



## John Desmond McCarthy

April 12, 1958 - November 30, 2023

John Desmond McCarthy, age 65 of Flowery Branch, Georgia passed away Thursday, November 30, from complications following a heart attack. He was born at Georgia Baptist Hospital in Atlanta to Dorothy Lee Miller McCarthy and the late Richard Desmond McCarthy.

Mr. McCarthy attended McClatchey Elementary School, The Lovett School, and graduated Crestwood High School, Dunwoody in 1976. He was a post-graduate of Choate Rosemary Hall in Wallingford, Connecticut. He earned his Bachelor of Arts Degree in English with a Minor in History from Saint Lawrence University in Canton, New York where he was a pitcher for the Saints.

After college, he moved to Winston-Salem, North Carolina to join his father's furniture design business. He started his real estate career while there before returning to Atlanta to join Fries and Associates in Roswell as an appraiser. He and his partner later formed their own company McCarthy Bass. He had a forty-year career as a residential real estate appraiser.

John loved all sports and referred to himself as a man for all (sports) seasons. He was most proud of his awards of Best Boy Athlete at McClatchey and Most Valuable Player in Basketball at Crestwood. As an adult, he played in softball leagues and basketball at Peachtree Presbyterian Church. He was active in

the Atlanta Lawn Tennis Association, ALTA, where his team won city titles. He was a Georgia Tech fan following in the steps of his grandfather.

For over forty summers since the age of 9, he joined his father in racing sailboats with The Corinthians. Their annual race/cruises were held in locations from Long Island Sound to Maine. He crewed in the Annapolis to Bermuda Race three times, crewed aboard a first-place boat in the Marblehead to Halifax Race, and sailed three years in Key West Race Week including crewing for the division-winning boat in 2005.

Mr. McCarthy began sailing in Wednesday Night Races on Lake Lanier in the 1980's. He raced his boat Iniki for over thirty years. He was active in the Southern Sailing Club, Lake Lanier Sailing Club's Auxiliary Fleet, and was a director of the Atlanta Inland Sailing Club. He was one of the most successful and winniest sailors on Lake Lanier. He considered his biggest successes working among clubs and individuals to coordinate races and events to make them more inclusive with larger participation.

In 2009, Mr. and Mrs. McCarthy traveled to China to adopt their daughter LilaLee who was two years old. During Christmas of 2014, Mrs. McCarthy returned to China to adopt their second daughter Macon who was five years old. After each daughter arrived home, she became daddy's darling. John's flexible schedule as an appraiser allowed him to spend many hours a day with his daughters. They accompanied him to job assignments and errands while listening to their daddy's favorite music. They learned about sports by listening to games in his car. Most importantly to him, he taught them social graces while meeting his business associates and interacting with people everywhere they went.

John was loyal and kept in contact with friends for decades. He loved to watch classic and action movies, read novels, and discuss opinions. He read

background stories to discover reasons leading to current events. He was a wordsmith who enjoyed crossword puzzles and Jeopardy. He quoted movies and novels often and kept a book of quotes with oxymorons and paradoxes. John loved to cook for his family and would organize dinners for dozens of sailing friends. He loved all types of music from classical to rock and roll.

Mr. McCarthy is survived by his wife of 31 years, Trena (nee Sawyer), his two daughters LilaLee and Macon, his mother Dorothy Lee Miller McCarthy of Dunwoody, sister Megan McCarthy and her husband Ed Lieber of Larchmont, New York, step-sister Cannon (Jay) Stoffel and step-brother William Simpson both of Winston-Salem, North Carolina, niece Caroline (Ariel) Solano and nephew Matthew (Madeline) Scarpa, and great-niece Elizabeth Scarpa, all of Larchmont, New York.

Funeral services will be held Saturday, December 9, at 2:00 P.M. at Flowery Branch United Methodist Church, Spring Street, Flowery Branch. The family will greet friends immediately after the service at Lake Lanier Sailing Club, 6206 Commodore Drive, Flowery Branch.

In lieu of flowers or other memorials, a college scholarship fund has been created for LilaLee and Macon. Their family appreciates your heartfelt support and loving generosity. <https://www.gofundme.com/john-mccarthys-daughters>

# Previous Events

## Funeral Service

DEC 9. 2:00 PM (ET)

Flowery Branch First United Methodist Church  
5212 Spring Street  
Flowery Branch, GA 30542

## Visitation

DEC 9 (ET)

Lake Lanier Sailing Club  
6206 Commodore Drive  
Flowery Branch, GA 30542

*Following Service*

# Tribute Wall

JB

“My family and I send our deepest condolences to John’s family. I am so saddened to hear this news. John made a huge impact on my life when he agreed to hire me over 30 years ago and agreed to mentor me. We became good friends and had a blast playing basketball and softball which was always followed by a few beers. He was such a good guy. Funny, smart, and he loved to have a good time. He was taken much too young. Our prayers go to Trena, the girls, and Dottie Lee. John will be deeply missed.”  
Jeff Belk

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**Jeff Belk** - December 16, 2023 at 02:18 PM

AE

“ We remember John as being a crucial part of the cockpit party, post some race or other, after doing all the heavy work as his Dad looked on and captained from the helm. No wonder they won so many races! But it was post race that we most remember John, his sense of humor and the endless camaraderie that he brought to all his fellow shipmates and friends, on the water or on land. He will be missed. We send our love & deepest condolences to his family.  
Amity Eills & Nancy Eills



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**Amity Eills** - December 09, 2023 at 07:55 PM

RR

“ John and I met in the fall of 1972 playing for Crestwood High School's first football team. The team was (0-and-whatever) horrible, but we started hanging out because we lived in the same apartment complex. Similar tastes in music, mischief, sports, humor and girls led to a lot of hanging out. John quickly became a dear and trusted friend. He was and always will be my oldest friend. Life's circumstances continually pulled us in different directions, but we always seemed to eventually reconnect. John attended Lovett for the 73-74 school year. In 76 I left for GA Tech. A year later, John left for St. Laurence. Several years later, we both made mistakes and married our first wives. (I moved to FL and was "dead" for 10 years.) The latest circumstance resulted from the responsibilities of parenthood. Between these events, we always found ourselves in each other's company. Competing at some game, arguing politics, and making each other laugh.

John's passing comes as a terrible shock. I always believed that once our children had left the nest, we'd once again reconnect and get back to competing, arguing and laughing. (I pictured the two old muppet characters - just on a suped-up sailboat moving really, really slow.) The thought that it won't happen in this life is hard to accept. As well as I knew John, there is one thing I was really looking forward to seeing. I never got to see John as a parent. I never got to see the profound change that being responsible for someone else's life had on him. (Having seen John and Trena together, I'm sure he was a great dad. This gets back to our arguing politics.) I really wanted to see how parenthood changed his attitudes towards the "human condition."

In many ways, John and I grew up together and shared many adventures. I will always cherish the countless memories from our many "adventures." In sum total, I couldn't do any better than to quote John from the speech he gave as my best man, "I love you man."

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Robert Rittenburg - December 07, 2023 at 10:59 PM



*Boy what a lovely tribute, Bob!!*

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**Megan McCarthy** - December 10, 2023 at 12:30 PM

MM

“ I met my baby brother John from the vantage point of the back seat of our car. We were headed home from the hospital after he was born. I was stuck in the backseat with a babysitter. But this new little honored person was up front, on my mom's lap. (Remember this was 1958, before carseats.). And thus began John's life as *The Prince*. Throughout our lives, I often pointed out to John his elevated status in our family. He'd heartily agree, and point out with his usual wit that it was well deserved.

*I tried my best to beat him into submission. I could push him, deny his access to my closet fort, slug him when Mom wasn't looking, and once even try to poison him during a science experiment involving household poisons, but John cheerfully tagged along with his rotten big sister.*

*We grew up in a quasi-geriatric neighborhood, so it was nice to have someone to play with. Then John started school, and he was no longer only my trusted little buddy. Sure, he'd follow me around sometimes, but that was just to bother me when a boyfriend was near.*

*John, like our dad, was a friend magnet, from the age of 5 until the age of 65. That means he was a good and true friend, which makes me proud of him. And I've been so proud as the years went on seeing what a great family man he was, both with Trena, LilaLee and Macon and with our mother. He went through heroic effort to get to his nephew Matthew's wedding, and I still treasure the photo of him with us at his Goddaughter niece Caroline's christening.*

*So many wonderful memories to hold dear in honor of him...*

*A modest person, John would want me to stop now. But he'd do it in his usual way, with humor. Evoking a childhood family joke caused by my once taking too large a slice of cake, John -- up there in heaven right now -- is lightly slapping my hand and saying, "Too much." And we'd all laugh.*

Megan McCarthy - December 07, 2023 at 08:55 AM

BC

“ 1 file added to the album Sailing



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Brian Clark - December 05, 2023 at 10:56 PM

BC

“ 1 file added to the album Sailing



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Brian Clark - December 05, 2023 at 10:52 PM

BC

“ 1 file added to the album Sailing



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Brian Clark - December 05, 2023 at 10:41 PM

SM

*I was not real close to John but admiration and respect for him. We often chatted at the sailing regatta's and did some beering and foozeball. I don't know what happened John but You were Loved by all. God Bless..... Scott McAllister*

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Scott McAllister - September 30, 2024 at 10:24 PM

DF

“ I know John is with his dad sailing the big blue sky. I will miss you,  
Cuz

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**Dianne Fries** - December 03, 2023 at 10:37 AM

JM

*John was a friend and a great sailboat competitor We competed in the same fleet often seconds apart at the finish Our boats were on the same dock and after the races win or lose he always had a great smile and a kind word. A great sportsman!*

*Jim Morang  
Athens Georgia*

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**Jim Morang** - December 05, 2023 at 06:46 PM