



## John R. McConaugha

September 24, 2022

John Robert McConaugha, 74, passed away on Saturday, September 24, 2022 in Fort Collins, Colorado.

John was born in Ohio and lived his entire childhood in Louisville. Even before he played football for Louisville High School, he knew that he wanted a career in Marine Biology. To that end, he chose to leave Ohio to go to University of Miami to complete an undergraduate degree in Marine Biology. After graduating from Miami in 1970, he was accepted to Graduate School of Biology at the University of Southern California where he taught undergraduate courses in biology and worked on many research projects in addition to his own PhD. dissertation on molting in the crab *Cancer anthonyi*.

After earning his PhD. John was awarded a post-doctoral fellowship at Duke University Marine Laboratory in Beaufort, North Carolina. Not long after accepting this position Cathy joined him in North Carolina where they were married in 1979. John and Cathy were just scraping by on a post-doc and fast-food salary with no permanent job offer for John at that time, so in order to afford their simple wedding bands they both sold all their books at the used book store, as avid readers this was a considerable amount of text. John wore this gold band every day after their wedding.

Just before their wedding took place, John was offered a research position at

Old Dominion University where he stayed until his retirement in 2016. While at Old Dominion John taught many graduate and undergraduate students in both the classroom and his laboratory. His primary work at O.D.U. focused on the Blue Crab, *Callinectes sapidus*, as he reimagined the way larval forms migrate offshore during their development to take advantage of higher salinity before reentering the Chesapeake Bay to grow to adulthood and harvest. In the 2000's John was appointed to the Virginia Marine Resources Commission by Governor Tim Kaine where he served many years and helped shape policy for conserving the Blue Crab population.

John and Cathy became a family with the addition of Duncan in 1982 and Nicholas in 1984. John jumped right into fatherhood changing at least as many diapers as Cathy and got out of bed to sit by them during mid-night feedings. As soon as the boys were interested in sports John became their soccer coach even though he knew nothing about the sport. He spent many hours reading and researching soccer coaching techniques that he used at practice with his teams. John also coached the Catholic High School Blue Crab Bowl Team when the boys were in High School, taking them to the National Finals. John had a green thumb and raised Orchids as a hobby. He cultivated orchids for the boys to give to their dates on prom night.

Throughout his life, John enjoyed being a "Santa's Helper", playing Santa for numerous schools and organizations. Even without the Santa suit, children would recognize him as "Santa".

After Cathy forced John into retirement they traveled to 46 states in their RV and traveled to Alaska on a road trip continuing onto a cruise to see the glaciers. In 2020 they went on their dream trip to cruise around New Zealand and spend a month in Australia. They became "snow birds" by settling in Arizona at Green Valley RV Resort in Winter and their home in Fort Collins, Colorado in Summer.

John is survived by his wife of 42 years, Cathy; his children Duncan McConaugha (Lauren) and Nicholas McConaugha; and his granddaughter, Lydia Rose McConaugha. He is also survived by his mother, Margaret McConaugha and his sister Nancy (Clyde) Haller and her children Debbie, Brian, and Heather and their children; his sister-in-law and brother-in-law; Linda and Douglas Northstein; his niece and nephew, Angela and Tim Kanter, and their children Megan and Emma. He was predeceased by his father, Jack D. McConaugha who was John's major influence on how to be a good father, husband, and human being.

Services will be private.

# Tribute Wall



“ *John R. McConaugha*

October 25, 2022 at 06:14 PM



“ *2 files added to the album Memories Album*



**Linda Duncan-Northstein** - October 11, 2022 at 10:21 AM



*Friends and Brothers-in-law, John McConaugha and Douglas Northstein. They had a good time every time they got together! For many years they helped at the Gloucester County Library as Santa and Helper greeting the kids from the Head-Start programs of Gloucester, Mathews and Middlesex Counties. They also were Santa and Helper for the S.T.A.R. Kids (disabled adults) at the Village Lanes Bowling Center.*

**Linda Northstein** - October 11, 2022 at 08:54 PM



“ *Barbara Eric Hutchinson lit a candle in memory of John McConaugha*



**Barbara Walum, Eric Hutchinson** - October 08, 2022 at 08:49 PM

BH

“ John was a man that a person felt so comfortable to be around. He was a very kind hearted quiet man with a huge heart. John was just easy to talk with. We will miss him so much in Green Valley this winter, but will make sure Cathy does ok on her own and help with whatever support she needs. We feel especially lucky to have known him as well as lucky that we were the recipients of two of his stained glass birds last spring, that we have proudly displayed in our garden. RIP John, you certainly will not be forgotten. ❤️ Barbara Walum and Eric Hutchinson.

Barbara Walum, Eric Hutchinson - October 08, 2022 at 08:49 PM

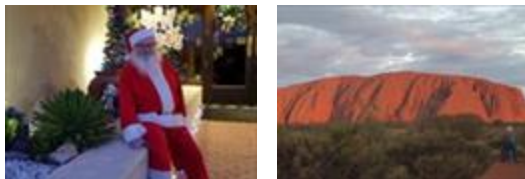
MD

“ John was always so friendly and helpful in Stainglass class at GVRV. He will be missed.  
Our sympathies to you Kathy and your family.

Marcie DeBruin - October 08, 2022 at 08:28 PM

GOES  
FUNERAL CARE

“ 2 files added to the album Memories Album



Goes Funeral Care & Crematory - October 06, 2022 at 11:32 AM