



## John Russell Beranek

December 6, 1939 - December 16, 2019

On Monday, December 16, 2019, John Russell Beranek died peacefully in his sleep. John was the eldest child of Leonard and Hazel Beranek. In his youth, John was athletic, outgoing and mischievous, and discovered his life-long love of travel. In 1961, he graduated from Florida State University, where he was president of Theta Chi Fraternity. In 1964, John earned his law degree from the University of Florida, where he was the executive editor of the Law Review.

John was a partner in the West Palm Beach law firm Jones, Adams, Paine, and Foster before his appointment to the Circuit Court of Palm Beach County by Governor Ruben Askew in 1973, at the age of 33. At the time, he was the youngest judicial appointee in Florida's history. Three years later, John was elected by his fellow circuit court judges as the first criminal court judge to serve as Chief Justice of all the circuit courts in Palm Beach County. He also served Governor Askew as a judge on the 4th District Court of Appeals and as special council to Governor Bob Graham.

In 1989, John moved to Tallahassee, where he joined the firm Aurrell, Radey, Hinkle, Thomas and Beranek. In 1990, he and John Aurrell joined the law firm Ausley & McMullen as partners, where John cultivated a vibrant appellate practice and became a fellow the American College of Trial Lawyers. During his career, John served the larger legal community as counsel to the Florida

Judicial Qualifications Commission and was active in the Florida Bar Association, chairing multiple committees.

John's passion for life was reflected in everything he did, though his greatest joy was time with Dee, his wife of 28 years, from whom he was inseparable. He remained passionate about the study and practice of law and delighted in any excuse to travel to the Bahamas' Abaco Islands. John was also an avid woodworker and enthusiastic host. John's family and friends cherish their memories of his irreverent humor and his fearless, adventurous, easy-going spirit.

He is survived by his step-daughter, Mignon L. "Sarah" Brockenbrough and husband, William; his sister, Joan B. Rodriguez and husband Charles, of Tampa; his niece Carol Rodriguez - Cox and husband, Roger Cox; his nephew Charles F. Rodriguez, Jr. and his children Matthew and Natalie.

A private memorial service will be held in January. In lieu of flowers, donations in John's memory may be made to The Bahamas National Trust, The Head Knowles Foundation, or The Southern Environmental Law Center.

Breanna Green of Bevis Funeral Home is assisting the family with their arrangements. (850-385-2193 or [www.bevisfh.com](http://www.bevisfh.com))