



John Williford

September 18, 1936 - June 2, 2021

John Lea Williford died on Wednesday, June 2nd, at his home in Bartlesville, held by his devoted son as he was reunited with his “light” and true love, Margaret, who was waiting for him. Not surprisingly, the first thing he heard was “Where have you been?”

John, an only child, was born on September 18th, 1936, in Kingsland, Arkansas to John and Archer Williford. His father served in the marine corps and then worked as a civil engineer for Phillips Petroleum while his mother, also an only child, became a schoolteacher and superintendent.

Because his father was transferred by Phillips, John spent his formative years in Kingsland and then Bartlesville but ended up in high school in Odessa, Texas. The “Friday Night Lights” of Permian High did not call on John as much as other activities which satisfied his voracious appetite for literature and a more “co-ed” environment. Though fueled by a gregarious nature, John maintained a steely resolve with schoolwork and channeled his mother’s inexorable appetite for consuming the written word. He received special notice from the Latin Club and was a member of the National Honor Society.

Upon graduating high school, John chose to attend the University of Oklahoma, much to the chagrin of his devout Texan family. However, he followed in his father’s footsteps of service and enrolled in the ROTC candidacy program. After carving a wide path with his Phi Delta Theta brothers and earning a Bachelor of Arts and Sciences degree, John was commissioned in the Army which opened the door for him to the University of

Texas Law School where he would achieve the degree of Doctor of Jurisprudence. Following graduation, he became a reserve commissioned officer for several years until he was honorably discharged.

In 1963, John, again, found himself echoing his dad's path and was hired by Phillips Petroleum but as a lawyer in the Houston office. His parents were relieved that his propensity to use more words than necessary would turn out to be something with which he could make a good living.

As blessed as John felt with his life of loving and supportive parents, good friends, a strong beginning to his career, and a balanced faith, there always seemed to be something missing. Coincidentally, about that time, a friend in Sunday School introduced him to someone and her name was Margaret.

From that moment on, he never felt like anything was missing again.

Margaret also graduated from the University of Texas and, fortunately, knew the moment she met John that he was who she was supposed to be with for the rest of her life. They married April 4th, 1964, and, the following year, gave birth to their only child, John Barton.

John's diligence, hard work, charisma, and strong ethical fortitude (even for a lawyer) did not go unnoticed, and he quickly rose in the ranks at Phillips. He was transferred from Houston to the Bartlesville office in 1968, over the pond to London, England in 1981, and then returned to Bartlesville in 1985.

In March of 1995, John retired from Phillips though he did not hang up his lawyer hat. He consulted for different organizations around the state and worked on boards and foundations such as the Oklahoma Methodist Foundation, the Bartlesville Symphony, and the Sportsmen Club. He and Margaret also were instrumental in helping build the Elder Care facility, First Church, and The Journey Home.

Regardless of the work with different philanthropic committees or local improvement, his new passion for shooting and hunting with buddies, his "margarita therapy" time with friends, or even the continued path of his faith, John always held his wife and son above all.

He would record and track every production John Barton did and he and

Margaret wouldn't hesitate to hop a plane to see his son perform. Beaming with pride and ever his champion, John supported his son in every way possible...unless of course, there was an argument between his son and his wife as to who ate the last piece of chocolate cake.

But Margaret was his light, his queen, his best friend, and his angel. Every day, he would hold her in his arms as though it was their first date. Every day, they would try to laugh and usually did. Every day, they would pray and tell God how fortunate and thankful they were. And every day, they would tell their son how much they loved him.

John is survived by his son, John Barton. The family wishes to thank caregivers Kim Hale and Lexie Peck. In lieu of flowers, please make donations in John's name to The Journey Home at 900 NE Washington Blvd Bartlesville, OK 74006

Services are pending and will be held under the direction of Stumpff Funeral Home and Crematory.

Tribute Wall

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“ *John, your father will be missed. When I worked a short time at Bartlesville First Church, i got to see them every week a few times. They were always so happy and always so nice! And yes so in love with each other. It was always nice to see you with them when you came in with them. Our sincere Condolences,
Serving Him from Our Hearts, Mike and Deniece Bush.*

deniece bush - June 12, 2021 at 01:20 AM