

District Governor 2010 -2011

Michael George Kenny was born in Oshkosh, Wisconsin, Feb. 6, 1959. Mike's father, George, instilled in him at a young age the importance of giving back to the community and others less fortunate than him – an attitude that Mike has adopted his entire life.

Mike joined the Boy Scouts, played baritone horn in drum corps and concert band, and was active in his church youth group. He enjoyed news writing, acting and athletics. Perhaps the biggest decision Mike had, as a young man was which of his interests to pursue as an adult. He considered teaching, and then studied drama, then radio/TV/film at the University of Wisconsin – Eau Claire. After his father's death in 1982, Mike transferred back home to the University of Wisconsin – Oshkosh to study journalism and help his mother through a difficult time.

That's where Mike met the love of his life, Gail. They were married in 1985 and moved to Arizona a year later. Their son Michael was born in 1990. Mike didn't hesitate to become involved in the community, volunteering as a youth football coach, an assistant scoutmaster and the local director of a soccer program for disabled youngsters, the VIP or Very Important Player program. He eventually took over the statewide leadership of the VIP program.

So when PDG Lion Dave Andrews approached Mike about joining up a new civic organization starting in Clarkdale, Mike listened. When he found out the group worked to help the community and especially people with vision problems, he bit. Mike became one of the first members of the Clarkdale-Jerome Lions Club in 1995, and was right there to cook steaks for the first two years when the club started its Verde Canyon Railroad/Steak Fry fundraiser.

An opportunity for Gail took the Kenny family to Prescott Valley in 1997, and even before they moved, Mike made a connection with the Prescott Valley Early Bird Lions Club. Checking out their new community, Mike saw familiar yellow vests at the Prescott Valley Days Parade. A chat with a couple of members convinced him this was the Lions Club to transfer to. It was an easy move: from cooking steaks to turning hot dogs, from the Verde Canyon Railroad to the PV Early Bird Lions Caboose! Mike got involved in cleaning shut-ins' yards during Prescott Valley's annual clean up days and selling Christmas trees each December.

Mike allowed his special interests to determine his service. With his writer background, he's done the club's newsletter, Canyon State Lion articles and press releases. With his interest in sports, he's run the Prescott Valley Early-Bird Lions bowling tournament fund-raiser for the past seven years and last year, created an NFL raffle for Sight First II, in connection with Super Bowl XLII (42) in Glendale. He's been club president twice, and was second Vice President.

But Mike's interests in Lionism didn't stop at the edge of Prescott Valley. He's been to numerous 21C and MD-21 conferences, and USA/Canada forums in Tucson and Reno, Nevada. He was zone chair in the greater Prescott area for four years, during which time he received the International President's Award. 2 years ago, he was nominated for and participated in the Faculty Development Institute.

4 years ago, Mike found out he has a heart problem. What his cardiologist told him was that he has cardiomyopathy – an enlarged heart. Looking at it another way, what the doctor told Mike was nothing that people who knew him best didn't already know – his heart's too big. He had to step back from his work in the hospitality industry for a brief period of time to regain his health, but he

didn't step back from Lions for a moment. Mike always knew that his call was to help his community and those less fortunate than him.