Mihai Radulescu

Obituary

Like so many who have settled in Beaufort and in this country, Mihai Radulescu, born on November 7, 1941 and passed away Friday, January 5, 2024,at Beaufort Memorial Hospital, was an immigrant who escaped from Communist Romania to proudly become “your fellow American.” In 2017 he and his wife Marly Rusoff left NY to begin making Beaufort, SC their home.

The son of a Greek mother, who was the daughter of an Opera singer, and a Romanian father, a pharmacist and amateur musician, Mihai was the great grandson of Commander Gheorghe Pastia, a philanthropist and highly decorated war hero who served in the war that freed Romania from Ottoman Rule. The family was rich in vineyards, and early in the twentieth century, Pastia used the family wealth to build an Opera House and Regional Theater which he donated to his hometown of Focsani, a midsized city that sits in the wine region at the foothills of the Carpathian Mountains. This architecturally spectacular building, built over a century ago, remains a gathering place and home that celebrates music and the arts. The Romania into which Mihai was born was distinctly Latin in temperament and language, yet a Francophile country with ties to France that went back to the 1848 Cultural Revolution.

All this is to set the stage for the person Mihai was to became: a lover of wine, people, music, beautiful architecture, and not least of all, freedom. After growing up under the thumb of one of the worst Communist tyrants of the past Century in a country where freedom of speech did not exist and where citizens could arbitrarily be imprisoned or tortured, Mihai became a passionate supporter of his adopted country as well as those in the American military who risk their lives to keep us free.

While in Romania, Mihai studied architecture, philosophy and received a law degree. Before leaving for America, he learned English by listening to an Arthur Miller play so often he found he memorized it. When meeting his wife Marly, he joked that he could speak English for an hour and half “as long as no one interrupted him.” After their marriage, he opened a business in Soho, New York, serving architects, developers, and real estate firms.

Mihai’s Beaufort story began after he left the world of architecture to become a partner in his wife’s literary agency. Mihai became a fervent supporter of the agency’s many authors and particularly enjoyed presenting new books to the international Book Community at the annual London Bookfair. There his gregarious personality and his skill in making tasty little sandwiches at the agency’s table made him popular with rights directors from around the world.

 Mihai was a natural host, a skill he later joyously used in Beaufort when, as a regular patron of Saltus Bar and Grill, he felt responsible for making sure everyone around him had a great time. Every Tuesday was devoted to his Taco Tuesday group organized by his “brother from another mother,” Roland Gardner

Among their agency’s clients was the celebrated Lowcountry writer Pat Conroy. Mihai became a friend and a passionate supporter of Conroy’s work. Following Pat’s death on March 4th 2016, Mihai applied his marketing and computers skills to reach Pat’s readers from around the world to raise the financial support necessary to establish a The Pat Conroy Literary Center in the hometown that Pat so loved, a love that Mihai would come to abundantly share.

Mihai is preceded in death by his parents and his younger brother Alex, a brilliant musician who taught at Berklee College of Music in Boston, and survived by the love of his life Marly Rusoff, his wife of 39 years, as well as an extended family which includes sister-in- law Tamara Rusoff-Hoen; nephews, Daniel and Ben Rusoff; stepdaughters Kari Andrade (husband Arthur); Clea Felien. His grandchildren include Matthew Andrade, Allison Andrade, and Cooper Felien.

While there will be no monuments to Mihai, his deep spirituality and love of music carried him through many difficult times. Many will miss him terribly, but his spirit may live on in music. Mihai could not live without his playlist and was comforted daily by the song *Seven Spanish Angels* as sung by Willie Nelson and Ray Charles. On January 5th, when Mihai’s battle against cancer was over we lost a great man when his “seven Spanish Angels took another angel home.”.

In lieu of flowers, memorial gifts would be gratefully received in Mihai Radulescu’s name by the Pat Conroy Literary Center