

John Donald Paul Eulogy

January 03, 1936–September 16, 2016

Hi, I'm Alex Young and John was my father-in-law. Thank you for joining us to honor John as we lay him to rest.

I'm here on behalf of Joanne to share some of her, Linda and Michael's thoughts on the unique and interesting man who shared his life with them.

John really became a part of the family, happily pitching in with mundane chores, shopping, and barbequing. He doted on Joanne with presents. **John really loved Joanne.**

Linda told me that she was relieved that her mother **finally** had someone to care for **her**.

When John faced a tough and unpredictable decline dealing with many issues – especially his battle with diabetes and Alzheimer's – Joanne also took care of **him**.

Although John complained about daily nuisances, he never questioned the big burdens and other complicated, painful medical conditions. John showed heroic effort with his courageous resistance to maintain as much independence as possible and still enjoyed pastimes such as playing cards and reading.

John and Joanne were always there for each other, truly a marriage for better or for worse, in sickness and in health, 'til death do us part.

John was stoic in facing his challenges. Joanne believes this reflected his quiet faith that God would carry him through. He remained true to the Church from youth to death. Mass and the Eucharist were important elements in his routine.

John was comfortable being himself. He never hid his critical reactions to situations or people he found irritating because he was an honest grouch!

You didn't have to be around John long to see his subtle sense of humor and his wry wit.

John was not an in-your-face kind of kind of guy, so even Joanne learned about him gradually over the years as information just casually slipped out. You probably never heard from him about many of his wide-ranging interests and life experiences.

The dichotomy that was John always surprised.

I remember sitting downstairs in his man cave even as I heard about John's talent as an ice dancer. John was also an accomplished ballroom dancer. He was participating in Arthur Murray Showcase competitions long before ***Dancing with the Stars***. He belonged to a square dancing group while living in Hartford.

At his childhood home, he was "**Donnie**" because his father was already called John. Growing up near Louisville, John attended parochial grade school and public high school in Clarksville and Jeffersonville, Indiana. He went out for football and track & field. Wouldn't you love to have watched him pole vaulting, high jumping and doing hurdles!!

In grade school, he played the violin, which may have inspired his love of classical music. John spoke proudly of playing *Ave Maria* at Masses.

John enlisted in the Air Force right out of high school in 1954, jumping head first into an adventure during his first assignment near Roswell, NM. John and his buddies tried to peek into Area 51, and were run off by guards. We may never know if John discovered the truth about aliens. But perhaps this is what inspired his love of science fiction.

After enlistment, John used military benefits to attend the University of Louisville. He graduated as an electrical engineer and a Second Lieutenant.

He soon bought his all-time favorite vehicle -- a brand-new, baby-blue-and-white 1965 Mustang convertible. His career as an Air Force officer included tours of duty in Albuquerque, twice in Dayton and Hartford.

My introduction to John was like the movie "***Meet the Parents***." I found myself alone with him trying to get his approval, as he started telling me about his testing equipment for the Air Force in the desert near Albuquerque, NM with nuclear bombs. But instead of being intimidated all I could think is "***Wow! This guy has done some really cool stuff!***" I hit it off with John right away. He made me feel welcome in the family.

John worked on developing the F-15 fighter! He met the Shah of Iran on assignment. He even had to carry two passports as he went back and forth between Israel and Iran (mortal enemies) so that one would not know about the other.

John loved the outdoors, especially in the West. In Albuquerque, he shared his hiking and camping skills as an Assistant Scoutmaster for the base scout troop. After

retirement from the Air Force, he made a solo tour of the western national parks—sometimes sleeping on picnic tables with his gun in case of bears.

John owned and trained horses while in Dayton. Supershine was his riding horse. He trained a younger horse, Blackie, winning an Ohio Quarter Horse of the Year award.

John loved sports and participated in many, including racquetball, volleyball and skiing. He skied throughout the Western US, New England and Europe. He especially loved golf and it was the last sport he gave up. John and Joanne enjoyed bowling together with friends.

John and his Dayton friends visited Las Vegas a couple of times a year. He preferred craps and Black Jack over slots. He also loved the great deals on food – especially his favorite breakfast buffet, where the guys would hang out for hours.

John retired from the Air Force as a Major in 1980 while living in Dayton. He had put down roots, even purchasing a condo. Not certain what he'd do next, he spent a couple of years attending a photography school. He never worked professionally in that field, but he sure acquired ALL the equipment.

Eventually, he worked for civilian contracting firms that supported military projects.

Joanne observed that John sustained relationships with people in his life. He was on good terms with his mother and his sister and her big family, even though they lived two states apart. Uncle Donnie made Christmas extra fun for his six nieces and nephews. His Christmas spirit continued as he joined our family.

He had a strong circle of long-term friends who had nothing to do with his workplace. He knew how to have a great time with people, but he could also be counted on as a serious friend.

Once John retired for the final time in 2003, he committed himself through the Timonium Optimists to community service on behalf of kids. He served as president, was an active member and developed deep friendships.

John met Joanne in her own backyard. She was hosting a picnic for local Catholic Alumni Club members, and John (a member of the Dayton club) was brought along by her friend. They reconnected a year later at a CAC national convention in Tucson, AZ.

From the outset of meeting John, Joanne saw him as a strong, capable, masculine guy. But there was a less obvious softer side, represented perfectly by his rescue of a tiny kitten found outside on a cold, January morning. John was no cat lover, but he allowed himself to be adopted by Slick – who remained an important part of our family for the next 18 years. We all grew to love Slick and each other. John’s love and tenderness will be passed on.

Joanne was flattered when John arranged a job transfer to Maryland in 1995, because back in 1980, he chose to retire from the Air Force rather than accept an assignment in D.C.

They married here a year later with Father Paul presiding, and they marked 20 years of marriage this past May. She felt blessed to find such a great love a second time, and with a man who was willing to leave a place and people he cared about to take a chance on blending his life with hers!

As a step-parent John had a choice. He didn’t have to be one but he stepped up because he wanted to be a part of not just Joanne’s but also Linda and Michael’s life.

John and Linda bonded over technology. Linda once called John in a panic because her computer monitor didn’t turn on. John said, **“Well, is it plugged in?”** after checking “she said no” realizing her cat Pixel had unplugged it. John was an expert in both computers and cats!

John and Michael developed a special bond and an important fatherly relationship. Michael often looked to John for advice and guidance. John helped Michael when he was enlisting – both in sharing with him what to expect – and as an excellent marksman, John taught Michael how to shoot with competition rifles and pistols before he left for the Army.

It is sad for her to say good-bye to this exceptional man, but she is consoled that he is home with the Lord and reunited with loved ones and friends from his past. She looks forward to joining him one day in the presence of **the Father, and the Son, and the Holy Spirit.**

She says she knows that just as God brought them together, in His wisdom and His own good time, He has decided that they must part for now.