

MICHAEL CRAGO

SPORTS



Originally from Belle Fourche, S.D., where he grew up on a family ranch, Mike Crago attended South Dakota School for the Deaf where he received diploma in 1973. During his school years, he participated in cross country, basketball, and track & Field. After graduating, he went on to receive his BA degree in Philosophy from Gallaudet University in 1978. When he returned home in Sioux Falls, he joined Sioux Falls Athlete of the Deaf to play basketball as a guard for several years. After retiring from playing basketball, he studied Educational Psychology and Counseling at the University of South Dakota and received his MA degree in 1991.

Mike has had various jobs including working as a chargeback representative for Citibank, operating his own garbage business, a technical specialist for CSD VRS, a trainer for Sorenson VRS and even operating his own interpreting agency before eventually becoming a vocational rehabilitation counselor for nearly 5 years.

Mike has had many memories involving competitive sports such as cross country, basketball, track & field, softball, rugby, football and even rodeo. Particularly, he has three precious memories that are hard to forget.

- 1) The District 18 basketball tournament back in February 1973. The SDSD team posted a stunning victory over Harrisburg, the heavily favored team across the state of South Dakota, with the score of 69-57. They made a headline in the Argus Leader Newspaper. Four starters including Mike Crago, Jan Buri, David Soukup and Doug Schweitzer hit double figures in the semifinal slot at the Sioux Falls Arena. The SDSD team coached by Larry Puthoff held a seasonal record of 11-11, the best season ever since 1954.
- 2) The region 5B Track & Field Meet in May 1973. Specifically, the SDSD Medley Relay team established a Region 5B record at Lennox with its 3:50:0 Mike ran with Ron Lerdal, Lyle Grate, and Leslie Barber. At that time, Larry Puthoff coached the team.
- 3) The annual MAAD tournament. For several years, Mike enjoyed participating in the annual tournament. He received several individual awards including the Individual Sportsmanship Award (3 times) and the Most Assists Champion. He was eventually inducted into the MAAD Hall of Fame back in 1984.
- 4) Throughout his sports career, Mike was supported by excellent coaches including Ron Mitchell, James Ponwith, Larry Puthoff, Mark Gunderson and Larry Strain. Mike remains grateful for their support continues to look up to them.



Mike's favorite quote for the younger generation is "In order to excel at your sport, you will need to work hard, practice and practice more."

Mike currently resides with his wife and their two dogs in Tucson Arizona where they enjoy short hikes and visits from their children Zach, Zarah, Matt and Heather. One of Mike's favorite