



## John W Matthews III

November 20, 1939 - June 30, 2020

John William Matthews passed away at age 80 on Tuesday, June 30, 2020.

John was born on November 20, 1939 in Charlotte, NC to John and Dorothy (Bass) Matthews. His sister Jean writes of their early childhood: "One of my first memories is from when we were living with our Matthews grandparents during the war. Our Grandmother Matthews would sit with us on their front porch swing holding a bowl of apples, which she would peel and slice into small pieces for us." During that time of war John also walked neighborhood guard duty with his grandfather, who was a member of the Citizens' Patrol.

As a child in an airline family, John began his nomadic lifestyle early, and by the time he was ten he had lived in North Carolina, Alabama, Florida and Washington, DC. Jean writes: "As young children we often were on our own to find our way around unfamiliar places. We could be found holding hands and walking along sidewalks and fields , Johnny standing tall and me a little anxious. His job, as he saw it, was to protect us from anything scary that we encountered along the way."

From 1949-52 the family lived in Gander, Newfoundland, where John was a member of Scouts Canada. From 1952-55 they lived in Kingston, Jamaica, where John attended the Priory School, and saw Queen Elizabeth when she came to the island as part of her coronation tour. Managua, Nicaragua was

the next stop, from 1955-57. There John worked for the US Geodetic Service helping to map Nicaragua. He and his friend Robert travelled by jeep on their own through remote regions of the country, sleeping in jungle hammocks. In 1957 John returned to Florida, finished high school and enrolled in Florida State University before enlisting in the army and going to Germany in 1961. There he met and married his first wife Brigitte Dickel, with whom he would have two sons, Michael and Glenn.

After his service John and Brigitte moved to California in 1962, where he served as a deputy sheriff in Long Beach, Victorville and Apple Valley. Moving to Ohio, John earned a degree in Business Administration at Ohio State. He then accepted a job with Pan American Airways as Cargo Manager at Dulles Airport, a position that he held for five years. From 1974-76 he worked in Yanbu, Saudi Arabia, where, in addition to his work on the oil refinery, he became a scuba diving instructor and also co-produced and acted in plays presented by the ex-pat theatre community. From 1976-80 he worked on the north slope in Alaska and it was during that time that he bought his first sailboat, which he lived on in Alameda, CA, between stints in Alaska. From 1980-86 he worked for American President Lines in San Francisco, travelling to Korea and the South Pacific for them while continuing to live on his boat when back in California. John sold the boat in 1986 and moved to Key West, FL, where he lived as a writer until 1988.

In 1988 John met Ann Farnsworth while on a business trip in Orlando, they married in August in Key West and John became project manager in Ann's construction company. In 1990 they moved to Sarasota, where John completed an M.A. in Humanities at the University of South Florida. In 1993 John completed an M.A. in Classics at Duke University, and in 1994 John and Ann moved to Orlando, where John taught at the University of Central Florida for two years.

John and Ann later lived in Omaha, Evergreen, Manassas, and, from 2010-12, in Edmonton, Alberta, where they enjoyed the arts, outdoor sports and fly fishing. With their trailer in tow and their trusty Dachshund Duncan they travelled across Canada. In 2013 they moved to Washington state for Ann's work, and bought a condo in Gig Harbor. John loved the outdoors, especially sailing, which was one of his great passions. During their time in Washington they bought a sailboat and sailed to the north end of Vancouver Island, this voyage was a high point in his life.

In 2014 John and Ann returned to Sarasota and purchased a home. In 2017-18 they travelled around the western and northeastern US with their granddaughters. In addition, they travelled extensively in Europe. Recently John had been an active member of the Sarasota Emergency Radio Club, helping to organize hurricane response protocols. He loved tinkering with the radios and organizing emergency procedures.

John's brother Michael writes: "John was a remarkable human being. He was a lover of knowledge, and avidly swallowed up literature, history and science. He was intelligent, thoughtful, kind, sensitive, witty and playful. I remember his joy as we sailed together around San Francisco Bay. I also remember a remarkable event that happened while we were camping in the Eastern Sierras – a massive meteor turned the entire night sky to brilliant daylight. This was a true experience of the numinous, one that we came back to in conversation again and again over the years. John introduced me to a lot of literature – we shared a love of not only of books, but of music, photography, food, travel and the intellect. I was consistently impressed by his broad and deep knowledge of a vast array of subjects. Like many with artistic sensibilities, John was sometimes out of place and a bit lost in the world. He had a vision for how a better world should look, and because the world so often did not conform to that vision, he sometimes became dispirited. But a

proper cup of tea and a one of his jokes about Poirot's 'little grey cells' would always set loose that conspiratorial laugh of his. My life is much richer for having known him."

John's son Glenn writes: "Dad was a wise, intelligent and caring person who always gave great advice. He instilled a love of travel and discovery in his children and grandchildren. He also passed on the reading bug to all of us! He loved all his grandchildren dearly and they knew it, and they felt the same for him. We will miss him and keep him in our hearts always."

John is survived by his wife Ann, his children Michael and Glenn, grandchildren Nathan, Aaron, Caitlyn, Maddie, and Cori, and his siblings Jean, Michael and Stephen. Ann's son Bob writes: "John and Ann shared a love that kept them together through all of life's challenges. They encouraged each other and never stopped looking for the next adventure. We will miss John and the love that he brought to our family." Indeed, John will be missed by all those who knew him.

A service will be held after the current pandemic situation has abated enough to allow the family to safely gather. Donations can be made in John's name to the Kidney Foundation.