



John Francis Ruff Sr.

March 14, 1945 - May 26, 2020

John Francis Ruff (75) was surrounded by his extended family at home when he passed peacefully on May 26, 2020.

John grew up in Wilmington, Delaware and summered at the Delaware Beaches where he met Emmalea Mae Haber who would become his wife of 53 years. He made friends wherever he went and was always helping others.

Just out of the Marines when they met, John worked security for ADT and for Ferris School for Boys before joining Pipefitter's Local 80 as an apprentice. Because he was a quick study and respected by his peers, he became an integral part of the local after graduation - sharing his love and talent with apprentices at the Delaware City refineries and teaching night classes, then holding positions as Secretary and eventually President of Local #80 (now Local #74) where he was a 50 Year member.

John attended Dickinson High School for a short time before entering the Marines and in later years, he would train at Purdue University and the University of Michigan to earn his teaching certification for welding. He was always learning, teaching, and working with his hands as exhibited by his many projects.

While an active Marine (Oorah!), John was stationed at Camp Lejeune, served in Cuba during the Cuban Missile Crisis, and worked at the NSA. He was a handsome soldier and his sisters enjoyed sharing his graduation pictures with their girlfriends (unbeknownst to John or his parents). That's probably why Emmalea fell for him.

From that first encounter at the surfing beach of Indian River Inlet to their marriage within the year, John & Em were an item. Soon after, they were a family. With two growing kids, The Ruffs moved from an apartment into their first house in Eagle Glen and began a new, suburban adventure raising four kids, working hard, and building relationships with some great neighbors.

Love for family always came first with John. One of his greatest gifts to them was the house in Rehoboth Beach. Many Ruff family memories took place in Rehoboth. There, John spent most of his free time on the beach where everyone knew him as Brooklyn Avenue's "Mayor of Rehoboth". In retirement, he enjoyed playing pool at VFW Post 7447, the Cape Henlopen Senior Center and in a local league where he helped take the team to a national competition in Las Vegas. Most of all, John liked working on renovations at the beach house, projects with one of the kids, or on a task at Funland. He lived his life for others and was a blessing to all. There was nothing he wouldn't do to help his family, friends, coworkers... even strangers. His heart was so big.

John's faith was the backbone of who he was. He lived out 1 Corinthians 13 and Matthew 22:37-38 daily. Service to others was his calling and a gift he gave every day. No matter where he was or what he was doing, John was helpful, fun to be around, full of wisdom and advice, and always cared. So many people have expressed their love and shared memories of his work ethic in action as well as his thoughtfulness, jovial attitude, crazy antics, and daring feats. Visit the Facebook group John "the Myth, the Man, the Legend" to join in. Reliving these memories with family by his side helped sustain John during his last days and has provided joy for all. He will be sorely missed.

John was preceded in death by his parents Eugene F & Nora (McLaughlin) Ruff; stepmother Mary (Maloney) Ruff; brother Eugene M "Yogi" Ruff; and Godson Roy David Thompson. He is survived by his wife Emmalea M Ruff; children: Michelle D (Ruff) & Scott Varner, John F. II & Jamie L. (Dyer) Ruff, Cheri R. (Ruff) & Israel C. Eleazar, and Jason L. & Joella A (Jones) Ruff; and grandchildren: Joshua & Nicholas Varner; John & Justin Ruff, and Miles, Bella, Skyler, Tristan, and Kallea Eleazar. He will be missed dearly by his eight remaining siblings and their spouses: Fred "Beaver" & Andrea Ruff, Winifred (Ruff) & Royall Thompson, Mary (Ruff) Cathell, Thomas & Janeen (Brown) Ruff, Anita (Ruff) & Rainer Wolter, Bridget (Ruff) Napolski, Joseph & Deborah Ruff, and Anne (Ruff) & Horst Fischer; as well as many cousins, nieces, nephews, co-workers and friends.

John will be laid to rest in a private ceremony at the Delaware Veterans Memorial Cemetery in Sussex County and a celebration of life will take place at a later date.

In lieu of flowers, the family suggests making contributions in John's memory to Ministry of Caring, Inc. at 115 E 14th St, Wilmington, DE 19801, <http://www.ministryofcaring.org>, or St. Jude Children's Research Hospital at 501 St. Jude Place, Memphis, TN 38105, <http://www.stjude.org/donate>.

Please sign the online guestbook located on the tribute page.

Comments



“ I have know John since before high school, we traveled with the Stanton Boys, lots of memories, lots of good times, beach times, and many others that I shall not mention. RIP Buddy!!!

Jay Meyer - October 06, 2020 at 01:03 PM



“ John was a great person,He will be missed by many friends.

Captain Larry K

Larry Karpinski - June 04, 2020 at 10:34 AM



“ Prayers for the Ruff family. John, you and your brother Fred are the nicest guys I've met since moving to Delaware in 2011. Always joking around. You will truly be missed.

Cal Schutz - June 04, 2020 at 09:15 AM



“ Thank you for letting me be your friend. You will be missed.

Capt Dave Brannon - June 03, 2020 at 05:34 PM



“ My condolences and prayers for comfort to the Ruff family.

John J. Giardina - June 03, 2020 at 11:06 AM



“ My condolences to the entire Ruff family. Rest in Peach Sir. Prayers for All.

Robert N. - June 01, 2020 at 07:40 PM



“ I've known John for 35+years he was a great person was quick to share his wisdom and taught me a trick or two when I was starting my pipe fitting and welding career. I have seen for awhile put thought about him often may you Rest In Peace buddy. Your friend and union brother Steve Cebenka

Steve Cebenka - June 01, 2020 at 05:17 PM



“ Gable Gift Box was purchased for the family of John Francis Ruff Sr..



June 01, 2020 at 05:14 PM



“ I had the honor of attending John’s 75th birthday party. I was also fortunate to have the chance to visit with John just over a week before he passed away. I was included in several trips to the AmVets to shoot pool with John and his brother Fred. John was one of the best pool players I’ve ever seen. Some of the shoots he could make would amaze everyone. John was always a well respected member and leader of both Local 80 and Local 74. Always willing to help fellow members in any way he could. John was a genuine friend and will surely not only be missed by me but also anyone who ever knew him.
May God be with Emmalea and the family in their time of need.

Kyle Spence - May 31, 2020 at 05:37 PM



“ Good good man rip my brother

Kevin Seramone - May 31, 2020 at 09:42 PM



“ Thanks, Kyle. He loved you like a brother.

Michelle Varner - June 01, 2020 at 01:32 PM



“ John (and Family),

John I didn't know you but rest in piece. Go with God.

Family,

John is at peace with his maker. This is a trying time as you deal with his loss. Remember all the Good John has done in his life. You each have a special memories to share or hold dear. As I reflect back of my life, I see and remember many who have gone before me. With John's passing you too will forever hold John in your hearts and minds. Those memories will never die.

Glod Bless.

Sookie and Lou Borsos

Louis C. Borsos - June 04, 2020 at 09:49 AM



“ I met John and Emmalea though friends I was visiting in Rehoboth Beach. John was always friendly, smiling and kidding. I will miss seeing him and his smile!! May he rest in the arms of the lord. ATL Jan

Jan - May 31, 2020 at 12:15 PM



“ On behalf the Board of Directors, Staff and Members of the Cape Henlopen Senior Center we would like to express our deepest sympathy to the Ruff Family. It was a pleasure to have known John. He was in the Center everyday to play pool and always found joy in hanging out with his buddies. We will always treasure the fond memories and will truly miss him.

Linda Bonville
Administrator
Cape Henlopen Senior Center

Linda Bonville - May 31, 2020 at 01:12 AM



“ What a wonderful obituary! Well said and well done. John taught me so much as a pipe fitter.....May his memory be eternal. Love you brother! Rest In Peace my friend. See you on the other side.

Bilky Papili - May 30, 2020 at 04:55 PM



“ One of my favorite memories of John is him at the community pool with kids lined up to get thrown into the air by him. He always seemed to live every moment to the max and set an amazing example for his children. A life well lived and too short.

My deepest sympathies to Emmalea, his children and all of his friends who had the pleasure of his company and the joy of knowing him. He will truly be missed and remembered with a smile and a tear.

Donna Price

Donna Price - May 30, 2020 at 10:50 AM



“ 1 file added to the album John F Ruff - his life in pictures



Michelle D Varner - May 30, 2020 at 10:24 AM



“ John F Ruff - missed by all

Michelle D Varner - May 30, 2020 at 10:25 AM



“ I was honored to know John only the last 10 years but always had a kind word or a uniquely John comment. Sometimes just stopping by my office on his way to play pool just to say hi and see how Captain K and I were doing. The world was a better place with him in it . Now heaven gets the pleasure. Prayes and hugs to the family

Carol Lynch - June 04, 2020 at 08:50 AM



“ My heart goes out to you Em and family!you are in my prayers

Jo-anne - May 30, 2020 at 10:15 AM



“ In lieu of flowers, the family suggests making contributions in John's memory to
Ministry of Caring, Inc. at 115 E 14th St, Wilmington, DE 19801
<https://www.ministryofcaring.org/giving-options/>
or
St. Jude Children's Research Hospital at 501 St. Jude Place, Memphis, TN 38105
https://fundraising.qa.stjude.org/goto/John_Ruff_Memorial
Thank you!

Michelle D Varner - May 30, 2020 at 09:39 AM



“ Please visit https://fundraising.stjude.org/site/SPageServer?pagename=personal_part_search and search John Ruff if link above does not work. Thank you!

Michelle D Varner - May 30, 2020 at 10:21 AM



“ 19 files added to the album John F Ruff - his life in pictures



Michelle D Varner - May 30, 2020 at 08:19 AM



“ The Falconi's lit a candle in memory of John Francis Ruff Sr.



The Falconi's - May 29, 2020 at 01:45 PM



“ May your rest in peace my friend.

Elle Hirneisen - May 30, 2020 at 10:06 AM



“ Emmalea, I am so sorry to hear about the loss of John. I have thought about you all over the years and what great neighbors and friends you were! John, May you now Rest In Peace.

Susan Peden - May 31, 2020 at 03:27 AM



“ Emmalea and family, We are so sorry for the loss of John, a thoughtful and caring friend. Remembering all the fun we had in Eagle Glen and the beach. May he now rest in peace.

Pat and Matt West

Patricia West - May 31, 2020 at 09:55 AM



“ Emmalea, i'm so sorry to hear about John's passing. My thoughts and prayers are with you and your family.

Dot Fausey

dot fausey - June 24, 2020 at 08:39 PM



“ Written in the Stars was purchased for the family of John Francis Ruff Sr..



May 29, 2020 at 01:42 PM