



## John R. Peterson

February 26, 1937 - December 27, 2023

John R. Peterson, aged 86, of Ann Arbor, Michigan passed away on Wednesday, December 27, 2023 after a long illness. John is survived by his wife of 43 years, Thais, his daughter Elizabeth (Kurt) Sutphen and his grandchildren, Jackson and Fiona Thursby. He was preceded in death by his beloved daughter Catherine Thursby.

John was a kind, loving and intelligent man. Most people would say he was quiet but behind those mischievous blue eyes was a sharp wit and he was a real chatterbox once you got him going. He couldn't tell a joke but he could always make you laugh and was a great punster. He was a man of many talents—scholar, linguist, world traveler, naturalist and woodworker. He loved reading above all else—one day it might be a Serbo-Croatian dictionary, the next how to bake bread or build a yurt.

John was a proud veteran of the US Air Force where he served as a Chinese language specialist in the Security Service. Upon discharge, he was an instructor of Chinese in the military's language program at Yale. He was a graduate of the University of Michigan where pursued his PhD in Chinese Linguistics.

John worked as a linguist but later switched gears and worked as a cabinetmaker for many years. Operating as JP Counters he built furniture, cabinets and countertops for customers in and around Ann Arbor. He retired in 2000. After retirement he was a bit bored, so in 2003 he chose to dust off his linguist's credentials and go to Iraq. There he developed and for 3 years ran

the English proficiency testing program for Arabs who wanted work as translators or interpreters for the coalition forces. He and Thais enjoyed the remainder of his retirement quietly at home.

A gathering of family and friends will be scheduled for a later time.

# Tribute Wall



“ *Thais, Carol & I were sorry to learn of John's passing. We will always think of him with his bibbed overalls on working in the flowers next door. We regret he was not able to do that the last few years.*

*Jim & Carol Clavier*

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**James Clavier** - January 02, 2024 at 10:24 AM

ES

“ *Dad, you were one of the good ones. I will love and miss you for the rest of my life.*

*My dad was an incredible person. He came from circumstances that most of us could never imagine yet he chose a path of kindness and intellect. He had a curiousness that would take him all over the world. He was an Eagle Scout with an innate love for animals, nature, and adventure. My sister and I loved to go canoeing with my dad who would introduce us to, and educate us about plants and bugs. He taught us to appreciate foods from other cultures. He was always so goofy and patient and sweet even throughout his illness and until his very last moments on this earth. Oh how he will be missed. I am so grateful for his presence in my life. Rest in peace, Dad.*

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**Elizabeth Sutphen** - December 29, 2023 at 07:58 PM

JH

*Thank you for sharing your loving memories of your Dad. He truly was a bright, well thought out observer of the world and where we fit in. His mind focused on what he saw, what he learned and the best ways to deal with the challenges he faced throughout his adventurous life. I knew your Dad as he was married to my cousin and we would reconnect every 4th of July at Sue & Jack Gleason's home in Imlay City. His knowledge of life events were remarkable and he never forced his opinions on to anyone. He seemed happy and content with his life choices and I always admired his ability to comment when asked first.*

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**jeff houtteman** - December 30, 2023 at 10:16 AM

JJ

*John was an intellect who observed before he spoke, he listened to others and his responses were based on the world as he saw it. A balanced, remarkable man that was guided by his own sense of purpose*

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**jjhoutteman** - December 30, 2023 at 11:55 PM