



Hayden Michael Aronson

October 31, 1942 - November 22, 2025

Hayden Michael Aronson was born on October 31st, 1942, in Chicago, Illinois. He was the first of three children to be born to his proud parents, Rose and Paul Aronson. His father was deployed at the time of his birth, and Hayden didn't end up meeting him in person until he was 4 years old. But Paul wrote to Rose after seeing a picture of his son for the first time, saying "He's got any baby I've ever seen beat for looks. He sure is some boy. Did you ever see such big eyes? Or such nice legs or arms on any baby? Honey we sure got some baby..."

Hayden's parents had two more children, both daughters, Theda (who goes by Teddi) born in 1948 and Ivy in 1950. Their childhood was not easy. Rose suffered from untreated mental illness and while Hayden had nice memories, like her drawing beautiful pictures on his religious school chalkboard, there were also periods of chaos that were quite scary for the young siblings. Due to her condition, the two youngest children were placed in different foster homes while Hayden moved in with his grandparents. His youngest sister died of respiratory illness when she was three years old, at which point Teddi was brought back into their grandparents' home. She remembers fondly being reunited with her brother and him taking good care of her, even when the adults in their lives did not.

Despite his rough start, Hayden went on to achieve and experience so much in his 83 years. In his teen years, a girl recommended he start going by his middle name in order to get a girlfriend, and after that advice most people

knew him as Mike, although family continued to call him Hayden. He had a sharp and inquisitive mind which led him to the Illinois Institute of Technology after graduating from Amundson High School. He always loved science and thought he might study electrical engineering in college, but when he found out he would have to take bookkeeping to get that degree, he decided to check the box that said physics on his application instead, even though he had never taken a physics course up to that point. He graduated with his Physics Degree in 1964.

Mike was a legendary storyteller, so I will let him tell the next part of the story in his own words, taken from an interview his daughter did with him for a school genealogy project: "So now I had a piece of paper that said 'Kid, you are a physicist!' Well, I had no idea what a physicist did, so I put that piece of paper in my back pocket. A good friend of mine had two non-functioning TR3s, which of course are sports cars. So we spent the summer making one functioning car out of the two by putting the parts together and then we drove off into the sunset, in a car with no visors." The two friends made it all the way to California, where Mike tried out the Beach Bum life for a bit until his money ran out, at which point he pulled that piece of paper out of his back pocket and wrote a few letters. It was 1965, in the peak of the Apollo hiring for the race to the moon. Mike was hired by Douglas Aircraft Company and ended up working on an instrument panel in the first Saturn V rocket to orbit the moon. After his start as a young physicist in the space race, his career path took several twists and turns. He discovered that he had a love for teaching and later went back to school, earning a Master's Degree in Physics from Oregon State with a teaching certification. He worked at Sehome High School in Bellingham, WA, teaching mostly physics but also developing some other courses, including one called "Physics for Poets" for the less scientifically minded. He later taught Physics and Astronomy at Clackamas Community College in Oregon City. He became very interested in computer programming and had a short stint running his own side business software company named Responsive Logic. He decided to go back to school again, earning his second

master's from OSU, this time in Computer Science. He finished out his professional career as a Software Manager at Lucidyne Technologies in Corvallis, OR, where he worked for over 25 years, until his retirement in 2018. Even with all of these achievements, Mike's greatest accomplishment by far is the beautiful life that he built with his wife and family. Mike was introduced by mutual friends to Susan Carol Golden, a Pediatric Nurse Practitioner, while they were both living in Bellingham. They dated on and off for a bit, but it was while they were both in a local production of Fiddler on the Roof together that their relationship became more serious. They started planning their wedding together and got married in Mike's backyard on August 11th, 1974, surrounded by family and friends. Together they raised three daughters, Wendy, Rachel and Carmel, first living in Oregon City and later moving back to Corvallis where all three girls graduated from high school. Those early family years were full to the brim with dance and violin lessons, family trips, community and high school theater productions, and participation on various sports teams. All three daughters inherited a love of performing from their parents. Mike was ecstatic to welcome his two grandchildren, Ravi and Beau, into the family when they arrived and has cherished his time with them very much over the last 11 years.

When Mike and Susan were newly dating, she remembers them talking about what the most important thing was for their lives. Mike answered that he wanted to learn as much as he could; he wanted to always be learning new things. And that is exactly what he did. Susan describes Mike as a true "renaissance man". He continued to explore and actively engage in all of his varied interests throughout his long life, including science, theater, music, creative writing, computer programming, world travel, and so much more. He was always a voracious reader and lover of history. He was instrumental in starting up the Reader's Theater program at the Majestic Theater in Corvallis, which allowed so many plays to be presented to the community that folks may not have otherwise seen. His volunteer work there was recognized on his 80th

birthday, when they unveiled and dedicated the Mike Aronson Spotlight Award, that they now grant to others in recognition of extraordinary service to the theater. He wrote and produced original readers theater productions on various topics of interest for the Beit Am Jewish Community over the years as well. Mike and Susan enjoyed many trips to Hawaii, both on their own as a young couple and later with their girls, to visit his sister Teddi and her family. They also traveled through Europe, Israel, Central and South America, Canada, and French Polynesia. Spending time in the Galapagos Islands, Bora Bora and at Machu Pichu were some of Mike's favorite travel experiences. Mike stayed busy with his interests and projects right up until the end of his life. He was working on his first novel, a science fiction story, and participating in a worldwide artificial intelligence programming competition. He was an active and respected member of the Beit Am Jewish community. He volunteered to train new board members in the Stoneybrook retirement community where he and Susan lived in recent years. He remained vibrant, inspired, motivated and loving throughout his long and full life.

Hayden Michael Aronson passed away in the Hospice House on November 22, 2025, after sustaining an injury from a fall in his home a few days prior. He was surrounded by loved ones at the time of his death. He is survived and deeply loved by his devoted wife Susan; his three daughters Wendy, Rachel, and Carmel; their partners Aaron, Andrew, and Lynn; his two grandchildren Ravi and Beau; his sister Teddi, all of his extended family and a wide network of friends. May his Memory Be a Blessing.

Donations in Hayden's honor can be made to Beit Am, The Majestic Theater Performing Arts Center, or Samaritan Evergreen Hospice House.

Previous Events

Graveside

NOV **25**. 11:00 AM (PT)

Waverly Memorial Cemetery
Old Salem Road
NE Albany, OR 97321

Tribute Wall

CN

“ I have many fond memories of Mike from my association with the Majestic Theatre over the years - parties, weddings, funerals and lots of laughter. I offer you Susan, Wendy, Rachel and Carmel my most sincere condolences on his sudden illness and death and send you love and wishes for strength as you grieve. Catherine Neary, Greystones, Ireland

Catherine Neary - November 26, 2025 at 02:58 PM

RA

My condolences to Susan and Family. I knew Hayden a long time... since grammar school. He was a part of the class that reunited in recent years. Classmates got together and had this connection that can't be explained! To Susan and family you are in my thoughts and prayers! Hayden was special!
Rita Carlson Andrews
River Forest Illinois

Rita Andrews - December 01, 2025 at 08:12 PM