



Michael Thornton Flynn

October 11, 1934 - January 14, 2026

Michael Thornton Flynn, 91, of Siloam Springs, Arkansas, passed away peacefully on January 14, 2026, with his wife beside him.

Born on October 11, 1934, in Sante Fe, New Mexico, Mike always considered Sante Fe “home” in many ways as Southwestern art, geography, and culture forever engaged his imagination, even though he did not reside there long.

Mike spent most of his childhood in Kansas and Oklahoma, graduating secondary school from Rogers High School in Tulsa. He later received a degree from Moody Seminary, studied broadcasting at John Brown University and the University of Tulsa, and earned a Master’s in Communication from University of Arkansas. Early in his career, Mike worked in television news as an anchor in Tulsa, Oklahoma. While he was skilled on camera, he found his true calling in settings where conversation was slower and more personal. That pull eventually led him back to John Brown University, where he served as professor and Head of Broadcasting and Communications, and helped create KLRC radio. His calm demeanor and ability to listen facilitated connection with students.

In 1978, Mike settled in Siloam Springs and began the work that would define his public life. From his home in the Ozarks, Mike created and hosted The Folk Sampler, a radio program centered on folk, bluegrass, blues, and traditional music. Over time, the program grew into a nationally syndicated broadcast, reaching listeners on public and community stations across the country from Alaska to Florida. After more than four decades on the air, Mike

retired from The Folk Sampler in 2018. By then, his work had left a quiet but lasting mark on American roots radio, on the musicians he featured, and on the listeners who welcomed his voice into their homes week after week.

A man of many interests and talents, Mike faithfully served on the City Board of Siloam Springs for twelve years. He was an amateur photographer, pilot, motorcyclist, and cowboy--he loved all things western and even served as editor and publisher of the Quarter Horse Newsletter. Still, music was his heart. Whether serving as MC at the Winfield Folk Music Festival or hosting a hootenanny in his home, his favorite past time was gathering with others to sing, play instruments, and enjoy the deep and humble roots of folk music with those he cared about. In his last twenty-five years of life, he and his wife, Laura Lee, embraced his folk-loving world—the music, the gatherings, and well... all the folks.

Mike is survived by his wife, Laura Lee Flynn of Siloam Springs, AR, his son Jerry Green (and Becky) of Phoenix, Arizona, grandsons Jeremy Green (and Emily) of Flagstaff, Arizona, and Nathan Green (and Brooke) of Phoenix, Arizona, and nine great-grandchildren. He is preceded in death by his brother Jerry Flynn, his mother Elsie Frances Carroon Flynn, his father George Elmer Flynn, Jr., his wife Mildred Green, and Sandy Wark Flynn, his wife who also shared with him the early years of his radio work and his love of music.

A celebration of Mike's life will be held at a later date to be determined. In lieu of flowers, the family welcomes memorial gifts to St. Jude's Children's Center or Alzheimer's Society.

Tribute Wall

CK

“ *Mr Flynn was not only my favorite professor at JBU, but also a valuable mentor, professional inspiration, and good friend. His showing me some of his photography pieces my Junior year sparked my interest in the art - which I enjoy to this day. But no part of his influence on me was greater than the interest he showed in teaching me the ins and outs of radio. I spent nearly 30 years as a DJ largely because of what I learned from Mike - in the classroom and in the studio. Even though my time at JBU was 4 decades ago, I will never forget Mr Flynn. Can't wait to see him in glory (hope there's Radio in the New Heaven and Earth.*

Curtis Kraetsch - February 03 at 05:16 PM

AI

“ *Mr Flynn was a favorite professor and a wonderful friend .. he taught me many things as a broadcaster and a student of his .. he will forever be remembered 😊❤️*
Ardy - Vos Iwema class of 85

ardy iwema - February 01 at 05:39 PM



“ *Peaceful Wishes was purchased for the family of Michael Thornton Flynn.*



January 27 at 11:19 PM

DB

“ Doug Porter / Angelyn Bass planted a [Memorial Tree](/store/Product.aspx?ProductId=4518) in honor of Michael Thornton Flynn.

Doug Porter / Angelyn Bass - January 27 at 11:19 PM

TH

“ He was such a sweet and welcoming man .

Theresa Haggard - January 27 at 04:28 PM

JM

“ John Marshall lit a candle in memory of Michael Flynn



John Marshall - January 22 at 08:53 PM

JM

“ Mikes first year teaching at JBU was my first year as a Freshman at JBU. Mikes teaching really molded my career in radio broadcasting.

John Marshall - January 22 at 08:53 PM