



## John Louis Arrigoni

February 29, 1956 - July 14, 2025

John was born on a winter Wednesday in 1956 in Bellingham, Washington—a leap day that marked the arrival of someone destined to leap into life with both joy and intention—and, likely, with a great big smile. John had the rare ability to make everyone he encountered feel respected, known, and valued. From the moment he arrived, John brought warmth, charm, and a spirit that drew people in. His broad, infectious smile and genuine curiosity about others meant that no one remained a stranger for long. Whether through his work in real estate, time at the gym, those he met at church, cycling companions, his wife Sue’s many friends, those from his youth, or friends from college, John formed lasting bonds and cherished every connection.

Growing up in Bellingham, John built friendships from early childhood that would become the foundation of his life. To his last day, John had among his very closest friends those he met in elementary school and middle school. At Sehome High School, he was known for his classroom and athletic achievements, but his true gift was uniting his fellow peers into lifelong friends.

During summers, John worked as a gillnetter off Lummi Island—experiences that deepened his bond with nature and the Pacific Northwest. After graduating from Sehome, he headed to Pacific Lutheran University in Tacoma, where he earned a degree in marketing and communications.

John's professional life began in real estate, managing medical buildings, athletic facilities, and commercial centers—work that had taken him to San Francisco and Seattle before he returned to his beloved Bellingham. As Senior Vice President of Real Estate, John played a pivotal role over many years in the development of Barkley Village. He left a mark not only through his accomplishments but through his authenticity, kindness, and integrity.

Beyond career and community, John found joy in the quieter rhythms of life. He loved returning to Whatcom Falls Park, where he and Sue began their married life together. Each year they returned to the park to celebrate their anniversary alongside the beautiful waterfall where they were married. Cycling was a shared passion, and how they met—winding roads, mountain views, and the freedom of movement became metaphors for the way John lived his life. When he and Sue fulfilled a dream of building a home near Lake Whatcom, John was excited about the prospect of working the land with the help of treasured friends. This is yet another vivid example of how the people in his life brought depth and meaning to everything he did.

Though he looked back with contentment on his life, John often said it was not accomplishments that defined his life in the end—it was the people, the stories, memories shared, and his faith. John embraced the fullness of God's grace during his medical journey over the last eleven years and that journey poured into the way he lived his life with intention.

John was a keen observer of life—a student of people, seasons, and moments. He lived with purpose and dearly loved those who walked beside him as he dodged and weaved through the obstacles brought on by multiple myeloma and amyloidosis. To know John was to feel acknowledged, heard, and uplifted. To summarize John's attitude in his final years he would often look to what was in front of him, not what yesterday took away. Behind that big, beautiful smile, John was cheerful and lived with the assurance that the

best was yet to come.

He will be missed dearly and remembered always—with love, laughter, and the enduring legacy of a life fully lived, and for his extraordinary devotion to the love of his life, Sue, who brightened his every single day.

He was preceded in death by his father, Robert Arrigoni; and mother, Rose Arrigoni. He is survived by his wife, Sue; sisters, Diane Arrigoni; Donna Arrigoni (Jeff); nephews, Jean-Paul (Elyse) Slagle; Justin (Tealia) Slagle; Scott (Meghan) Schell; Ryan (Stephanie) Schell; brother-in-law Carroll (Sylvia) Schell; and numerous grand-nephews and grand-nieces.

There will be a Celebration of Life to honor John on September 5th, 2025, at 5:00 PM at the Bellingham Cruise Terminal located at 355 Harris Ave, Bellingham, WA 98225.

# Tribute Wall

PM

“ I just learned that John passed away last summer. I had hoped to reconnect with him. John and I were roommates as Freshmen at Pacific Lutheran more than 50 years ago. I remember thinking then, as I do now, that I was lucky we were assigned that room together.

When I met John, I thought he looked and acted like he was 30! He dressed well, carried himself with maturity, and drove that new Datsun 240Z he bought with his Lummi Island reef netting money. More than anything though, his kindness and acceptance made a lasting impression. I was a long haired, awkward, nerdy guy who looked all of 16 at the time. We spent a lot of time together that year, and he helped me accept myself through his acceptance of me.

We played a lot of very intense racquetball--as kind as he was, he was a competitor and we battled it out on the court!

Some of our mutual PLU friends stopped to see John last year not long before he passed. They recently caught me up with that visit and the news of his passing. I'm so happy they spent the time with John and Sue and sad I wasn't there.

I met John's parents that Freshman year, in Bellingham, and remember how much John loved his family and Bellingham. I know he is missed by his many friends, colleagues, and family. I feel the loss even though I haven't seen him in so many years.

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Peter Morris - June 03 at 05:02 PM

ER

“ Susie, Gonie was a dear friend, skiing and biking partner but most of all he was a true inspiration even with his health issues. Thank you for being at his side. You are an angel here on earth.

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**Ed and Lisa Richards** - September 02, 2025 at 12:00 AM

TG

“ John was a one-of-a-kind person who left a lasting impact on those who knew him. His friends were consistently inspired by his compassionate approach to life, and I feel blessed to have had the opportunity to know him.

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**Terry Graham** - August 31, 2025 at 12:00 AM

CS

“ It's with great sadness that Brother-in-Law John, aka "Goni", has left my Sister Susan without the Love-of-her-Life. But John's long illness and suffering has come to an end. He was a very special person, highly-accomplished in his professional life ... as demonstrated by his development & management of Barkley Village before becoming ill ... but, as emphasized in this Obituary, he was rare in his wonderful development and treatment of friends. John & Sue had many great experiences as described above, and they built a beautiful home overlooking Lake Whatcom ... where they hosted us many times for wonderful meals and conversation. Sylvia & I give our sincere condolences to Diane, Donna, and the entire Arrigoni family ... and to the MANY Friends of John and Sue! The Schell family will always remember John fondly!

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**Carroll Schell** - August 05, 2025 at 12:00 AM

LT

“ Sue, so sorry to hear about John's passing. The comfort we can get is knowing he has God and that he will be resting peacefully , no pain. Prayers to you as well dear friend and my heart felt condolences .

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**leslie R tiemersma** - August 05, 2025 at 12:00 AM