



John Waldo Neuenschwander

NOV 14, 1925 - MAR 22, 2024



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John Waldo Neuenschwander was born on November 14, 1925 and passed away on March 22, 2024 at the age of 98, having lived an incredibly full life as a husband, father, grandfather and great-grandfather. His travels took him all over the world, usually accompanied by his family or friends. He enjoyed remembering and discussing these travels up to the day of his passing.

John was born in Akron, Ohio, the second son of Willis Lee and Esther Mayer Neuenschwander. Both of his parents were educators. This may explain in part his life-long love of reading and learning about the world around him. His father taught biology, physics, aeronautics and even started one of the first driver's education programs in the country. His mother taught English, Latin and German. John's commitment to religious study is not surprising, given the fact that his maternal grandfather and great grandfather were ministers in the Reformed Church. His father, a Swiss Mennonite, also served as a minister in what is now the United Church of Christ.

John graduated from Akron (Ohio) Buchtel High School in 1943, then enrolled at the University of Michigan. He finished one year of engineering before enlisting in the Navy to become an Electronic Technician. John received his naval training at Texas A & M University and at Treasure Island in San Francisco before heading to sea. John served on the USS Biloxi. While anchored at San Pedro Bay in the Philippines on August 15, 1945, John and the rest of the crew on the Biloxi heard the Japanese surrender announcement. He did not see any fighting but his ship was the first to arrive at Hiroshima after the war. Along the way he visited Nagasaki, survived two typhoons and then returned to the States on the seaplane tender the USS Yakutat.

John returned to his studies in September 1946 at Michigan where he completed a degree in Electrical Engineering while working as a Quality Control Engineer for Kaiser-Frazier Automotive. John went on to get his MBA in 1951 at Michigan and then joined General Electric's Manufacturing Training Program. Three months later, while on a rotating assignment in Schenectady, John met his wife Beth, a graduate of Furman University. She was also working for



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GE. They were married in 1952 and moved to GE's Electronics Park at Syracuse. His work focused on manufacturing and then on the new marvel, the computer.

In 1956 John and his family moved to Valley Forge, Pennsylvania where he managed a Computer Application Organization for GE's Space Division. John was responsible for the installation of one of the first computers for business applications in GE. In his position of manager, John "created history of a sort" by promoting a black male and white female to managerial positions over primarily white males.

In 1960 John became an internal GE Computer Application Consultant, living in New Canaan, Connecticut while commuting to an office in New York City. John later joined GE's Computer Business division as Manager for Marketing for a new printer technology business GE bought in Philadelphia. John and the family then spent a year in Paris where he was heading up a large Computer Application Organization for GE's newly acquired subsidiary Bull Corporation, the largest data processing and computer corporation in Europe and South America. The family, including young children, enjoyed their living quarters for the year, the apartment that normally was occupied by the Belgian ambassador to France.

Returning to the States, John joined GE's Computer Group staff in Connecticut to help coordinate the development of new markets and applications. John was instrumental in starting GE's Time sharing Business, a precursor to the personal computer and the internet. John and his family lived in New Canaan (Connecticut) during this time period.

When GE sold its computer business to Honeywell in 1970, John moved to Rockville, Maryland where he was responsible for strategic planning and business development with GEICO. John served on a government task force to forecast computer processing trends.

John retired from GE in December 1986.

During his retirement John spent ten years doing church development work for the Central Atlantic Conference of the United Church of Christ. John started several ethnic churches, provided funds for revitalizing some old churches, sold vacated properties and sought out new ones.

John started and was president of Fernwood Child Care Center at Bethesda United Church of Christ and headed a major fund raising and building expansion project for the church.

In March 2000, John and Beth moved to Buckingham's Choice, near Frederick, Maryland. John served on the Board Directors of Bethesda Kiwanis Club and Bethesda United Church of Christ.



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John is a life member of the Ohio Huguenots. He, along with Beth, was a member of the University of Maryland Terrapin Club and enjoyed attending all Maryland home football and men and women's basketball games.

Outside of his professional life John was an avid reader. He loved playing golf, tennis and as he got older, bowling, cornhole, and poker. While a resident, John was active in bridge, book clubs, investment clubs and wine clubs. John served on the board of directors of Buckingham's Choice Resident Association, helping monitor BCI/EMA finances.

But above all, John treasured his family. He is survived by his spouse of 72 years, Elizabeth Ellis; his daughter Elaine and her husband Ken Ferguson of Austin, Texas; daughter Terry and husband John Bauer of Spokane, Washington; son John and wife Tina Orzechowski of Ijamsville, Maryland; grandchildren: Kevin Ferguson, Kyle Ferguson (wife Julie Baker), Eric Ferguson (wife Christine), Katie Boedeker (husband Ryan), Cecylia Morrison, Cheyanne Neuenschwander, and Christine Neuenschwander; and great-grandchildren Skylar Ferguson, Miles Ferguson, and Ezra Morrison.

In honor of John's memory, contributions can be made to Bethesda United Church of Christ, Chesapeake Bay Restoration Fund, Swiss Community Historical Society, and the NAACP




Events


John Waldo Neuenschwander

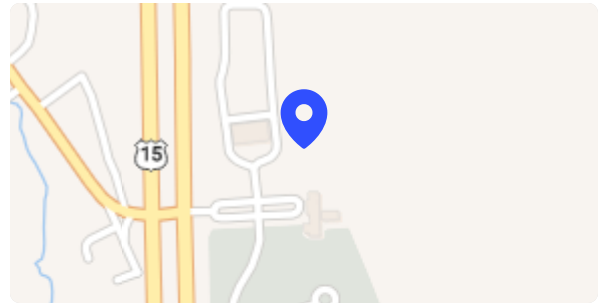
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Celebration of Life

 **Saturday**, April 27, 2024

 11:00 AM ET

 **Resthaven Funeral Home & Crematory, Inc.**
9501-B Catoctin Mountain Highway, Frederick MD
21701





Memories only last if you share them

Join us in honoring John by contributing to a collection of shared memories.



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