a chance. Did a fair amount of consulting doing what I could to get people to define their own problems and strategies, tactics about what they could do about them making them authors of their own script. I owe that to you.

The wisdom learned at that point led me to a philosophy of action and trust in people to decide rather than me being a fixer...

*David
David G. Carnevale, PhD
Professor Emeritus
College of Arts and Sciences
University of Oklahoma*

TARA FAULKNER

Dear Mike,

I first met you when Renee and I were living in Santa Cruz 27 years ago. Since then, we've been part of the same wonderful/crazy extended family. Consequently, we've been on an extended roller coaster ride together through various familial highs and lows too numerous and personal to mention here.

Through it all, I've always known you were a very good man. The fact that you are a truly great man, however, had somehow managed to escape me until a few months ago

when I offered to help with OTC's new website. As I read through the historical material being posted to the site, I turned to Renee and said: "Mike is kind of the Forrest Gump of community organizing!"

What I meant by that was that you seem to have had an uncanny knack for being in the right place at the right time when so many truly historic events were taking place. The big difference, of course, is that you were an active, passionate participant in said events, and often even an instigator of same, while Forrest Gump was merely an accidental tourist.

This is what makes you a great man in my eyes.

I won't be at your birthday party, but I will be there in spirit, celebrating all the ways this world is a much better place because you have been, and continue to be, in it.

I'm grateful to have been on the roller coaster ride with you all these years. Your calm, steady presence has helped keep the cars from derailing on many occasions.

I love you, Tara

TOM RAMSAY

Many years ago when we first met at a talk you gave about the southern civil rights movement at San Francisco (then) State. Then our time as you led us in building SNCC's efforts in San Francisco.

Good days, good work. I am proud to have been counted your friend over the years. The best on your 80th birthday. Sorry I can't make it.

BOB and MARY TRIPP

We go back a long way with you, Mike: we've been friends since we met in New York City in 1958. In all these 58 years through moving various places and children and grandchildren we have never lost touch.

First I want to say this: a major reason that both of us love you, Mike, is that you really have stayed true to your core values. To us that is very important. Unlike some other folks who once considered themselves and were considered by others to be lefty/progressive, and then allowed money or whatever to move them to the right, you, dear friend, stayed

true to yourself--as your many years as a community organizer attest.

And withal you also stayed true to and never lost contact with old friends.

During the second half of the 1950s a whole bunch of us Californians migrated to the Big Apple. Mary's and my apartment became a kind of meeting place/hangout. A big reason is that we were the only married couple in our group and were [sort of] settled.

One of my favorite memories of Mike in those days is that he would show up at our apartment on 120th St very early in the morning having dropped off an overnight book at Columbia. When he heard us rattling around he would gently [yes, gently!] knock on the door and join us for breakfast.

We also remember that New Years Eve [1959, we think it was] when a whole bunch of us, led of course by Mike, went to a party somewhere on the West Side at the apartment of some well-known writer or activist. Mary and I have been racking our brains [not so easy at 84 as it once was!] trying to remember at whose apartment it was, but we just are not

sure. Maybe you remember, Mike. Anyway, after leaving the party our group started walking around the upper West Side and, as I recall it, came to the edge of Morningside Park and watched the sunrise.

Sadly, for us, we will not be able to be at the Jan 22 party. It is just too much at the moment for us to go back to my beloved home town – much as I wish we could – from Reston in northern Virginia. But we sure as hell will be there in spirit.

STEVE BINGHAM

Congrats Mike! May OTC continue forever!

RICHARD & MICKEY FLACKS

Flackses send you warmest possible greeting on reaching this moment. We hope to make it there too. You were one of the first of the 'sixties' activists we became aware of and appreciated our times together in the City!

Love d/m

MATT ALEXANDER

Happy Birthday, Mike! Thank you for your leadership and vision!!

LILLY RIVLIN

May your work be read by the next generation and may you continue to be an inspiration. Health.

JUDITH SANDOVAL

Thanks for your continuous organizing!

CLAIRE MILLIGAN

God bless you, Mike. Happy birthday.

PETER PITEGOFF

Happy birthday, Mike! And best wishes for 2017.

CAROL SHEIN

For many more years of activism!

KATE GILPIN

A very happy 80th to you, Mike! Sorry I can't make the event--have a wonderful birthday!

SUSAN MCWILLIAMS BRANDT

Happy Birthday, Mike! The world is better for having you in it!

JEAN HUME

Now more than ever. Happy birthday, Mike.

ROBERT LINTHICUM

(Notes from Mike: Bob Linthicum died soon after writing

his comments for my birthday party. I considered him a non-blood brother. He was an evangelical Presbyterian, theologically conservative, and a radical on issues of racial and economic justice. When he was a young seminarian in Chicago, he encountered an extreme example of racial injustice and the abuse of political power. It changed his life. Reflecting years later on that experience, he wrote,

"First, I realized that the power of the world's evil is far greater than the sins of its individuals. The very systems of a city or nation could become corrupt, grasping, oppressive and exploitive. And it little mattered if all..the nation's poor were to be won to Christ as long as the evil in the systems could be allowed to run unchecked and destroy [people].

The other thing I realized was that my theology was inadequate for ministry in that kind of evil-powered world...I realized that if the church does not deal with the systems and structures of evil, then it will not be effective in transforming the lives of that city's individuals. What I needed, I realized, was a biblical theology that would be equal to the challenge of the social and individual sin of the world!" (MM: See Appendix for full text.)

Bob devoted his life to acting on that early experience, and the theology he learned and contributed to as a result of it. His exploration led him to community organizing and Saul Alinsky. He and I first met by correspondence, then in person. In 1990, he asked me to lead a community organizing workshop for theologically conservative Christians. In that workshop, I met Marilyn Stranske who found the arguments for building people power organizations so persuasive that she left her job as co-director with her husband of an inner-city faith-based community center in Denver to, first, become an intern in a Denver community organization for which I was consultant, and then to be the full-time organizer for a project that became Christians Supporting Community Organizing (CSCO). The project was conceived in a meeting of Marilyn, Bob, Ken Luscombe (Bob's co-director) and me. A project concept was developed in two intensive days of talking, writing and thinking together. And I was asked by the three of them to be project consultant. When I asked, "How are you going to explain me—a fallen away Jew—in your world?" They responded, "You let us worry about that."

For the next 10 years I was a de facto staff person in the building process that led to CSCO. During that time, we held about a dozen workshops in which I did the presentation on

organizing, and Bob presented its theological base. It was one of the most rewarding work experiences of my life, and Bob and Marilyn became close friends (Ken returned to Australia). Wherever Bob was, whether pastor of a local church, or co-director of World Vision's Office of Urban Advance, he made organizing low-income communities central to his work.

(Google Robert Linthicum to find more of his writings.)

"Whoever pursues justice and kindness will find life, justice and honor" (Proverbs 21:21, ESV).

Thus wrote a Jewish wise man nearly 3,000 years ago in the Hebrew Bible's wisdom literature. It is an amazingly accurate description of who you are, Mike Miller!

Nietzsche once wrote that to change the world required "a long obedience in the same direction." You have lived a lifetime of single-focused commitment to the cause of justice. Whether it was as a student on the Berkeley campus or in SNCC, or later in your organizing work with IAF or OTC, or whether it is today in your writings and mentoring, your life has been epitomized by a "long obedience" to the cause of justice to those most marginalized and exploited by

our society.

But there is also another side to your life's contribution, Mike, which endears you to people. You really care about them! The author of the above statement from Proverbs used the Hebrew word "chesedh" for what is translated "kindness". Actually, "chesedh" is essentially untranslatable into English because there is no English equivalent to it. "Chesedh" is God's love for human beings which is lived out by humans to humans. It is God's love translated into human compassion, caring and curiosity about others.

That is a trait that you radiate forth to each person with whom you deal, whether it is manifested in affirmation or calling to accountability!

So happy 80th birthday, Mike Miller. Over your 80 years, you have experienced and keep on experiencing "life", "justice" and "honor", because you have been a man who has combined in your person and in your vocation both "chesedh" love and a commitment to justice. As a result, you have blessed my life and the lives of a multitude of people. May you have many more years of blessing us through both whom you are and what you do.

Have a happy 80th birthday. I regret deeply not being able to be there!

FRED B. KOTLER

There are many ways to gauge the impact of someone's life and work. Mike Miller's life and mine intersected when, responding to a Chronicle want ad for "socially-minded activists," I presented myself, age 22, at Citizens Action League one September day in 1975. A friend brought the notice to my attention. Serendipity. There are a few events in our lives that are truly transformative. This was, for me, certainly one of them.

It was the very definition of contingent employment: if you can raise that \$60 quota in four hours of door knocking, you keep \$20, then go at it the next day. Thanks to youthful energy and purpose, it worked. Door knocking for dollars then led to house meetings and actions. The start of a most valuable and practical education.

All that I later learned and later practiced, in forty years of organization and education work is rooted in that experience. Working with Mike and the corps of

experienced staff organizers, among them Tim Sampson, Pat Jackson, Tom Ramsey, Mike Barnes, and Kim Clerc, changed my life. This was, for me, the utmost good fortune.

Mike and I reconnected a few years ago and a series of phone chats since has been a pleasure. Mike has positively impacted many lives. I am delighted to join with others in recognizing his important and continuing role as practitioner, writer and teacher and salute his lifelong commitment to what in the Jewish tradition is called Tikkun Olam: the “mitzvah”, the charge for action in this life, to heal the world.

Happy 80th birthday, Mike. Carry on.

MATTHEW HALLINAN

Greetings, Mike, It's important to celebrate those who have made the choice to devote themselves to human betterment – and you have done that. What makes you special is that you treat everyone with respect and compassion – something that is not all that easy, and not all that common with those who give a lot of themselves. Happy birthday!

CAROLYN & STAN WIENER

We wish you many more years of good health, strength, hope & love. HAPPY BIRTHDAY!

MICHAEL MYERSON

Happy birthday: here's to the next 20!

HARRY BOYTE

In 1983, I followed Mike around San Francisco in the early days of the San Francisco Organizing Project, which I wrote about in "Community Is Possible -- Repairing America's Roots" (Harper & Row, 1984). We had a long discussion, which impacted my thinking -- though in recent years he says he doesn't agree with the point! He had just talked with someone -- maybe Dick Harmon - about two models of change, the Maoist and the Christian. The Maoist is to surround the cities from the countryside with a vast sea of forces; the Christian was to bubble up everywhere from the catacombs, with an alternative way of being and thinking. Mike and I talked about which would be the path toward

broad democratization of power in our age -- and while we both agreed that it's not either/or but both and, it is also "more or less." I'm with the Christians.

HERMAN GALLEGOS

Greetings on the occasion of your 80th birthday. I will miss seeing you and being with your many friends gathered to celebrate, not only your birthday but in admiration for all the years you left behind of contagious enthusiasm, and a treasury of hopes helping communities organize for power so that in your own words, "New leaders will arise to better express the constant quest for freedom, equality, community, security, and justice for all."

Congratulations and happy birthday, Mike

*In solidarity,
Herman Gallegos*

JUDY STRAIN

Dear Mike, We met at Wazir's bedside about a year ago.

Just making a small donation in his honor, and to support your work and to remember Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.

STEPHEN BINGHAM

Congrats Mike! May OTC continue forever!

JIM QUEEN

Mike, much respect for your body of work.

AMY FAZIO

Mike, I have great memories of learning to ride a bike, rollerskate, skateboard, etc., at your house with Tessa. A favorite memory of mine is practicing cooking in your kitchen. I still remember how you told Tessa and I "I think maybe you added a bit too much salt." Indeed we had! We added ½ cup instead of ½ teaspoon to the batter. Afterwards, we had chili and laughed at our huge mistake.

Happy birthday, Mike.

LAURA MYERSON

Happy birthday, Mike! May the next decade bring you continued vigor and fight for the struggle ahead. And may be all live to see a new, radical, progressive era in our country. March on!

*Love,
Laura*

MICHAEL MYERSON

Keep on keeping on. Abrazos.

ANNA RIDDER

To Mike, Keep the fire burning. You have made a great impact in the world. We need your wisdom and fire more than ever.

JOHN MARTIN

Mike, your ability to inspire, to lead, and to make our corner of the world a better place is unparalleled.

Happy birthday.

RAY STRANSKE

Happy Birthday, Mike! Congratulations on achieving this milestone, but also for the accomplishments of a life filled with serving our community. Yay!

MARTHA CLARK-SCALA

To my favorite agitator! Goodness, you lead us well in the art and grace of aging. I have so much gratitude for you... and love.

MILA THOMAS AND DAN

Mike, happy 80th birthday! I first met you in the spring of

1982 when my friend Celia and I walked up to your SFOP office. We interviewed you about how to deal with “burnout” for organizers. We had gotten a grant from the Yale Club to research this question and you were very helpful.

I met you again with Tim Sampson who was my mentor for homecare and childcare organizing when I was organizing director with SEIU 616. Since then we’ve kept mostly in touch with the L250 retiree group and Kathy. And of course, your books have been much appreciated by my Filipino friends/organizers, trained by Herb White and his staff. Thank you so much for sharing your experience and wisdom.

MARILYN STRANSKE

Mike, you changed the trajectory of my life and work as much if not more, than any other person in my life. You challenged my worldview, taught me a new way of thinking, and a set of skills that have enabled me to be a much more effective person in working for the things I care about. Despite turbulent times in our relationship, or maybe because of them, I owe you a debt of love I can never repay,

except forward. Thanks for all. May you have many more years to share your wisdom.

Happy 80th.

*Love,
Marilyn Stranske*

MARTI LEICHESTER

Happy birthday, Mike! You look wonderful, happy, the man of a fulfilling life! I'm enjoying the movies. Being here is an honor, a place to learn, fun, and bittersweet, because Ron would have wanted to be here, too. He is in spirit! Some of the ripples of your life you have seen touch others, create more ripples. Other ripples you have no idea of the impact you've made. I'm so fortunate that one of the ripples of you and Ron meeting, his year with SNCC in Alabama, and all you have done, what he did, somehow the ripples have reached me! May the fullness of happiness and positive impact of your life continue and increase.

*Love,
Marti*

KATIE COLEMAN

Mike, my love at 18 who broke my heart then, but also a political mentor who became a lifelong dear friend, as he has been to so many. I treasure your friendship and loyalty. I still can see you at my Black Oak reading when Bob Bloom, Judy Bari's attorney, attacked me "spittle flying" and you walked to the front, squared your shoulders and shouted him down. "What's the question?" you bellowed. My hero. My defender. You've enriched my life. I love you.

Happy birthday, dear friend.

MARCY ADAMSKI

Happy birthday, dear Mike – may your heart be filled with delight, all your appetites satisfied and wise understanding shape your days ahead. Live long and thrive.

*Love,
Marcy*

JEANETTE EICHORN

Happy birthday, Mike! Wishing you many more – you are needed! If two knitting women can generate a million plus women’s march, let’s go!!

CHERYL GLOECKNER

Mike, happy 80th my friend – thanks for including me in your celebration of your journey today.

*Warmly,
Cheryl*

JOAN COHEN

To Mike, a real milestone. I’m glad I can celebrate it with you. xxx

STEVE & RELANNA WALDHORN

Mike, We are all little fish in a big pond, but you have been

a bit bigger than most of us and have taken on a few big sharks, but still made it to 80!

Happy, happy birthday.

MARV STERNBERG and SHARRY LEVY

Dear Mike, It's been a pleasure and an honor knowing you and working with you. With lots of love.

SUZON KORNBLUM

Dear Mike, Celebrating you on your special day and wishing you all the happiness you deserve for always "walking your talk."

Happy 80th birthday with lots of admiration and in friendship.

DENISE BERGEZ

Dear Mike, As your 80th birthday celebration has

approached, I've been thinking back on our years of friendship and smiling at the moments, large and small, that still shine in memory. I offer a few of them to you:

- At a CAL staff party when I was in my early 20s and new to the organization, you showed me how to properly clean mushrooms: DON'T wash them directly in water because they'll become water logged and lose flavor; instead, wipe them with a damp towel. I still clean mushrooms this way to this day, and I keep trying to get Caleb to do likewise. He doesn't listen. ☺*
- (PS Your mushroom cleaning lesson helped me to not be TOO intimidated later when you were a hard ass with us CAL staff.)*
- In the mid 80s, when I was casting about for my next job, you suggested I call Fred Ross because he was doing interesting work at a place called Neighbor to Neighbor. I called, and the next thing I knew I was on a plane to Tennessee to organize a campaign to win the vote of rep Bart Gordon against aid to the Contras. We won his vote – and the rest, as they say, is history. Best job I ever had.*
- Of course, part of that history was my on again, off again*

relationship with Fred. After one especially painful breakup, you took me to dinner at an Italian restaurant on Mission street and listened as I cried over my meal. I don't remember what you said, just that you were there for me in the kindest way. And, in that moment, that meant everything.

- *Somewhere during those years, you took me to the sing-along Messiah at the opera house – maybe even twice? I don't exactly remember, but I do treasure the recollection of the two of us standing in the balcony and belting out the Hallelujah Corus with abandon.*

- *Even though we don't see each other often, you and Renee invited me to ring Caleb's big Japanese temple bell to open your wedding ceremony. I can still feel my nerves as I knelt to invite the bell. But mostly, I still feel surprised and moved by the honor. I'm inspired by your continued devotion to Renee and your kids and grandkids.*

When I became involved with the IAF, I was struck by their insistence that in organizing, "It's all about the relationship." Mike, you embody that truth, and my life is richer for it.

Thank you! Happy 80th –

BARRY SHAPIRO

Happy birthday to a man who makes the world a better place by being a unique, positive part of it. May you enjoy many more years of health and productivity.

With respect and admiration.

JULIANNE MORRIS

Dear Mike, looking back to a friendship that started more than 50 years ago, I remember how good to me you've been, from your mentoring in our SLATE years to your care and support when my husband died and I came back to California.

I have always admired your ability to bring people together to act and participate – both your skills and your big heart.

You have made a real difference in this world and I am so happy to be with you at this time in your life.

Happy 80th birthday. Love, Julianne

DAVIN CARDENAS

Mike! I'm indebted to you, your dedication, and ideas. I really hope to emulate you, the way you've made your presence on this earth known to others, creating history and not passively observing. Thank you for the countless hours and insights.

Happy birthday, big hug. Davin

DIANNA MILLER, KEN DURSO and KATE

Mike, 80 candles shine today to honor one important life that's touched so many others and been such an inspiration – and as they shine, may you look back with pride and satisfaction, knowing that your life and you are cause for celebration! So glad to celebrate another decade with you!

Onward – Dianna, Ken and Kate

DONNA MICHELSON

Another exciting chapter! Happy birthday. With great

fondness AND appreciation for who you are and what you do.

KAREN and JERRY HEATHER

Mike – happy 80th birthday! You have been such a loyal supporter of NVCM over the years! Thanks for being there for us! You have been such a community advocate over the years!

Love, Karen & Jerry

MARIAM GLICKMAN

Dear Mike,

Happy 80th birthday!

Enjoy the sweetest of days and years to come! I'm so glad I could be here to help celebrate with you. It's enriched my life knowing you. I feel so proud of all you've accomplished to help others and make the world a better place. I wish I'd known when I was 21 and met you that I'd be coming to

your 80th birthday party. Best wishes for many more healthy and happy years.

Warmly, Mariam

RICH WALLER

Mike – You were an agent of change in my life and I will always be thankful and grateful!

PANSY WALLER

Happy birthday and many, many more!

MIMI STERNBERG

Watching you over the years with our SLATE discussion group, I see a person committed to being an agent for change – with your writing, your work in communities, your action and your thinking and analyzing, I come away with great respect and joy at a man using his potential in important and positive ways. May you have many more

years to contribute to our community and the earth!

Love, Mimi

DEVORAH GOLDBERG

Dearest Mike, You've changed my life in so many ways. The experience of SLATE (which without you wouldn't have even existed); learning from you at Freedom House; teaching me how to talk to people; how to speak up for what I believe and be heard; guiding me to run for SLATE rep (which you probably don't remember) and, not least of all, being such a wonderful and dear friend in my life now... Someone I can call at midnight to rescue me from the terrors Trump is engendering in me... Someone who is there for me, as you are for so many others. I am grateful for the gift of you.

Happy, happy birthday!! Love, Devorah

PARTY ATTENDEES

Marcy Adamsky

Matt Alexander

Laura Andrews

Buck Bagot

Ramon Barbieri

Frank Bardacke

Anne Barrows

Judy Baston

John Baumann

Lynne Beeson

Diane Benton

*Denise Bergez
Joe Berry
Judy Bertelson
Steve Bingham
Diane Bloom
Joe Blum
Charles Bolton
Marcia Brenta
Ron Bridgeforth
Ember Brightly
Gail Brown
Deanne Burke
Mario Cabrera
Davin Cardenas
Sara Cleveland
Dave Clisham
Pam Clisham
Joan Cohen
Kate Coleman
Kathleen Connolly
Marian Currell
Caleb Cushing
Mason Drukman
Ken Durso
Tom Edminster*

*Tom Edminster
Dave Eichorn
Michael Eisenscher
Mohammed Elgazzar
Barbara Epstein
Peter Franck
Rich Fallenbaum
Amy Fazio
Tony Fazio
Alan Fisher
Julienne Fisher
Dave Fulton
Peter Gabel
Ana Garcia-Ashley
Marj Garlin
Vic Garlin
Betty Garman
Miriam Glickman
Cheryl Gloeckner
Devorah Goldberg
Mariela Gonzalez (with Mario Cardenas)
Tim Gordon
Gerry Gray
Susan Griffin
Chia Hamilton*

*Bruce Hartford
Amy Hartman
Chester Hartman
Rich Hayes
Jerry Heather
Karen Heather
Lorie Hill
Holly Holcombe
Phil Hutchings
Cecile Isaacs
Lisa Jaicks
Becky Jenkins
Marie Jobling
Clarence Johnson
Aryay Kalakai
Sally Kirk
Kevin Klein
Suzon Kornblum
Jack Kurzweil
Jeanne Larson
Marti Leicester
Jerry Levine
Toby Levine
Sharry Levy
Kathy Lipscomb*

*Amy Locks
Pat Lynden
Jerry Mandel
John Martin
Sharon Martinas
Benino Martinez
Anne Mason
Nancy Matthews
Craig Merrilees
Donna Mickleson
Diana Miller and Kate
Renee Miller
Sharon Miller
Herb Mills
Julianne Morris
Bob Moses
Laura Myerson
Michael Myerson
Jamie Nakama
Tim O'Brien
Peter Olney
Mike Parker
Elaine Peacock
Christina Perez
Martha Prescod*

Jim Queen
Rachel Reinhard
Anna Ridder, plus Leyla and Navin
Salomon Rizzo
Karen Robert
Eduardo Sandoval
Judith Sandoval
Gene Savin
Susan Savin
Martha Clark Scala
Norm Schneider
Harvey Schwartz
Rodger Scott
Barry Shapiro
Susan Shaw
Carole Shein
Tom Sinclair
Marvin Sternberg
Mimi Sternberg
Julia Strait
Katherine Strait
Larry Strait
Tessa Strait
Marilyn Stranske
Ray Stranske

*Alvin Tan
Dan Thomas
Mila Thomas
Marco Topete
Mateo Topete
Odin Topete
Gene Turitz
Louise Turitz
Rihanna Waldhorn
Steve Waldhorn
Pansy Waller
Rich Waller
Austen Ward
Jonah Ward
Silas Ward
Gail Whitty
Mike Whitty
Maurice Zeitlin
Cathy Zhou*

APPENDIX

Eva's Story
by Robert C. Linthicum

In 1957, while I was a student in college, I was working among African-American teenagers in a government housing project in a city of the United States. This housing project was built to warehouse the poor in high-rise buildings of poor construction and design. Our ministry among those youth included recreational and athletic activities that were designed to bring them to confession of Christ as Savior. Once they received Christ, they were encouraged to join our Bible studies where they would be disciplined and connected to the life of a local church.

One of the youth who began to actively participate in our Bible studies was a new Christian named Eva. Eva was an exceptionally beautiful teenager, physically mature for her age. She became even more radiant when she received Christ as her Lord and Savior. I began discipling Eva, building her up in the “nurture and admonition” of the Lord.

My academic year was drawing to a close, and I was looking forward to returning home for summer vacation. Just before I was to leave my teenage “parish”, however, Eva came to me greatly troubled.

“Bob”, she said, “I am under terrible pressure and I don’t know what to do about it. There is a very powerful gang of men in this project that recruit girls to be prostitutes. They are trying to force me to join them. I know it’s wrong, but what should I do about it?”

I didn’t know what to say to Eva. Nothing in my experience had prepared me to deal with something like this! After all, I was only 19 years of age! The only thing I could think to do was to share with her what I had learned in Sunday school and in the Christian college I attended -- to “resist

evil and it will flee from you”, to “commit your way unto the Lord and he will give you the desires of your heart”. I urged her to stick with her Bible-study group and not to give in to the gang’s demands.

And then I left for my summer vacation!

Three months later, I returned to college and to that ministry. Eva had stopped attending the Bible study. When I asked about her at the Bible study, the other youth told me she had stopped coming about a month after I had left.

I feared the worst! I went to Eva’s apartment in one of the project buildings to talk with her. Eva answered the door. When she saw that it was me, she burst into tears.

“They got to me, Bob,” she said. “I’ve become one of their whores!”

“Eva, how could you give in?” I unsympathetically responded. “Why didn’t you resist?”

“I did resist!” she replied. “I didn’t give in; I was forced in.” Then she told me a story of sheer intimidation and terror.

“First, they told me they would beat my father if I didn’t become one of their whores. I refused -- and they beat him bad. Then they said my brother was to be next. I still refused, and he ended up in the hospital with both legs broken. Then they told me that if I didn’t yield, they would gang rape my mother. I knew they meant it, and I couldn’t allow that. So I gave in and became one of their whores.”

“But Eva,” I said, “Why did you let them intimidate you that way? Why didn’t you get some protection? Why didn’t you go to the police?”

“Bob, you honkey,” Eva responded in disgust, “Who do you think the gang is?”

Suddenly it hit me. This gang of “very powerful men” Eva was describing was the police! The police -- the very people entrusted with the task of protecting and defending the people -- were in reality the real exploiters and oppressors of the people. Here was evil like I had never known it before -- for the police were the gang operating the prostitution ring and recruiting young girls like Eva out of that slum. And later it was discovered that this was not simply a single police precinct gone astray. What was happening in that

one precinct was the tip of the iceberg in what was a city-wide operation of gambling, prostitution, drug-distribution and bootleg liquor by the police, with the judiciary organized to legally protect from exposure and prosecution this betrayal of the people.

It was in this encounter in 1957 that I discovered two things. First, I realized that the power of the world's evil is far greater than the sins of its individuals. The very systems of a city or nation could become corrupt, grasping, oppressive and exploitive. And it little mattered even if all the Evas among that nation's poor were to be won to Christ as long as the evil in the systems could be allowed to run unchecked and destroy these Evas.

The other thing I realized was that my theology was inadequate for ministry in that kind of evil-powered world. Through Eva's tragedy, I realized that if the church does not deal with the systems and structures of evil, then it will not be effective in transforming the lives of that city's individuals. What I needed, I realized, was a biblical theology that would be equal to the challenge of the social and individual sin of the world!