



John R. Gardner

December 3, 1944 - August 23, 2017

John R. Gardner, age 72 of Willoughby formerly of Concord Twp. died Wednesday August 23, 2017 at Lake West Medical Center, Willoughby. He was born December 3, 1944 in Cleveland and raised in Berea.

John attended the College of Wooster and Case Western Reserve University. He taught at Phillips Exeter Academy in New Hampshire, St. Lawrence University in Canton, New York, and at Lake Erie College in Painesville. He served as Associate Librarian at Lake Erie and, for 17 years, was the Director of Morley Library in Painesville.

In retirement John pursued his passion for world travel, especially to some of the most remote islands in the world, including all 7 continents and more than 100 countries, as well as gardening, bicycling, walking, cooking and entertainment, and reading.

Survivors include his partner for 42 years: Ralph J. Slaw, siblings: Thomas P. (Betsy) Gardner, Judy Gardner, Nancy Skabar, Bruce A. (Bonnie) Gardner, Kay (Rick) Helle and many nieces and nephews.

Preceding John in death are his parents: George and Mary Gardner and brother in law: Ron Skabar.

Entombment will be in Concord Twp. Cemetery.

In lieu of flowers family request contributions may be made to Ohio Living-Breckenridge Village Life Care, 36855 Ridge Road, Willoughby, OH 44094.

Arrangements entrusted to Brunner Sanden Deitrick Funeral Home & Cremation Center, 8466 Mentor Ave., Mentor, OH 44060.

Offer condolences at www.brunners.com

Cemetery Details

Concord Twp. Cemetery

11650 Concord Hambden Rd
Concord Twp, OH 44077

Tribute Wall

JM

“ Ralph and the rest of John's family, I was saddened to learn today from the Wooster Alumni magazine of John's death in August. I send condolences to you all as you continue on the difficult path of living without this special person in your lives. I last saw John at our 50th college reunion. We especially connected because we were both grieving the loss only a few weeks previous of our mutual good friend Joan (Winkie) Browne Brooks. She had been my freshman roommate and a fellow English major and kindred spirit to John. He was a special person, kind, witty, smart, a delight to be with. My heart goes out to you as you mourn his passing. Judy Black May, Humber Village, NL Canada

Judy May - November 22, 2017 at 10:35 AM

JB

“ John inspired us. He looked upon us as his second family, our little circle of librarians, and he encouraged us to be better than we knew we could be. My most vivid memory is at a multi state library conference, in a long-ago September, in a Minnesota blizzard.

We dined at his restaurant of his choice, as the unexpected snow came down. Afterward, we waited in the lobby for taxicabs for what seemed to be hours. In the center of the lobby was a (snow) white grand piano. Without hesitation, John sat down and quietly began to play. Beautifully, without sheet music, he soothed us of the cold, the waiting, the uneasiness of the unexpected weather.

John took care of us in our lives. He nurtured us, sometimes knowing what we needed before we did ourselves. He could be blunt, but always on point.

He is already sorely missed. But if anyone is in need, I know that he is quietly playing the piano for them in Heaven.

James Bouchard

James Bouchard - September 01, 2017 at 10:28 AM

LD

“ I have so many lovely memories of John that it's hard to choose. We were part of a small select group of friends from the Ohio library community. John was the organizer of many wonderful dinners across the country as we attended national and state conferences. As the excellent librarian that he was, John made sure to select the best and most interesting restaurant for us and made sure the reservations were done months ahead. Each dinner outing began with cocktails in John's hotel room and then we were off for the evening. It's no exaggeration to say that our little group was the envy of many and it was due to John, host extraordinaire.

Prior to a trip to Los Angeles many years ago, John called to see if I would like to join him and two others for a visit to Disneyland. I happily agreed and John's immediate response was, "Good. So none of us will have to ride alone!" And that was John. If you knew him, you knew you wouldn't ever have to ride alone.

For all of John's family, especially Ralph and Judy who I've met, I know there are no words. John made the world a better place and he will be greatly missed. God bless.

Laurie Drapp - August 31, 2017 at 09:13 PM

DE

“ The Fraebel family is deeply saddened by the news of John's passing. He was a wonderful man, and will be missed. Our deepest sympathies and prayers go out to Ralph's and the Gardner family.

Denise - August 30, 2017 at 07:59 PM

BR

“ Every class has a person who defines its values and represents its spirit. In his quiet and friendly manner, John was that very person for us. We will certainly miss his presence, but we will never forget what he meant to all of us and how he reached out to all of us. Bob Rosselli, class of 62.

bob rosselli - August 29, 2017 at 06:14 PM

JB

“ I'm glad we saw John less than a month ago but sorry we won't see him anymore. John was always soft spoken and sincere. We have talked with John and Ralph for several years about stopping in to see us when they were in Wooster for the Ohio Light Opera but somehow it never happened (we live 2 blocks from Freedlander Theater).

Jim Black, BHS '62

James D. Black - August 29, 2017 at 05:53 PM

CT

“ I always viewed John as the conscience of our class. A great friend with time for anyone. Such a good-natured person with a heart of gold and a very sharp mind. So glad to have seen him just a month ago. And totally shocked that he is now but a memory. Prayers and thoughts are with John's partner and extended family. Such a great guy. Craig Toedtman, The Great BHS Class of 1962.

Craig Toedtman - August 29, 2017 at 03:53 PM

JE

“ Because our last names were only two letters apart, we shared many of the same classes in the Berea school system. He was such a gentle spirit, earnest in his approach to classwork and respectful of everyone. I will always remember his quick smile and easy laugh.
Jim Elgin BHS Class of 1962

Jim Elgin - August 27, 2017 at 06:47 PM

TH

“ Thomas lit a candle in memory of John R. Gardner



thomas - August 27, 2017 at 01:35 PM

TH

We always enjoyed an opportunity to spend some time with John. He had such enthusiasm for life. He was a strong supporter and advocate for our North Coast Men's Chorus. We just had the pleasure of spending some time with John at the 30th Anniversary Chorus Kick-off picnic. He was his usual vivacious self--hard to believe we will no longer have the pleasure of running in to him

Tom Leber & Stephen Adley

thomas - August 27, 2017 at 01:38 PM

RG

“ *To the family of John Gardner*

Please accept our prayers and condolences in the lost of your loved one.

John was one the most outgoing, pleasant gentleman we have ever met. He lived in our neighborhood in Concord and he would pass pleasantries every time he passed our home as he took his daily walks.

Ron & Donna Gliebe

Ronald Gliebe - August 27, 2017 at 10:26 AM