



John James Desparrois Sr.

May 17, 2020

John James Desparrois, Sr., affectionately known as 'Big John', age 69, of Elmer, New Jersey, passed away on Sunday, May 17, 2020. John is survived by his wife of 43 years, Margo; four children, Jessica Galvin (nee: Desparrois) (Thomas), John (Nikki), Vincent (Courtney) and Stephen (Heather); mother-in-law, Peg Snitzel; brother, Anthony Picchi (Susan); niece, Erin (Derick) and 4 nephews, Robert (Sandy), Eric, A.J., and Ned; numerous great nieces and nephews; and adopted brother and lifelong friend, Jeffrey Sowles.

Predeceased by his mother, Mary, step-father, Anthony, sister, Judy Reeder, brother-in-law, Bill Reeder, uncle, Jimmy Porrecca and father-in-law, Raymond Snitzel, Sr..

Born February 17, 1951 in Chicago, Illinois to Mary and Charles Raymond Desparrois, and raised by his mother and step-father, Anthony Picchi, John grew up in Penns Grove, NJ. John graduated from Penns Grove High school in 1969, received an Associates Degree in 1971 from Brandywine College, and a BS in 1973 from Union College, Barbourville, Kentucky

John grew up working the family business, Picchi's Cab and car repair business in Penns Grove, fostering a lifelong love of cars. Upon graduation, John sold insurance for Prudential Insurance where a co-worker and future brother-in-law, Raymond Snitzel, Jr., introduced him to his future bride, Margo. John also worked as an OSD Clerk with his father-in-law, Raymond Snitzel, Sr., at Hall's Motor Company. This inspired a lifelong passion for collecting the yearly Hess Toy Trucks and distributing them to the boys of both family and

friends.

John met his wife of 43 years, Margo, in 1974 and they married in 1976. They bought a 100 year old Queen Anne Victorian house in Elmer, which would prove to be a lifelong passion project, raised four children and lived close to family and friends.

John's true passion in life was one of service, service to the youth of his community, service to his faith and through his professional career, service to those in need.

For over a decade from 1993 to 2007, John was Scout Master of Troop 39 of the Boys Scouts of American. He was never happier than when commentating the racing of Pinewood Derby Cars, organizing the Funnel Cake booth at community events, attending 3 National Jamborees as Scout Master to Troop 212 and awarding merit badges, having taught young men new life skills.

John was a devout and practicing Roman Catholic, Eucharist Minister and parishioner, first at The Nativity in Franklinville (now St. Michael the Archangel), and later, at St. Anne's Church in Elmer, where he served for years as Board Member.

John found his professional calling when he was employed with the Department of Aging in Salem County, and later became the Regional Coordinator of Catholic Social Services for Cape County, Cumberland, Gloucester and Salem counties and the President of the Board of Mental Health of Salem County, NJ. He spent 32 years supporting the South Jersey community, families and individuals in their moments of crisis, providing assistance and reassurance. He answered the call for aid, assisting personally for months in the disaster relief efforts in Louisiana and Texas, after Hurricane Katrina in 2005. John was recognized for his service in 2012 as a recipient of 'Pro Ecclesia et Pontifice Cross', awarded by Pope Benedict and the Vatican for service to the Church and Pope; it is the highest honor given to Laity from Rome. He furthered his education through the years, achieving certification from Rowan University, Rutgers University, and University of Notre Dame.

Big John loved traveling, from Europe to America's National Parks; family trips always involved museums and historical places of interest. There were always Jersey tomatoes and sweet corn to spare from his backyard gardens. He couldn't pass up a thrift or antique store, often adding to his collection of furniture, glass insulators and vintage T.V. lamps. He would disappear for hours to tinker in his red, hand-built barn. He'd do a swing step or two to the Golden Oldies in the living room. Big John would happily spend hours talking with the neighbors and friends on a front porch, lending advice to any home project underway, 'playing Santa' for generations of children, including his own and many others, and riding his Harley Davidson across the back roads of South Jersey.

John's years of service in both his professional and personal life have impacted thousands of people in New Jersey and beyond; his dedication and generosity will live on in the people and the community that he called home. The family will hold a small service and John will be interred at Chestnut Grove Cemetery in his hometown, Elmer, NJ at a future date. In celebration of his life, please send a card to the family and share a special memory of Big John.

Tribute Wall

GL

“ *With Deepest Sympathy We Send Our Condolences and Prayers to Margo and Family.. So Sorry for You Loss...
George and Connie*

George Constance Lange - June 11, 2020 at 02:36 PM

JF

“ *My deepest sympathy and condolences to Margo and family. John was a wonderful friend and guide for both my parents for many, many years. He was always there for them. They were much older than he was and he had so much patience with them, and he was always so full of love and understanding. Many years ago Margo was the nurse for my grandfather at Salem Memorial Hospital, and she was also an angel in that situation. And right after that my parents formed a friendship with John. It lasted almost 30 years, which I'm sure will continue on the other side. Best wishes...James Field and family.*

James Field - June 01, 2020 at 01:59 PM

HO

“ *Dear Margo/Family&Friends~We were so saddened to hear of Johns passing...His Memory will be cherished&treasured by Us always...He is Unforgettable as We've Known Him since We were Young Children...Hank/John&I Graduated together...He left quite an impression to be Remembered by the Many People He has Helped throughout His Lifetime...R.I.P. Big John... We'll See You on the Other Side...God Bless Love~Henry&Deborah Ottinger*

Henry&Deborah Ottinger - May 31, 2020 at 11:47 PM