



John R. Renshaw

October 28, 1941 - June 13, 2020

John R. Renshaw, 78, of Mattoon, Illinois, peacefully passed away on June 13, 2020 at Hilltop Skilled Nursing and Rehabilitation Center, Charleston, Illinois, after a year-long struggle with cancer, which he faced with dignity and grace.

John was born on October 28, 1941 in Charleston, the son of Roy and Dorothy (Day) Renshaw. He married his wife of 40 years, Nancy (Greeson) Roman on December 1, 1979 at Grace United Methodist Church in Neoga, Illinois. She survives. His brother Jim Renshaw is deceased. His half-sister, Sylvia Long of Winchester, Virginia survives. Her spouse Robert Long is deceased. Also surviving are his son, Sean Renshaw (Dawna) of Naperville, Illinois and Sean's daughter Gabrielle, a student at the University of Illinois, of Naperville; his step-daughter, Martha Roman of Brooklyn, New York; sister-in-law, Sandy Norviel Renshaw Jones (Bill) of Mahomet, Illinois; brother-in-law David Greeson (Dona) of Neoga, Illinois; several nieces and nephews; his best friend of many years, Roger Barry and his beloved standard poodle, Mercy. He was also predeceased by the family's four other standard poodles – Missy, Mindy, Muffin and Maggie, whom he loved dearly. They had been waiting for him at the Rainbow Bridge and have been joyfully reunited.

He attended elementary school at Eastern Illinois University's laboratory school and then attended Charleston High School, where he graduated in

1959. He was also a graduate of Eastern Illinois University where he majored in business.

John suffered from the disease of alcoholism and at the age of 34, entered treatment at C.E.A.D. Council in Charleston. He also became a very active member of Alcoholics Anonymous and maintained sobriety until his death. He had been sober for 44 plus years and was tremendously grateful to this wonderful spiritual program of recovery. He made many, many friends there. He was always ready to reach out to those needing help with their drinking problems and helped countless others on their recovery journeys. He became a certified addictions counselor and spent many years working in the treatment field, including some years working at Carle Clinic's New Choice program in Champaign and the Illinois prison system's alcoholism programs in Vandalia and Decatur. John also worked in a variety of other places, including the Embarras River Basin Agency, Coles County Historical Society and was director of the Coles County Regional Planning Commission for several years. In his later years, John worked at County Market in Mattoon where he so enjoyed interacting with the customers. John was a member of Trinity Episcopal Church in Mattoon, and had a deep and abiding faith in God.

He was interested in so many things and had a boundless curiosity about the world and the people in it. Martha often said "John knows everything!". He was a student of genealogy and spent countless hours researching his family tree. One interesting thing he discovered was that he and Nancy shared a third great-grandmother. Who knew! He also loved to read – fiction, non-fiction, biographies, history.

He loved words and especially liked the challenge of competing at Scrabble with his mother-in-law, Gertrude Greeson, who found him to be a worthy opponent.

He enjoyed playing golf and was a fan of PGA tournaments. He was a huge

fan of Illini basketball and Blackhawks hockey. He loved the year the Hawks won the Stanley Cup. He was a die-hard Cubs fan and appreciated Sean's taking him to games over the years. And of course, he was thrilled when they won the World Series! He loved everything in nature. He especially loved visiting his Aunt Mabel and Uncle Emmert Weber's farm in Strasburg as a child. A drive through the countryside usually included a tutorial on such things as Drummer/Flanagan soil or the Shelbyville Moraine. He so loved studying geography with the late, great Dalias Price at Eastern.

He had a reverence for every animal and enjoyed feeding and watching the birds. When he saw a bug in the house, he would coax it onto a piece of paper and take it outside. He also loved flowers and grasses and all plant life, especially prairie plants. In fact, he found the prairie to be a very fascinating place.

He was a lover of music, especially old hymns and such singers as Willie Nelson, Kris Kristofferson, Johnny Cash, Emmylou Harris and Joan Baez. He surprised himself when he found that he enjoyed the opera and liked very much the trips he and Nancy made to Butler University in Indianapolis and the Krannert Center at the University of Illinois to attend opera performances.

John was a member of the Democrat Boosters of Coles County. A highlight of his later years was campaigning in Indiana for Barack Obama.

John loved his family and many friends and especially relished good conversations with them. He will be greatly missed by all who loved him and the world is a better place because he was here.

John will be cremated. A funeral service will be held at Trinity Episcopal Church, 2200 Western Avenue, Mattoon, IL 61938 at a later date when,

hopefully, the coronavirus has abated a bit. Father Jeff Kozuszek will officiate. Mitchell-Jerdan Funeral Home, located at 1200 Wabash Avenue, Mattoon, IL is in charge of arrangements. The service will be followed by a meal at the Downtown Diner in Mattoon in celebration of John's love of good food. The date of John's service will be posted on Nancy's Facebook page and in the Journal Gazette.

Memorial donations may be made to the Coles County Historical Society, 1718 Broadway Avenue, Mattoon, IL and Trinity Episcopal Church, PO Box 302, Mattoon, IL or the donor's choice.

Please visit www.mitchell-jerdan.com or www.facebook.com/mitchelljerdanfuneralhome to light a virtual candle in his honor or share a memory with the family.

Tribute Wall



“ Mitchell-Jerdan Funeral Home created a Webcast in memory of John R. Renshaw



Mitchell-Jerdan Funeral Home - July 18, 2020 at 10:39 AM



“ John R. Renshaw

October 08, 2023 at 07:40 PM

NM

“ *The Prayer of Saint Francis*

*Lord, make me an instrument of Your peace;
Where there is hatred, let me sow love;
Where there is injury, pardon;
Where there is doubt, faith;
Where there is despair, hope;
Where there is darkness, light;
And where there is sadness, joy.*

*O Divine Master,
Grant that I may not so much seek
To be consoled as to console;
To be understood, as to understand;
To be loved, as to love;
For it is in giving that we receive,
It is in pardoning that we are pardoned,
And it is in dying that we are born to Eternal Life.
Amen.*

Nancy and Martha - July 19, 2020 at 11:36 PM

RB

“ *For Whom the Bell Tolls*
by
John Donne

*No man is an island,
Entire of itself.
Each is a piece of the continent,
A part of the main.
If a clod be washed away by the sea,
Europe is the less.
As well as if a promontory were.
As well as if a manor of thine own
Or of thine friend's were.
Each man's death diminishes me,
For I am involved in mankind.
Therefore, send not to know
For whom the bell tolls,
It tolls for thee.*

Roger Barry - July 19, 2020 at 01:40 PM

NR

Ah, yes, Roger. Thanks so much for this.

Nancy Renshaw - July 19, 2020 at 11:07 PM

JP

“ *Nancy,*
We are saddened to hear of John's passing. We have so many wonderful memories of John from our antiquing days. He was one in a million. Our love and prayers are with you during this difficult time.

Jerry and Mary Parker

Jerry and Mary Parker - June 18, 2020 at 09:58 PM

NR

Thanks so much. John enjoyed Jerry's visit at Carle to much.

Nancy Renshaw - June 18, 2020 at 10:42 PM

MA

“ *Nancy, I was so sorry to read of John's passing. I have many memories of John and you from Trinity Episcopal Church. My thoughts and prayers are with you and your family. I know how devastating it is to lose your spouse after so many years together. Remember the good times - that helps with the loss.*
Marilyn Strangeman

Marilyn - June 18, 2020 at 11:54 AM

NR

Thanks, Marilyn. I think of you so often and thinking of Harold always brings a smile.

Nancy Renshaw - June 18, 2020 at 10:44 PM

JG

“ *Farewell, my friend. I bet you didn't know I called you walking serenity. I will miss your wit and friendship.* *Jan Gomien*

Janis Gomien - June 17, 2020 at 02:24 PM

NR

Thanks, Jan. John would love this.

Nancy Renshaw - June 18, 2020 at 10:45 PM

BW

“ *John was strong, loving and kind. He saw me through some of the worst times of my life. Now he is whole and free. He has flown away.*

Brenda Williams - June 16, 2020 at 06:12 PM

NR

Thanks, Brenda.

Nancy Renshaw - June 18, 2020 at 10:46 PM

BW

“ *Brenda Williams sent a virtual gift in memory of John R. Renshaw*



Brenda Williams - June 16, 2020 at 06:02 PM

JK

“ *Nancy, you wrote such a beautiful tribute to John. I learned so much about his life and achievements. John was one of a kind. We send you our love. Jane and Don*

Jane knoerr - June 16, 2020 at 04:17 PM

NR

Thanks Jane and Don. Love you two.

Nancy Renshaw - June 18, 2020 at 10:48 PM

PS

“ *I loved caring for John at Hilltop, we shared a lot of laughs. RIP John, you will be missed*



Patsy Stephens - June 16, 2020 at 01:55 PM

NR

Thank you Patsy. You took such wonderful care of John.

Nancy Renshaw - June 18, 2020 at 10:49 PM

AT

“ So sorry to hear about John's death. We have many wonderful memories of antiquing with John. We especially appreciated his interest in Coles County history and enjoyed talking with John about it. Nancy, our thoughts are with you and your family. Joe and Anieta Trame

Anieta Trame - June 16, 2020 at 10:42 AM

NR

We had so much fun antiquing. John knew so much about history. Thanks for your kind thoughts.

Nancy Renshaw - June 18, 2020 at 10:50 PM

MH

“ John was my first counselor (IDOC), my first encourager, and a wonderful friend. He always seemed to be there when I got my yearly coin. He even sat with my husband and I a couple years ago. He helped me to believe in myself, God, and the programs. Thank you John. Rest in peace dear friend.

Melody Hovious - June 16, 2020 at 10:25 AM

NR

Thanks, Melody. So glad you found your way and that John helped you.

Nancy Renshaw - June 18, 2020 at 10:51 PM

BW

“ Brenda Williams lit a candle in memory of John R. Renshaw



Brenda Williams - June 16, 2020 at 12:33 AM

NU

“ So very sorry to learn of John's death. I graduated with him at CHS and can say I've shared some laughs with him. His obit certainly reflected many hurdles he had successfully jumped in his life. Now, I'm glad to learn of his abiding faith; the next meeting with him, will be in heaven. My sympathy to his entire family.

Norma Updegraff - June 15, 2020 at 07:44 PM

NR

Thank you, Norma.

Nancy Renshaw - June 18, 2020 at 10:51 PM

RB

John was a special and unique person who touched many lives. He was a dear friend and will be missed.

Roger Barry - June 22, 2020 at 04:40 PM

MS

RIP John - from a friend from the old days (Eastern Lab School and Charleston High School) Went on several different outings with he and his first wife Margie Kearns. Also worked at the original country club with John
MikeStrange

michael I strange - July 14, 2020 at 06:04 PM

GF

I was sincerely saddened to learn of John's passing and regret not making more of the last time I saw him. He was a good friend and a good person, caring and compassionate. He took pride in family and expressed it easily. He had a sense of social justice and shared it freely. He could talk to anyone about anything at any time, and he is missed.

Love,
Gary Foster

Gary Foster - July 18, 2020 at 05:28 PM

NR

Thank you so much, Gary. John treasured the time spent with you when we lived on 10th Street.

nancy rensaw - July 21, 2020 at 09:48 PM