



John Lee Dougherty

June 2, 1952 - December 27, 2019

John Lee Dougherty, longtime resident of Newport well known for his love of friends and family, passed away the evening of December 27, 2019.

John was born June 2, 1952 in Salem, Oregon, the second of six children. He grew up in the farming town of Aumsville, Oregon where his grandfather owned Highberger's Flour & Feed Mill. Later in life John recalled fond memories of sitting on the Mill's loading dock after school with his grandfather, drinking soda from the nickel pop machine. The family enjoyed vacationing at Detroit Lake and he spent summers working in the strawberry fields surrounding Aumsville.

John graduated from Regis High School in Stayton, Oregon, where he played basketball but was better known for his love of music, cars, and his baby blue eyes. He attended Oregon State University, where he was a member of Phi Kappa Theta. In 1971, the Dougherty family moved from Aumsville to Newport after John's father, Joe, became the Postmaster. John shared his family's love of Newport; he moved there after his time at OSU and called Newport home for the rest of his life.

In 1974 John purchased property and a small cabin on the Alsea River from Andy Naterlin, former state senator and mayor of Newport. John deeply respected Andy and the two formed a friendship during Naterlin's later years.

After college, John worked briefly as a deputy with Lincoln County Sheriff Earl Hockema and also tried his hand at commercial shrimping. In 1977 John married Robin Rudolph, whom he met at OSU, and they welcomed daughters, Erin, in 1978, and Julie in 1980. With young kids, John decided to begin a career as an insurance agent. John and Robin divorced in 1984.

John spent the majority of his career at Ken Doerfler Insurance. In his early years with Ken Doerfler John was the only agent with an office, not because he was the most senior agent but because he was known for his colorful language when meeting with clients in person or over the phone. John focused on health and life insurance and took pride in advocating for his clients and helping them navigate what could be very challenging times. He took great satisfaction in recent years helping clients obtain health insurance who had not had health insurance for years. He was known for his empathy and determination to do right by the people who came to him for help.

In 1989 John met Barbara Wellsted and her young daughter, Shannon. John and Barb shared a love of the ocean and sailing and married in 1994. In 1997, they competed in the Transpacific Yacht Race, a grueling sailing race from California to Hawaii. Together they remodeled their house on a knoll overlooking Nye Beach and the Pacific Ocean, and over the years they hosted friends, old and new, for steak dinners cooked on John's beloved, small charcoal Webber grill. For many years they enjoyed traveling to see friends and family, including vacationing in Mexico with dear friends, taking in the Iditarod, attending an impressive number of Jimmy Buffet concerts, and hosting untold guests at the Alsea River property.

John was at his happiest at the Alsea River. He spent years fishing for Walter, the legendary giant steelhead that eluded him, swimming and shooting the rapids with the generations of kids to visit the property, improving the cabin,

fighting with the water system, mowing the grass, expanding the property, telling stories around the fire, and creating a park-like setting for appreciative guests.

John cared deeply for his community and was a champion of local businesses and organizations. He refused to shop at chain stores and insisted on buying local before it was a slogan. For nearly 20 years he was a supporter and promoter of Rogue Ales. He proudly served as the Vice President of Rogue Nation and could often be found at the Bayfront Pub shucking oysters and telling tales, some taller than others.

John was a gifted storyteller and master of the dramatic pause. He loved people and made them feel at ease (unless they were dating his daughters or nieces). He was generous with his time and was first to volunteer if someone needed help. He could be gruff at times, and he expected a lot from those he worked with and loved. But underneath a sometimes rough exterior was a man with an elastic heart. Though he lived a social life full of friends, John also enjoyed more quiet pursuits. He loved gardening and grew plentiful tomatoes and enormous artichokes and jade plants. He enjoyed playing the guitar, monitoring the barometer, keeping track of the boats crossing the Yaquina Bay bar, and sitting with his dog in front of his piping hot wood stove.

John was preceded in death by his father, Joseph Dougherty, and his loyal dogs, Magnum, Nick, and Miles.

He is survived by Barbara Dougherty, Erin Dougherty Lynch (Rob Lynch), Julie Dougherty Winger (Erick Winger) and Shannon Wellsted, as well as his grandchildren, Marin, Burke, Flora, and Logan, his mother, Jeannie Dougherty, his siblings, Joene Runkle, Jimmy Dougherty, Janis Becker, Julie

Tickle, and Jill Capri, brothers- and sisters-in-law with whom he loved to laugh, numerous adoring nephews and nieces, and a legion of loyal friends.

A celebration of John's life will be held at the Rogue Brewery in South Beach on Sunday, February 16 at 2:00pm. John would want everyone to have a great time, so please dress casual and warm.

In lieu of flowers, the family suggests donations be made to Newport-based charities. John was deeply committed to this town and its people and would want any remembrance of him to benefit the community. Though many of us feel adrift without him, John would want us to celebrate the good times and remember him by showering each other with the kindness he showed so many over the years. Hold your loved ones tight, call to check in on the friend you haven't heard from in a while, extend a hand to the person who needs it, and be kind to the stranger at the bar. Take time to watch the weather roll in. Enjoy some chocolate and cheap red wine before bed. And when someone says they love you, tell them "I love you more."

Tribute Wall



“ *John Lee Dougherty*

February 12, 2020 at 12:00 AM



“ *When my wife and I moved to Newport way back in the 80's John was our insurance man. He had a warm welcome for us when moving to the community Whenever I would run into him at the brewery he always had a smile on his face We will miss you. RIP John*

Bill & Vicki Van Boeyen - January 29, 2020 at 12:00 AM



“ *Loved working with John years ago. He was funny and had a great smile. So sorry to hear of his passing. RIP John.Lou Rollings*

Lou Rollings - January 12, 2020 at 12:00 AM



“ *Can't help think of The classic John smile and his love of Newport, Fishing and the occasional beer. I will miss him greatly.*



Rick Hert - January 11, 2020 at 12:00 AM



“ *Smart, funny and charming, John was a joy to work with, drink with and just be with. He'll be missed by all who knew him. Raising a glass to his memory.*

Peggy Olson - January 09, 2020 at 12:00 AM