



John William Fred Layher

January 26, 1927 - October 9, 2024

John William Fred Layher of Saline, Michigan passed away peacefully at StoryPoint Assisted Living on October 9, 2024 from pancreatic cancer and congestive heart failure. John was born in Dearborn, Michigan on January 26, 1927 to the late Thema (Schnirring) and Rudolph Layher. He graduated from Saline High School in January, 1945. He joined the Allied forces during the end of WWII when he joined the US Coast Guard right before his 18th birthday. His dad suggested the US Coast Guard so he wouldn't have to serve overseas. As per John's luck, he joined the other unlucky 20% of the Coast Guard that had to serve overseas. He was stationed in the Mid-Pacific as a Radio Technician 3rd Class. On May 12, 1956 he married Elaine Kurowicki in Milan, Michigan. They were married 66 years when Elaine passed on June 29, 2022. They met on a blind date arranged by their good friends Tom (deceased) and Noreen (Schwartz) Love.

John was a life-long member of St. Paul United Church of Christ in Saline, where he was baptized and confirmed. He served on church council multiple times, building and grounds committee, memorial committee and sang in the choir. John also volunteered with the Saline Historical Society for many years and enjoyed taking many an elementary class for a historical tour through downtown Saline, Rentschler Farm and the Saline Depot. He retired from the USDA Soil Conservation Service in 1993 after 37 years of service, where he worked as a Soil Conservation Technician. He worked with farmers, school districts, and Engineers throughout Washtenaw and surrounding counties,

designing drainage systems, ponds and other earth related projects. He also farmed on his family farm on Maple Road in Saline with his brother Rudolph (Bub) Layher. John was an environmentalist long before it was a thing. Caring for the earth, growing earth sustaining plants and trees, and clean water were his priorities.

John loved the Lord and had read the Bible cover to cover four times (if not more). His Bible was highlighted throughout and he loved to argue theology with his pastors, many of whom called him a Biblical Scholar.

In November 2023 at age 96, John took an honor flight, with his grandson, to Washington DC from Toledo, Ohio. He was the oldest veteran on the flight and the only Coast Guard veteran besides the pilot. He was welcomed back with a celebration for all the veterans that never received a welcome home when they returned from war.

What John loved the most, besides his family, was to visit with people. Into his late 80's, he was often seen walking around Saline, to the grocery store, hardware store and barber shop. He would stop to talk with whoever was along his route. In November 2022 he moved into Assisted Living at StoryPoint, Saline. There he made many new friends that became very important to him, including his best friend Donna Dahlenberg and her daughter Deb Gumucio, Janet Laatch, Charles, Ed, and fellow Vets living at StoryPoint. John thanks everyone who came to visit with him while in StoryPoint including Betsy Marl, Scott Rentschler, Pastor Jim Coran and many others who called and spoke with him for many hours at a time. He wanted to thank his caregivers at StoryPoint for caring for him so well. And he wanted to thank Corsocare Hospice for their wonderful work. He wanted to especially thank his grandson Jared for his many hours of companionship, shopping for and lovingly taking care of grandpa, niece Susan Yuhasz who lived down the street, and his dear neighbors Fred and Laura Girbach and Donald and Denise Hatfield.

John is survived by his children Patricia (Craig) Richter of Saline, Paul (Rikilynn) Layher of Frankenmuth, and John (Jan Mata) Layher of Tecumseh.

Spending time with his grandchildren was his "Happy Place". He is survived by those beloved grandchildren, Joshua Richter of Canton, Jared Richter of Saline, Sarah Richter (Rachel Krawchuk) of Grand Rapids, Sadie Layher (Conner Applebee) of Boston, MA, Samuel Layher of Oak Park, Bryan and Daniel Layher of Ypsilanti. He is survived by many nieces and nephews, grand nieces and nephews, great-grand nieces and nephews. He is also survived by his sisters-in-law and brothers-in-law Janet and Donald Hann of Holland, Vicky and Edward Kurowicki of Milan, brothers-in-law James Weber of Grand Rapids, and David DeVee of Ann Arbor, and sisters-in-law June Fowler of Morenci and Jean Kurowicki of Evansville, IN.

John was preceded in death by his beloved wife Elaine, his parents, his sisters and brothers-in-law Lucille (Walter) Hinderer, Elizabeth (Donald) Dechert, brother and sister-in-law Rudolph (Marjorie) Layher, his sisters-in-law Stella Weber and Linda DeVee, and brothers-in-law David Kurowicki and Paul Kurowicki. He is also preceded in death by his favorite dogs, Mandy and Cindy.

Visitation will be held from 10:00 A.M. until the time of service at 11:00 A.M. on Friday, October 18, 2024 at St. Paul United Church of Christ, 122 W. Michigan Ave, Saline, MI 48176. Pastor Jim Coran will be officiating the service. Military Honors will be held at the church following the service under the auspices of the Veteran's Honor Guard of Washtenaw County. A luncheon will follow and will be held at the church. For those who cannot attend, the service will be livestreamed and will be available to view by visiting the Church's Facebook page or YouTube Channel. In lieu of flowers, donations in his name may be made to the church. Envelopes will be available at the service. To leave a memory you have of John, to sign his guestbook, or for directions please visit www.rbfhsaline.com.

Previous Events

Memorial Gathering

OCT 18. 10:00 AM - 11:00 AM (ET)

St. Paul United Church of Christ Saline
122 W. Michigan Ave.
Saline, MI

Memorial Service

OCT 18. 11:00 AM (ET)

St. Paul United Church of Christ Saline
122 W. Michigan Ave.
Saline, MI

Tribute Wall

ST

“ I had the pleasure of meeting John when I worked at Story Point. We are not suppose to have "favorites" but John was near and dear to me. I miss our chats and talking about clean, healthy eating. I will always remember to take my vitamins because he reminded me daily how important they are. You will be missed John.

Stephanie - October 29, 2024 at 01:37 PM

RN

“ I remember him as a kind boy scout leader back in the seventies. He was always calm, never saw him angry. I remember him saying of being strafed by Japanese aircraft while driving landing craft during WWII that it was “very frightening” which was I’m sure an understatement . May he RIP - Ron Newton

Ron Newton - October 20, 2024 at 06:25 PM

MH

“ John was a beloved member of St. Paul UCC for many years. He was very close with my grandfather, Rev. Ronald Boldman. My grandfather told me that the two would often talk on the phone or in person about the Bible or about the exciting lives they both led. Both men were very knowledgeable about so many different topics. To be a fly on the wall to listen to them talk! Brennan and I send our love to the family and friends of John Layher during this difficult time.



Megan Haley - October 14, 2024 at 12:53 PM

TP

“ Prayers to the family. I had the good fortune of knowing him. God's Peace. Toby Proctor

Toby Proctor - October 12, 2024 at 05:34 PM

SM

“ Dear Patty and family,
My condolences to you and your family. All of the years we spent in marching band together and our parents were right their supporting us as a big family. God bless and comfort you all in this time of sorrow.

Sue (Carter) Mulka

Sue Mulka - October 12, 2024 at 02:07 PM

JS

“ Wonderful memories of Mr. Layer and his wife when visiting their home, and high school friendship with Patricia. Always a kind man. Prayers for your family during this time of loss. Celebrations in heaven !
From Joyce Klein Shavers

joyce Shavers - October 12, 2024 at 11:06 AM