



## John Carter Othmer

May 25, 1943 - January 5, 2023

John Carter Othmer passed away on January 5, 2022, surrounded by immediate family and holding the hand of his beloved wife of 55 years. After a long 11-year battle with Alzheimer's, heaven gained an angel and prankster. John was a son, husband, father, grandfather, brother, uncle, and a friend. All roles he excelled in with love and humor.

John was born May 25th, 1943, in Spokane WA, to parents Fred and Cathryn Othmer. He graduated from North Central High School and Eastern State University. After completing ROTC training in college, he joined the U.S. Army and was assigned to the First Cavalry Division. He was next assigned to Ft. Rucker Alabama Flight School to be trained in flying helicopters and was then sent to Vietnam during the height of the war. Flying in and out of combat zones for 5 months, he finally took fatal enemy fire to his helicopter. He successfully brought it down after losing the tail rotor, saving his life and that of his co-pilot. John received a Purple Heart for that action as well as many air medals for his excellent flying skills.

He was returned to the States to recover from his injuries in Madigan Hospital in Tacoma, Washington. He soon met Judy Mc Cammon Decker, a young widow with a two-year-old daughter. After a five-week whirlwind courtship they were married, and the three of them moved to Mineral Wells, Texas, where John was assigned to Ft Wolters to finish his tour as an instructor pilot.

After his discharge from the Army, they returned to the Pacific Northwest where John began his teaching and contracting careers. First in Everett, Washington, where they welcomed their second daughter Heather Colleen, and 7 years later in Colville, Washington until retirement. John was an educator, mentor and friend to all he met. Teaching for years with the ability to positively impact so many lives brought him pride and joy. His humor was epic! An avid prankster and storyteller – who could ever forget “fur slugs”, “invisible pets”, “tabasco bird”, etc.?!

While living in Everett they became followers of Jesus and were baptized in a small

community church.

Before John started teaching in Colville, he spent several years building homes in that area along with his partner Richard Berg. At the same time, they were homesteading 50 acres 4 miles south of Colville. Roads were built, wells drilled, cabins built, (all while living in tents) and eventually two lovely homes finished. This was John's utopia. The endless projects were his calling. He was never bored and was always creating more and making improvements. There many fabulous memories were created as the girls finished schooling. Wonderful friends were made. The first grandchild, Lindsey Galbraith, was welcomed with much joy, and family reunions were had. John built a shop/barn combination where the family housed their horses and where he built two cedar strip canoes, a cedar strip kayak, and many wooden toys.

At age 65 John and Judy sold the property, moved to Bellingham to be near Heather, downsized to a condo, and then began in earnest to travel. They journeyed to France, England, Spain, Mexico, and road trips all over the U.S. & Canada. Heather took her dad back to Vietnam in 2008 for a healing, bonding trip. In 2011 John and Judy welcomed their second grandchild, Sasha – their little prince. Soon after Sasha was born, John began to experience symptoms of his disease. Sasha was a great source of joy to John as he fell deeper into his disease. John's good-natured, joking personality stayed with him through to the end. He was always a favorite of his wonderful caregivers in two facilities.

He is survived by his wife Judy, daughters Leanette and Heather, grandchildren Lindsey and Sasha, sisters Joan and Fran, and multiple much-loved nieces and nephews. He was preceded in death by his parents, his sister Mary Lou Jorgenson and her husband Glen, his brother Jerry Othmer, and his wife Marilyn, and his brother-law Bill McCammon and his wife Velda.

There will be a celebration of life held for John in Colville in the spring, with more details about that to come soon. Any donations can be made to the DSNW (Dementia | Dementia Support Northwest | Washington ([dementiasupportnw.org](http://dementiasupportnw.org))).

# Tribute Wall

ML

“ *Judy and family,  
It was my privilege to work with John at Colville Junior High and to call him my friend. Students loved him and he truly helped to positively change young lives. He was a wonderful person.*

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**Michael Lariviere** - February 10, 2023 at 12:00 AM

RB

“ *My name is Ronald Bush. I graduated North Central High School in 1961 with John. We weren't close friends, but acquaintances who shared a few classes. The thing I most remembered about John happened at our 10th reunion. John spoke to me about my parents dying before graduation and how he noticed "I just kept going on" I don't know how he knew about that but I appreciated his thought about me. I've often thought about that through the years. I wish his family comfort in their grief. John was a good guy.*

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**Ronald Bush** - January 28, 2023 at 12:00 AM