



John E. Arnold

January 4, 1940 - October 4, 2019

John E. Arnold, 79, Topeka, Kansas, passed away unexpectedly on October 4, 2019.

John was born on January 4, 1940, in Atchison, Kansas to George and Iva “Audrey” Bailey Arnold. A graduate of Atchison High School, he enjoyed performing in the band, playing basketball, and running track. High school classmates remain dear friends today.

John started a life of service by answering the call from JFK, joining the Peace Corps and serving in the Philippines from 1962-1964. That experience shaped his life, but most importantly, led to him meeting his wife Kaye. They were married in 1965. Kaye preceded him in death in 2007

John was a passionate Jayhawk, graduating from KU with a bachelor’s in liberal arts in 1962 and a master’s degree in public administration in 1965.

During John’s service in local government, he was recognized as a pioneer and innovator. His career took him around the country, from Atchison, to Texarkana, Texas, Titusville, Florida, and Little Rock, Arkansas. John served as City Manager in Minot, North Dakota from 1972-1977, Fort Collins, Colorado from 1977-1985, and Eureka, California from 1992-1996. He was the first Executive Director of the E-470 Authority that built the E-470 highway in Denver. John served as Chief Administrative Officer in Topeka from 1998 until retirement in 2002.

John was proud of his legacy in the places he lived, but also treasured the connections he made working together with Mayors and City Councilmembers, city staff, colleagues, and community members. He kept in touch with people regularly, sometimes with an emailed article, news clipping, or his own commentary.

During retirement, John focused on his passions: becoming a published author, playing golf, enjoying food and drink with friends, traveling often to visit family, and following Kansas basketball.

As a drummer, guitarist, and improvisational pianist, John instilled a love of music in his family. He also enjoyed sports whether shooting baskets or throwing a football with his sons, playing a game of golf whenever he could, watching the Sunday football game, or sailing on his boat, the Jayhawk. John and Kaye also loved to dance, a talent that unfortunately skipped a generation.

John is survived by his sons, Jay (Mary Beth) and L.T.; granddaughters, Audrey, Carmen, and Scarlett; dear friend and companion, Judy Morris. He will be dearly missed by cousins, nieces, in-laws, and friends here and around the country.

Memorial service will be 4 p.m. Saturday, November 9, 2019, at Kevin Brennan Family Funeral Home, 2801 SW Urish Road, Topeka KS 66614, with visitation half an hour prior.

In lieu of flowers, memorial contributions may be made to Friends of the Topeka Zoo or the Midwest Boxer Rescue, sent in care of the funeral home.

Events

NOV **Visitation** 03:30PM - 04:00PM

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Kevin Brennan Family Funeral Home
2801 SW Urish Road, Topeka, KS, US, 66614

NOV **Memorial Service** 04:00PM

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Kevin Brennan Family Funeral Home
2801 SW Urish Road, Topeka, KS, US, 66614

Comments



“ Very sorry to hear about the passing of our friend and neighbor John. Glad to have shared Pepperwood Ct with him these last 20 plus years. Enjoyed our countless front yard chats about nothing in particular but always with a smile. May he Rest In Peace.

J.D. and Lynn Lorenz

john d lorenz - November 06, 2019 at 05:37 PM



“ My thoughts and prayers to John's family and extensive list of friends and professional colleagues across the country, of which I am one. I worked with John on many issues when he was with both Fort Colins and E-470. He was precise in his approach, understood the consequences of decisions and the foibles of elected officials, and had a wicked sense of humor. To me he was both a good friend as well as mentor. He had quite a following within the city management profession, and certainly that was the case in Colorado.

Sincerely, Sam Mamet, retired Executive Director, Colorado Municipal League.

Sam Mamet - October 13, 2019 at 04:21 PM



“ I'm so sad to learn of John's passing. I worked with John in the City of Fort Collins. John was a great man and the most creative and innovative City Manager I've ever known. He was supportive of all of us 20-year olds who were just entering public service. Many of us became City Managers, Fire Chiefs, Public Works Directors, and Human Resource Directors and served in other public service roles due in large part due to John's mentorship and example and because of the opportunities he gave us.

John stayed in touch and was a constant source of support. He was always willing to offer advice when asked. When I told him I had cancer and how public it would need to be because I was a City Manager, he encouraged me to just “be bold and audacious about it.” I loved and followed that wisdom.

I'll miss John and I give my love and support to his family. He was proud of you and loved you with all of his heart.

Linda Norris - October 13, 2019 at 01:18 PM