

Griffith Suicide Group

Mike Cowdroy

“I want to put country music on the map in Australia, then take it to America and show them how it should be done”.

These were brave and bold words for a man who became passionate about music, not just any music, but country rock in particular.

These were also the words used by Mike to explain to his Father why, at the age of 21, he was choosing a career in music, over a more ‘stable’ career as a budding chartered accountant, a life which he had lead for 12 months after graduating in Commerce from the university of NSW.

Having made his decision to change his lifestyle direction, Mike embraced music with a passion. He completed a diploma course at the Australian Institute of Music where he learned to read music for the first time and gained a solid knowledge of a wide spectrum of music life.

Mike and fellow band member, Todd Atkinson, formed the band “Southbound” when they were both in their late teens living on the northern beaches of Sydney. They both had a passion for country rock music and soon found a synergy between Todd’s singing and Mike’s guitar playing.

The quality of both continued to improve and with the addition of a drummer and bass player, followed by pedal steel guitar, the unique sound that was Southbound began to emerge.

In recent years, Mike had developed a skill for song writing and many of his songs feature on the Southbound albums “Make a Move” and “You didn’t need the world”. Although his passion was country rock, many of the songs Mike wrote were ballads. Some of Mike’s songs are still emerging from files and filing cabinets and computer records. Who knows what other ‘gems’ may still be lying idle, awaiting discovery?

At the time of Mike’s untimely death, Southbound had a full playing schedule, both in the city and in country towns and had been nominated for a “Golden Guitar” at the 2003 Tamworth Country Music Festival, for a song which Mike wrote called “You didn’t need the world”.

Always with an eye to the future Mike was developing skills in the area of promotion and marketing of Southbound within the music network of radio stations and TV stations, etc. He was also building a recording studio and honing his skills in this area, in preparation for yet another shift in his music career, at some time in the future.

Being “passionate” about music did not mean that Mike became intense and myopic. He attacked surfing and snowboarding with the same degree of energy and enthusiasm as he used in his music endeavours. Mike was as much at home entertaining skiers as a guide on an “Alpine Ski Tours” bus to Jindabyne, or as a tour guide on a skiing trip to Canada. Many of his ‘customers’ became Southbound fans.

Through Southbound, Mike enjoyed helping and providing assistance for deserving causes, especially those which represented others less fortunate than himself. The strange thing is that through these activities, although helping others, he also became a winner as he took time to get to know those with whom he came in contact and added these to his long list of friends, a list of which he was very proud.

Mike lived and loved life to the full. He loved dealing with people. He had a happy attitude to life and an infectious smile which made you smile with him. He also possessed boundless energy which became contagious.

Above all, Mike seemed to approach life’s tasks with a degree of urgency - which may have even suggested that Mike knew that his time here on Earth was limited!

In all this Mike still found time to ‘stop and smell the roses’ on life’s journey. This was advice given to him by his parents; advice seen by them to be essential to the enjoyment of a balanced lifestyle. Mike followed their advice, wherever possible. This showed itself in the way he handled the many pressures of his chosen career.

Mike died in a car accident on his way to play with the band in Tamworth and Quirindi. He was an Organ Donor and, as a result of his death, six people including a young girl, benefited from his generosity. He had discussed his decision to become an Organ Donor with his family. To him, it was the most natural thing to do. To others it is a beautiful and unselfish act of love

When Mike died, his parents established the Mike Cowdroy Regional & Country ICU Trust Fund, to raise money to provide assistance in the ICU functions of qualifying hospitals in Country & rural areas, particularly in NSW. Discussions are currently underway to bring that dream to reality.

These discussions are being held with the Rural Committee of the Australian & New Zealand Joint Facility of Intensive Care Medicine and, if successful, will result in the Trust Fund becoming a perpetual fund, the income from which being used to assist those who wish to train in ICU nursing, to attend National conferences and seminars in this critical area of ICU medicine.

Donations to the Trust Fund can be made by cheque sent to the Trustees of the Mike Cowdroy Regional & Country ICU Trust Fund, c/- Homan Webb, Solicitors, GPO Box 119, Sydney, NSW 2001.
