



## John Albert Erickson

August 21, 1949 - January 8, 2023

John Erickson passed away peacefully Sunday evening, January 8, 2023, from a brave battle with ALS.

Born in Roswell, New Mexico, on August 21, 1949, to Cecelia and Oscar Erickson, John grew up in Portland, Oregon, where he graduated from Cleveland High School and eventually met the love of his life and wife of 52 years, Karen.

John Erickson was a top-notch professional whose name became synonymous with the hospitality management business where he spent 40 years running numerous hotels, resorts and golf clubs throughout the country. Beginning with a high school job at Portland's Benson Hotel, John grew to be known for his interest in hospitality properties in need of repositioning and/or restructuring. He had a passion for "fixing" things, and always raised his hand for "turn around" opportunities, landing countless numbers of them throughout his tenure.

John earned his MBA from Marylhurst University, where he then developed a Hospitality Management Curriculum. While this felt like a crowning achievement to John and those involved, Marylhurst ceased operations before the curriculum could be offered.

Even though John's hospitality career began when he was very young, he found time to honor his country from 1967-1970, by serving as a sonar technician in the United States Navy. John and his family were forever proud of his service in the U.S. Navy.

Always proud of his home town of Portland, John's civic interests included serving as Chairman of the Board of Clackamas County Tourism Development Council. John also represented Clackamas County at Portland's Metropolitan Exposition Recreation Commission (MERC).

A role John was very passionate about was his five-year Director position on the Board of Mary's Woods, a continuing care retirement community, where his expertise in hospitality and business management plus his Marylhurst education were a strong fit. John was especially fond of his time on the Mary's Woods Board of Director's because of Mary's Woods' connection to the Sisters of the Holy Names of Jesus and Mary, who founded Marylhurst University in 1893, Oregon's oldest Catholic university.

Later on, as he dabbled with retirement, John found a way to share his industry wisdom for the business he knew and loved by teaching Hospitality Management for Chemeketa Community College plus courses in business and hospitality at Oregon State University's campus in Bend.

With such an extensive and demanding career – holding positions in many major cities such as Houston, Chicago, Seattle, Atlanta and Puerto Rico to name a few – it's hard to believe John had a high priority and great capacity for recreating with family and friends – but he did!!!

His family beams with joy over John's passion for people and his unbelievable energy for socializing with those who were close to him as well as strangers in the grocery line. John had an uncanny ability to connect with people, to remember their stories from the most simple to the most complicated and to hold them dear and treat everyone as if they were his best friend. As a result of his lifelong powers of connection, he leaves behind 73 years of friends.

On the family side, no one made John smile more than his children and grandchildren. He brought the same level of passion he had for his career to his devotion to his family.

Many years ago, when his son, Leif, was four years old, Leif wanted to play soccer. John knew nothing about soccer but he immediately went to town learning everything he could about the sport in order to build a team and

coach Leif and his teammates in soccer. This spilled over into additional sports that would lead to years of refereeing soccer and basketball as well as umpiring baseball.

John's daughter, Hope, says her father loved the outdoors. "He LOVED camping," she exclaimed. John got so excited about camping with the family that he would chart the course and head out ahead of the family to "scout out" the situation. When the family arrived everything would be perfect because John had applied all his hospitality skills to preparing the campsite.

The love and pride John felt for his grandchildren could not be matched. A favorite time for John was teaching his granddaughter, Chayse, to fly fish; an experience he never stopped talking about. It had touched his soul in a way only a grandchild can. And there was nothing better than looking forward to visits with the Las Vegas contingent of his family. Family was John's primary love!

As he loved fixing businesses, John loved fixing anything, the messier the better. He had a philosophy about "fixing" that will certainly live on: "You can fix anything with Duct Tape." John's family frequently laughs about John "fixing" the undercarriage of the car he gave Hope and her husband, Eric, with, yep, Duct Tape!

While John was unconventional sometimes, i.e. "fixing" things with Duct Tape, he was meticulous in two of his favorite past-times—wood-working and fly tying. He spent countless hours in his wood-working shop, fashioning projects for friends and family—from trivets to Adirondack chairs to small tables to garage cabinetry. And, had you visited John's home, there's no doubt he would have taken you on a tour of his impressive fly-tying setup. He had limitless fly-tying materials and flies he had spent many afternoons making for specific species of fish he had researched. Those, so very tiny, handcrafted, detailed flies, were truly amazing works of art!

Still on John's bucket list? His aspiration to publish one of his written works. Along with many poems, John was also in the midst of writing four books. His

intention was to focus on his writing as he freed up time later in life. Perhaps a silver lining in this sad time is an opportunity to honor John's legacy by completing one of his written works, posthumously fulfilling his aspiration. Another side of John was the one he reserved for his lifetime sweetheart, Karen. She speaks of an extremely soft and loving part of John that was a daily part of their quiet moments. His ability to "sweetly" express his love for Karen and hold her in a very special place in his heart never ended. The memories of which will stay with her forever. "You are my sunshine, my only sunshine . . ." provides a little glimpse into the sweetness of this much loved and remarkable man.

John will be deeply missed and remembered dearly by his devoted family: his wife, Karen; daughter, Hope and son-in-law Eric; son, Leif, and daughter-in-law, Veronica. In addition, John leaves behind four much-loved grandchildren: Chayse; Rick; Vanessa; and Morgan. They were John's pride and joy. John also leaves behind two loving and much-loved sisters: Sheila and Marie; an adoring mother-in-law, Arlene; and countless friends, who treasured his friendship.

As was John's wish, a celebration of his life is being planned for late summer 2023.

Recently, a friend opined with words that seem to capture it all . . .

"This is a very sad time. John was a wonderful friend to so many, and a loving and devoted husband, father and grandfather right up to the end. He was a bright light and a progressive thinker, an intelligent conversationalist with a jovial personality; an avid adventurer and a quiet tinkerer, fisherman, gardener, sports enthusiast and hospitality guru. Because he was all of these and more, he fit in anywhere and was well loved everywhere! R.I.P. my dear friend of 43 years. Your engaging ways will be sorely missed, but your legacy will surely live on!"

# Tribute Wall



“ *Beautiful in Blue was purchased for the family of John Albert Erickson.*



February 09, 2023 at 12:16 PM

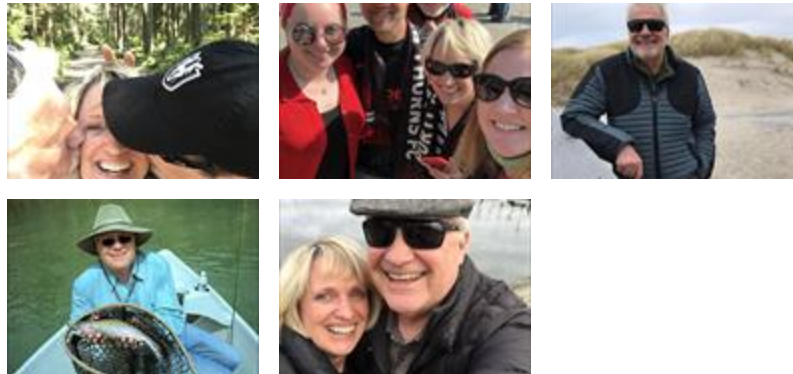


“ *I am so sorry for your loss. Positive thoughts and prayers for you and your mom and Leif!❤️*

**Kelly Blake** - February 03, 2023 at 10:32 AM



“ *15 files added to the album John*



**Hope** - February 01, 2023 at 06:50 PM



*I was a classmate of John's at Cleveland High School. I'll always remember his sweet smile and gentle ways. So sorry for your loss.  
Diane Lorenzini*

**Diane Lorenzini** - August 23, 2024 at 09:41 PM