



## **The MRPA “Mike Brett Summer Crab Feast”**

It’s not often that someone so special comes into your life and leaves an everlasting footprint on your life’s journey. But that is exactly what Mike Brett did - a loyal friend, a consummate professional, an inspiring mentor, a devoted family man.

Mike saw the best in people and brought out the best in every one of us. He always wanted to “catch” employees doing something great. He was never satisfied with the status quo and instilled that in everyone he mentored. He always had a smile on his face and had such a great sense of humor. His laugh was contagious, and he knew how to have fun.

Mike worked for the Maryland-National Capital Park and Planning Commission, Department of Parks and Recreation, in Prince George’s County starting in the early 1970s as a Community Director, where he coordinated hundreds of leisure programs and major events while building and nurturing long-lasting friendships and relationships with Commission staff, Recreation Councils, city and county officials, and more. He wore many hats and was successful in wearing all of them!

Because of his extraordinary leadership skills and success, he was promoted and continued his passion for managing and upholding the integrity of a multiple gold medal award-winning Parks and Recreation agency. He succeeded in practicing smart growth in parkland management while embracing employees to fulfill and achieve their career goals. In his final position with MNCPPC, Mike and a very ambitious team began moving the Department of Parks and Recreation to an online platform. He remained the Smartlink Manager until his retirement in 2010.

Mike was active in MRPA throughout his career, holding numerous leadership positions throughout his 45+ years of membership, including President from 1987 to 1988. Mike was an outstanding example of a professional and a dedicated and humble leader. He received numerous awards during his tenure including the Distinguished Fellow Award, Member of the Year, Retired Life, Governors’ Citations, and many other accolades celebrating his excellence in parks and recreation leadership and management. Mike also became the “expert in by-laws and policy development” upholding the integrity of the Association’s business plan and operations- something he took very seriously. In addition to his active role in MRPA, Mike was also an active member of the National Recreation and Parks Association, (NRPA). He represented Maryland on the Mid-Atlantic Regional Council, (MARC), for several years and was voted to represent the Mid-Atlantic Region on the American Park and Recreation Society, (APRS).

Mike's professional career spanning 37 years, was marked by steady progress and increased responsibility; a testimony to his professional competence and sterling record of accomplishment in each position he held. More important than his career progression perhaps was his mentoring of the young professionals who worked with him, many of whom went on to leadership roles within MRPA, and in their respective departments. Mike will always be remembered as someone who could help mold promising young talent, and show them the path to success while instilling the importance of giving back to the profession.

There is no doubt that Mike has left a legacy and was an inspiration to so many. He loved his parks and recreation family, MRPA, and he especially loved the summer membership meeting each July where we all come together, enjoy each other's company, recreate, and "crack some crabs".

In honor of Mike Brett, the crab feast was dedicated to him in July 2022 and will be known as the MRPA "Mike Brett Summer Crab Feast".