

In Memory of First Officer Michael L. Martin

October 30, 1961 - November 15, 1999



On November 15, 1999, Michael L. Martin died after a courageous two-and-a-half-year battle with cancer. He was only 38. He is survived by his wife, four children, his mother and father, two brothers, and two sisters.

Mike was hired in March, 1989, and was last flying the F-100 in PIT as a First Officer. He loved to fly and took his last flight on his father's retirement trip from TWA last fall.

Mike was a friend of many at US Airways. Approximately 25 uniformed pilots from all over the country honored him by attending his funeral in St. Louis. I read the following poem, "The Perfect Friend," at Mike's funeral. It was written by several of his friends, and it expressed the feelings of all of us who knew him. Mike, we miss you.

*Mike Berryman (PHL)
A319/320*

Note: Mike's wife Carla asks that any donations be given to the US Airways Pilots Voluntary Fund.

The Perfect Friend

A friend and I said good-bye,
Though good-byes aren't that good.
We searched for words and we both tried
To do the best we could.

It was hard to talk about
Our memories and the past;
For back then we had no doubt
That all good things would last.

But that is what we had to do
To say the things we said.
We even shared a smile or two,
At times we cried instead.

I knew when I first met him
He would be the perfect friend.
I'm proud to say it stayed that way
Until the very end.

God had given him a challenge
With a lot of pain and strife;
And what hung in the balance,
Was my friend's very life.

I knew the odds he went against,
How hard that it would be.
I also knew if I lost him,
I'd lose a part of me.

He had amazing courage
Through the battle that he fought.
He didn't know the word discouraged,
Never gave the word a thought.

I never once heard him complain,
He never asked "why me?"
But kept his silence through his pain
So no one else would see.

He didn't have a single doubt
That he could somehow win,
And when his body just gave out
He still would not give in.

He kept that look that made me smile
That twinkle in his eye.
He kept his humor all the while
And his dignity and pride.

Then late one day he just let go
While drifting off alone.
God picked him up and held him close,
Then carried him back home.

Had I lived my life without him
It would be poorer yet by half.
For he had a way about him,
That taught me how to laugh.

He was an inspiration till the end,
A man you had to like.
If I ever had "the perfect friend,"
That perfect friend was Mike.

I tried last night but could not sleep
As thoughts rushed through my head.
Then I know I heard Mike speak,
And this is what he said.

Although I had to leave you
And was taken in my prime.
I had many blessings too,
So much of life was mine.

I had the perfect loving wife
And loving children too.
I had more friends in this life
Than many people do.

My father and my mother
Were the best that there could be.
My sisters and my brothers
Were all so good to me.

I had many earthly dreams
Most of them came true.
God even let me spread my wings,
I got to fly with you.

Although that final flight was rough
And long as it could be.
I'm now in God's eternal love,
I have been set free.

I am here beside you still,
And I will always be.
Deep within you'll know and feel
The presence that is me.

If you just look around you now,
Look up into the sky;
What I've become surrounds you now,
My spirit did not die.

I'll be the rain that falls each spring
And the flowers that you grow.
With each season I will bring
A sign that you will know.

I'll be the colors in the leaves
As they begin to fall,
And in the slightest autumn breeze,
Listen, I will call.

I'll be the silver in the moon,
Look up and see me glow;
And when your winter comes too soon
I'll sparkle in the snow.

I'll touch you with the summer sun,
I'll whisper in the wind.
Please don't cry, I did not die,
With God I'm born again.

"I'm with God, and born again."