



# Mark Hohenwald

December 23, 2024

Mark Alan Hohenwald

October 23, 1962 – December 23, 2024

Written by his daughter, Daniela Wilkerson

Born and raised in St. Paul, Minnesota, Dad described himself as an outgoing sports enthusiast as a kid. He was often up to mischief, constantly “running the roads” in search of a good time. He worked a variety of jobs growing up—delivering newspapers and working in the kitchen of a local Mexican restaurant, to name a couple.

In 1980, he enlisted in the U.S. Army, which brought him south to Alabama. It was there he met and married our mom, and before long, they were stationed together in Germany—where I was born. He spoke often and fondly of his time overseas. When they returned to the States, there were eventually three of us kids. Although their marriage didn’t last, we were always part of his life in one way or another.

I’m Daniela—the oldest—and in his later years, I became his caretaker. Cory, the middle child and only boy, inherited Dad’s headstrong attitude and mischievous streak. The two of them together- sarcastic, tough, and impossible not to laugh around. I always admired the way they brushed off

others' opinions with ease. Then there was Bridgett, our baby sister. She was feisty and quick-witted, and Dad lovingly referred to her as his "mini me." We lost Bridgett suddenly in 1997 when she was only eight years old. That was a heartbreak our family never fully recovered from. For the rest of his life, Dad struggled to speak about her or even look at her photos.

After his time in the Army, Dad worked primarily as a roofer. He was self-employed and proud of his craft, always insisting that hammer and nails were the only proper way to do a roof—no nail guns allowed. Though he had a small frame, he had Popeye-sized arms and hands from decades of hard work. I can still remember clinging to his arm as a kid while he swung me around.

Music was a major love of his—especially classic rock, which he preferred to play at full volume, whether the neighbors liked it or not. He loved fishing, playing softball, and collecting football cards. He was a die-hard Minnesota Vikings fan and often said he wanted to see them win a Super Bowl before he died. Even when they were winning, he'd complain they weren't playing well enough. He had high standards for his team. Some of his favorite possessions were Vikings memorabilia that Cory and I gave him as gifts.

Dad was also incredibly sharp. No one could beat him at strategy games like Monopoly—within ten minutes he'd be dominating, and the rest of us were just along for the ride (and his bragging). He could play cards for hours. He loved crossword puzzles and word searches, and his vocabulary was impressive because of it. On TV, if it wasn't sports, it was game shows or talent competitions. He thought Steve Harvey was the funniest person on the planet and would come into the room laughing so hard he couldn't get the words out to tell us the joke. He loved America's Got Talent and would call me into the room to watch acts he found especially impressive.

He had a real talent for cooking and especially loved spicy food. He made his

own hot sauce—based on a recipe he picked up at a restaurant job—and put it on everything. He had a serious sweet tooth, too. We shared that. Most days he would graze on snack cakes and cookies and then eat a big home-cooked dinner. It wasn't exactly conventional, but it was him.

Dad didn't live a perfect life. He struggled with alcohol addiction from his teenage years onward. But he made real progress in the final years of his life, especially while living with me and my family. I'm proud of how far he came. I'm even more grateful for the time we had together in my home—time filled with meaningful, healing conversations. We both said the things we needed to say. He made amends in his own way.

Though disabled, he still found ways to contribute—doing yard work, cleaning, helping cook. Some of my favorite memories in those last years were of us cooking together. We even smoked a duck on my Green Egg grill once, and it turned out great. He loved checking the progress of my spring garden each day, always amazed that I was growing things. Hearing him say I was doing a good job meant everything to me.

If we ever showed him a DIY project, his response was usually, "I can build that for you." We had a lot of unfinished projects on our list, and I'll always wish we'd had time to finish them.

He softened with age. He'd get teary-eyed spending time with his granddaughters, Heidi and Vanessa. He was so proud of how smart and talented they are. He beamed with pride when Heidi graduated high school in May 2024.

Anyone who knew Dad knew he was rough around the edges—but if you were his friend, he was fiercely loyal. He wouldn't hesitate to climb up on a

roof or fix something in your house if he could help. He did it many times for me and for Cory. You always knew he loved you if he offered you one of his classic knuckle sandwiches—with a grin and a wink to let you know you were his favorite target that day. That was his way of showing affection: tough on the outside, and heart underneath.

He was one of the hardest workers I've ever known. Honestly, he worked his body to the point that it couldn't keep going.

In the weeks leading up to his death, it became clear he was very sick. But we didn't learn the full extent until he was in the ICU. Just a few days before he passed, an ER visit revealed advanced cancer in three areas of his body—something that hadn't been diagnosed before. At that point, he only had days to live.

On December 22, 2024, Cory and I made the decision to remove him from life support. He was in the ICU at Mobile Infirmary, where the staff treated him with great care and dignity. We were lucky to have had a couple of days with him by his bedside before that decision was made. He passed peacefully in the early hours of December 23, 2024. I was there with him when he took his last breaths.

Dad never wanted a big service or anything fancy. The only request he made was to be cremated, and he trusted that we'd make the rest of the decisions. Cory and I chose to bury his ashes with our sister Bridgett. We did so on January 26, 2025, and placed a stone there in his memory.

Dad was preceded in death by his daughter, Bridgett Hohenwald; his granddaughter, Ava Wilkerson; his parents, Archer and Karen Hohenwald; and his sister, Vickey Thoreson-Hohenwald.

He is survived by me, Daniela Wilkerson (Wayde), and my daughter Heidi; by

his son Cory Hohenwald (Candice) and granddaughter Vanessa; and by his beloved cat, Rosie.

You can find the location of his burial by searching his name on [findagrave.com](http://findagrave.com).

In lieu of a service or flowers, we ask that donations be made in his memory to any of the following organizations:

Juvenile Diabetes Research Foundation

American Cancer Society

Alcoholics Anonymous (please consider donating to a local chapter)

"Jesus answered him, 'Truly I tell you, today you will be with me in paradise.'"  
Luke 23:43

"And when death finds me,

I hope it whispers,

'Come now,

the fight is done,'

and takes my hand gently,

like an old friend

who understand

why I'm so tired.

I hope it says,

'You've carried enough,

let me hold this weight for you.'

I hope it promises,

'Here there is quiet.

Here you can rest.'"

-Titus.poetry

# Tribute Wall

RI

“ I grew up with Mark in West St. Paul, MN. We both worked at “ La Casita”, where we both learned how to cook Mexican cuisine. I also knew his sister Vicki, who also worked at the restaurant. It was quite a busy establishment and sometimes we wouldn't get home until 2-3 AM on weekends.  
Mark always found a way to make a boring day into an adventure. It was amazing how quickly he could make friends.  
We lost touch after a while, and I was saddened to hear of his passing. He was lucky to have a kind and caring family. I hope that time will heal the emptiness and prayers to heal the soul. God bless you and your family.

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**Rick** - November 03, 2025 at 01:52 AM

DW

“ Dad and Rosie



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**Daniela Wilkerson** - May 31, 2025 at 02:20 PM

DW

“ Fishing under the Alabama Point bridge in Orange Beach Alabama



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**Daniela Wilkerson** - February 07, 2025 at 10:34 AM

DA

“ 6 files added to the album Memories



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Daniela - January 08, 2025 at 05:03 PM

DW

“ 6 files added to the album Memories



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Daniela Wilkerson - January 08, 2025 at 05:01 PM