



John Joseph Austin Jr.

FEB 14, 1949 - JUL 15, 2018



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John Joseph Austin Jr.

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John Joseph Austin Jr., age 69 of Rehoboth Beach, DE, passed away unexpectedly on Sunday, July 15, 2018 at Beebe Healthcare, in Lewes. He was born on February 14, 1949 in Charlottesville, VA, son of the late John Joseph Sr. and Eva Estelle (Bragg) Austin.

Mr. Austin was a 1971 graduate of the University of Virginia, Charlottesville, where he earned a Bachelor's degree in Chemistry. He dedicated 33 years of his life to the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) as a chemical engineer, earning three Commendable Service bronze medals for his efforts. After moving to Delaware in 2002, Mr. Austin has been a dedicated environmental activist. He worked tirelessly to reverse and prevent the ongoing destruction of our environment including alternative energy sources, air quality improvement, wells for safe drinking water, and the preservation of wetland habitats. An avid wildlife photographer, he had an eye for capturing the beauty of nature in all its forms. Mr. Austin also enjoyed a green thumb, as evidenced by his abundant flower gardens and landscaping. He enjoyed dining out and trying craft beers along with the occasional round of golf. More than anything, however, Mr. Austin was a family man who cherished time spent with those he held dear. He was a loving, unselfish person who thought of everyone else before himself. He was a devoted son, husband, stepfather, granddaddy, and friend. He was loved by many and will be missed by all who knew him.

Mr. Austin is survived by his Mother, Eva; his beloved wife of 32 years, Martha (Talbot) Austin; her children, David Heiskell (Bridget) of Pasadena, MD and Karen Collins (John) of Annapolis, MD; and his grandsons: Brian Collins and Matthew Heiskell.

A Graveside Service will be held on Wednesday, July 25, 2018 at 2:00 PM at Riverview Cemetery, 1701 Chesapeake Street, Charlottesville, VA.

A Celebration of Life will be held on Wednesday, August 15, 2018 at 4:00 PM at Parsell Funeral Homes and Crematorium, Atkins-Lodge Chapel, 16961 Kings Highway, Lewes, DE, where friends may visit beginning at 3:00 PM.



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In lieu of flowers, the family suggests contributions in his memory be made to The Inland Bays Foundation, Inc., Attn: John Austin Memorial, PO Box 521, Bethany Beach, DE 19930. For more information on the foundation or to donate online, please visit: <https://inlandbaysfoundation.org>.

Please sign the online guestbook located on this site.

FLORIST NOTE: PLEASE DELIVER ALL FLORAL ARRANGEMENTS BY 10 AM WEDNESDAY, AUGUST 15, 2018 TO OUR LEWES LOCATION.




Events


John Joseph Austin Jr.

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Graveside Service

 **Wednesday**, July 25, 2018


 2:00 PM ET

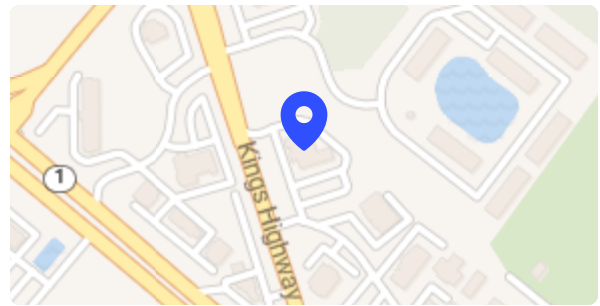
 **Riverview Cemetery**
Charlottesville VA

Visitation

 **Wednesday**, August 15, 2018

 3:00 PM - 4:00 PM ET


 **Parsell Funeral Homes & Crematorium-Atkins-Lodge Chapel**
16961 Kings Highway, Lewes DE 19958

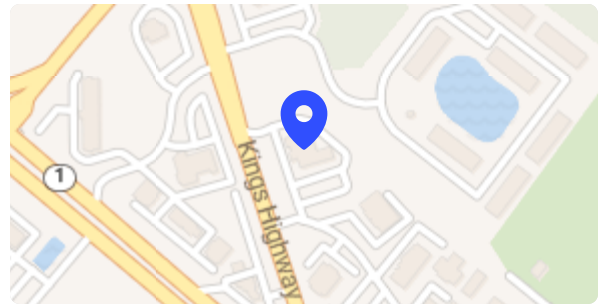


Celebration of life


 **Wednesday**, August 15, 2018

 4:00 PM ET

 **Parsell Funeral Homes & Crematorium-Atkins-Lodge Chapel**
16961 Kings Highway, Lewes DE 19958



Cemetery Details

 **Riverview Cemetery**
Charlottesville VA



NF

Nancy Feichtl posted:

With the sudden, heart-sickening death of John Austin, Eastern Sussex has just lost a brilliant, indeed irreplaceable advocate and champion of public health and our environment. After a distinguished career as an EPA scientist largely working on toxic contamination and waste issues, when John and Marti retired to the shore, he could have spent the brunt of his time, largely stress-free, playing golf, traveling, and gardening; but instead for the last 15 years of his life he worked tirelessly through any number of frustrating battles with unwelcoming arms of the state's bureaucracy in support of his fellow citizens, exhibiting for all to see an astonishingly commanding ability to access, analyze, and explain technical scientific studies, reports, and data files without which public policy cannot be effectively challenged, let alone remedied for the common good. No other concerned citizens I know in the groups with whom John affiliated himself so generously could have begun to utilize those materials to their maximum effect when questioning public policy decisions or forwarding more enlightened remedies. I personally know him to have been essential to the Citizens for Clean Power's executive committee's effectiveness during a number of years while we tried to address the health dangers presented by the antiquated coal-fired Indian River power plant – a facility grandfathered by the Clean Air Act in 1970 but neither subsequently closed down nor, 40 years later, operating with any substantial improvements in its virtually non-existent air pollution controls. Though he and his collaborator, Kim Furtado, were repeatedly dismissed as unprofessional cranks by the Delaware Department of Public Health's officials, John's persistence single-handedly forced that department to recognize and publish the truth: the area near the Indian River power plant was and is one of the number of cancer clusters in the state that he had uncovered. Then there was a two-year effort to secure approval of offshore wind development (since aborted by NRG) and his studies of well-head contamination in Millsboro neighborhoods bordering long neglected industrial sites slated for redevelopment, studies whose validity was denied or whitewashed out of hand by state authorities. Finally, we owe to John his recent and tragically interrupted involvement in support of those whose groundwater was negatively affected near the Mountaire processing plant. For well over a decade, he lent scientific authority to the Citizens Committee of the Center for the Inland Bays as it pressed for improvements to the toxin-laden coal ash storage facility at the Indian River power plant and weighed in on the adequacy of Inland Bay buffers as well as the advisability of a new wastewater treatment facility so close to the Inland Bays' waters. To John's repeated and great frustration, most of these demanding and time-consuming efforts came to little or nothing; but John carried on, "bearing it out," as the Bard affirmed of the power of love, "to the edge of doom." For that civic grace under pressure so modestly granted to those he worked with, on behalf of others who did not, he has our undying admiration. Surely it's the generous aim even more than any hit-or-miss accomplishments that most counts in our wonder at those who make such sacrifices. At the turn of the 21st century a Harvard School of Public Health study indicated that those who lived within a 25 mile radius of old coal plants like that Indian River were 50% more likely to die prematurely or suffer serious cardiopulmonary disease and damage from the untreated particulates they emitted. Today, three of the four stacks at Indian River have been closed down; the one that is left, its newest, has reduced Mercury omissions by over 90% and has been fitted with the latest, most effective controls available for obsolete coal generation stations. None of that would've happened -Bill & Kit Zak, Nancy Feichtl, Dr. Kim Furtado



Tribute Wall

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August 6 at 11:49 AM



Wendy Grooms lit a candle in honor of John.

My heartfelt condolences Marti. I will think of John often. He has been a great friend over the years since you moved to Rehoboth. We will miss him. Prayers and Love, Wendy



July 25 at 10:23 AM



Anonymous sent a Divine Peace Bouquet to the Austin family.



July 21 at 11:37 AM



Anonymous sent a Fairest of All to the Austin family.



July 19 at 5:05 PM



Anonymous sent an Emerald Garden Basket to the Austin family.



July 19 at 9:15 AM



Mary Jackson posted:

Dear Marti, I worked alongside John for many years at EPA and have thought of him often since his retirement. I was very saddened to hear of his passing. I always loved hearing his sailing stories and details of the latest restaurant he had tried, either with Barry at work or at home with you. I was impressed that he continued his work for the environment after retirement. My thoughts and prayers are with you, Mary Jackson

July 19 at 5:11 AM



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BJ

Barnes Johnson posted:

Dear Marti, As a former EPA colleague and friend I was deeply saddened by the unfortunate news of John's untimely passing. I am not sure if you remember me, but when you and John lived in Annapolis, John was my car pool mate for a number of years. We enjoyed lots of technical conversations about the finer points of waste management, investing, etc. We also endured lots of traffic, a couple of car accidents and you may even remember the fateful day when we arrived at the Davidsonville park and ride only to find John's Volvo missing.....turns out stolen....that was a shocker for sure. In more recent years I appreciated John kept in touch from time to time via email. He really seemed to enjoy maintaining a continued commitment to environmental protection with his most recent focus on agriculture related nitrogen groundwater impacts. Oh, and I was quite surprised to learn, also via email, of his deep expertise on silver dollar numismatics. I could tell he was super engaged in all of his interests based on getting emails from him at all hours of the day!! Be well, I plan to attend his memorial service in August. Sincerely, Barnes Johnson

July 18 at 11:49 AM

GH

Greg Helms posted:

I was very sorry to learn of John's passing. He was a good friend and a fabulous chemist for many years at the EPA. We have missed him over the years he has been gone but always knew that he never fully retired, and was using his knowledge of the system to help keep local environmental decisions honest. Greg Helms US EPA Office of Land and Emergency Management

July 18 at 10:40 AM

TD

Tom Diorio posted:

Marti, there are no words to express the shock and sorrow of John's death. He was one of the brightest minds that I have met and I had much respect and admiration for him. He will be greatly missed. Please know that your friends and all within our community mourn with you. Tom DiOrio

July 18 at 8:38 AM

HD

Harry Dombrosky posted:

We are deeply saddened and in a state of shock to hear of John's untimely passing. He has been a positive role model and strong advocate in The Woods at Seaside since the beginning and will be greatly missed. We shall remember his unselfish effort and commitment in ensuring a welcoming and harmonious community. Our heartfelt condolences, thoughts, and prayers are with Marti and family. May the love and support of your loved ones bring solace to you during this difficult time.

July 18 at 5:44 AM



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DP

Doug Parham posted:

Met John in 2006 at a Citizens Advisory Committee where we were much younger initiates into the wonderful world of the polluted waters of the Inland Bays Estuary. After many years of court room battles we sought a diversion. As of last Tuesday we were working on the challenges of improving our Golf Game and sharing a Yuengling at Stockley Tavern. I'll remember the big smile on his face after learning he had beat me by one stroke.

July 18 at 3:47 AM

JS

Joseph X. Sudimak ?? lit a candle in honor of John.



July 18 at 2:36 AM

DA

Donald Allan posted:

I was so saddened to hear of John's passing, he was such a great person. He spent more of his time educating me on issues with our water quality than I had any right to expect. I'll miss seeing him put his knowledge and photography skills to good use. My sympathies to the Austin Family. Don Allan

July 17 at 5:17 PM

IL

Ilene Levine posted:

We are quite saddened by the sudden passing of our neighbor, John. He had his pulse on the neighborhood and was an asset to us all. May his memory be a blessing. Mark and Ilene Levine

July 17 at 4:48 PM

MS

Maria Payan And Sraproject sent a Serene Retreat to the Austin family.



July 17 at 2:49 PM



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DK

Dr. Marva E. King posted:

I am shocked to hear this sad news. Although we just met last year, with our common interests and working relationships, I thought I knew John forever. I shall miss him as a former EPA colleague and a friend fighting for justice for all. Peace and Blessings to his family, Dr. Marva E. King

July 17 at 1:14 PM

WM

William & Ladonna Mayo posted:

Please accept our heartfelt condolences for the loss of John. William and LaDonna Mayo

July 17 at 12:30 PM

TB

Tom Brett posted:

I came to know John only recently while attending events to support environmental protections. It didn't take long to understand that John found it important to lend his expertise and skills for the benefit of others. I am happy to have met and get to know John a little bit. He will be missed. Tom Brett

July 17 at 12:01 PM

SC

Susie Ball, Chair Board Of Directors Cen July 18 at 2:47 AM

So sad to hear of John's passing. He was a tireless defender of the environment. His contributions to the Center for the Inland Bays as a longtime member of the Citizens Advisory Committee were legion. He will be sorely missed. On behalf of the Center and myself I send condolences to his family. Susie Ball

JY

Jim & John Jasch-Young posted:

Jim and I are so shocked and saddened to learn of John's passing. We pray that God's loving grace surround Marti and John's family and friends during this journey, and that comfort be provided to them through their memories of John. Our thoughts and prayers are with you Marti. Jim & John Jasch-Young

July 17 at 11:46 AM



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KC

Ken Kristl, Env Law Clinic posted:

John was a tireless advocate for science-based protection of the environment. He called out all who wanted to take shortcuts or ignore the evidence. He was a font of knowledge and energy for those fighting to protect people from environmental problems and concerns. The people of Delaware have lost an important advocate. He will be sorely missed.

July 17 at 11:42 AM

KE

Kim Erickson posted:

I can't believe John is gone. I enjoyed his pictures on Facebook and he seemed so happy and healthy! He was a wonderful person and I was fortunate to know him during the lively 80s when we were in Crabtowne Ski Club together. Always caring, John gave great hugs (like a snuggly Teddy Bear). My thoughts and prayers are with Marti and the family. Kim Miller Erickson.

July 17 at 11:26 AM

FR

Frances lit a candle in honor of John.



July 17 at 10:16 AM



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Frances Bragg Thompson posted:

The loss of John (Johnny) is so overwhelming. We are first cousins, great times of memories when we were growing up. Will miss him so very much.

July 17 at 8:44 AM



Jack Hayes July 23 at 4:34 AM

I was stunned to hear of John's passing last Tuesday morning, I know it had been a couple of days but that was the first I had heard. John and I had some lengthy conversations about the most recent Regulation changes as he was in attendance at most work shops and the public hearings. We also had many more conversations regarding the recent poultry related permits and incidents. John was stalwart with his love of the environment and the need for appropriate regulation and enforcement. I hope he knew that I felt the same way he did and though not quite as passionate as him I do love and work to protect the environment and the waters of Delaware. I will miss him and his active role he had keeping me and the Department focused on the issues infringing on our precious environment. Jack Hayes



Nolean Deskins July 21 at 12:23 PM

John lost is overwhelming for me. He was a great friend for many years while working at the EPA. I join with many other in expressing my deepest sympathy in the passing of your loved one. You and your family are in my thoughts and prayers. Nolean Deskins



Ann Austin Orowski July 18 at 8:32 AM

We, too, were first cousins. We had just reconnected after decades at my father's recent funeral. How sad to lose "Little Johnny" so young. We had just started enjoying sharing our heritage together. He will be missed.



Memories only last if you share them

Join us in honoring John by contributing to a collection of shared memories.



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