



## John Weston Larson

March 6, 1936 - January 25, 2024

John Weston Larson was born on March 6, 1936, in San Jose, CA to Dr. Carroll Bernard Larson and Nadine Townsend Larson. He would become the oldest of 4 siblings. When he was just 3 months old, they moved to Boston, where his dad accepted a position at Massachusetts General Hospital of Harvard Medical School. When John was in the 9th grade his father became the head of the orthopedics department at the University of Iowa hospital and the family moved to Iowa City, IA. They lived on a farm and he was thrilled to drive to school at the age of 14 on a "farm permit." His mornings started early, "slopping" the pigs before school. While in high school, he played varsity basketball and baseball all four years and graduated as co-valedictorian from City High in 1954. He attended the University of Virginia on a Navy ROTC scholarship his freshman year where he played on the freshman basketball team. John transferred to the University of Michigan his sophomore year and became a member of the Sigma Nu fraternity. He spent every summer aboard a Navy ship fulfilling his ROTC duties and graduated in 1958. He then served 3 years active duty as a LT JG naval officer on the USS Des Moines, stationed in the Mediterranean Sea off the coast of Nice, France. A highlight for him was when the USS Des Moines hosted President Dwight D. Eisenhower for several days while he was on his "Goodwill Tour" in December of 1959!

After finishing his Navy tour, John attended the University of Iowa Law School, where he was the editor of law review. He graduated 2nd in his law school

class in 1964. While a law student, he met Martha "Marty" Lear, while she was getting her master's degree. They were married in 1962. Their son Eric was born in 1963. Upon graduation he took a job as an associate with the Dorsey Law Firm in Minneapolis, where their daughter Jennifer was born in 1965. He lived and practiced law in Minneapolis until returning to the University of Iowa as legal counsel for the University president in 1968. In 1972 he moved the family to Tallahassee when he joined the FSU Law School as an associate professor, as his true passion was teaching.

John gave his time and energy, for both students and the law school's greater objectives, for more than 30 years. He taught, served as Associate Dean, and as a volunteer to various other administrative positions, such as serving on the admissions committee and as the first administrator of the JD/MBA joint degree program, until his retirement in 2003. He is remembered as a conscientious and fair-minded professor, focusing on being a teacher and mentor to students. A former judge in town, who was also a former student, once referred to him as "a scholar and a gentleman."

John enjoyed reading historical novels and listening to classical music. He often wished he could be a maestro in his second life. He also, forever, had an active "professorial" red pen, notating, commenting, highlighting and editing newspapers, magazine articles and automotive journals. He was a 60-year subscriber to Road and Track Magazine, and he loved "tinkering" with cars. Over the years, he had several red sports cars (his first being a Porche 356B that he got while in the Navy) and always a fondness for convertibles.

In addition to playing in city basketball leagues until his ankles couldn't take it anymore, he was an avid and enthusiastic tennis player. He and his family became charter members of the Forest Meadows tennis club in 1973, where he continued to play until he was 83. In 1975, John achieved a Florida Top-10 35-and-over doubles ranking with law school colleague/doubles partner, Ken

Vinson, and later played in 4.5 USTA competitive men's doubles leagues into his 60's. He also willingly played social mixed doubles partnering with his wife, Marty. John hit a big topspin serve, nicknamed by some of his regular playing friends as "The Swedish Swat", until a rotator cuff injury at age 65. He recovered from surgery, and returned to the courts, albeit with flat serve. From his retirement until 83 he played early morning doubles at Forest Meadows with the "Golden Boys Early Bird" tennis group.

John, with Marty, for many decades, delivered Meals on Wheels. In the summertime he would often take the grandchildren with him. Also, for several decades, he was a congregant of St. John's Episcopal Church, attending the 8:00 a.m. service. He was a member and regular attendee of the Tallahassee Economics Club, a regular patron and supporter of the Tallahassee Symphony and an avid fan of FSU, University of Michigan, and University of Iowa sports. He and Marty were happily, lovingly married for nearly 61 years until her death in January of 2023. He was a loving grandfather, and so proud of his 3 grandchildren: Abby Birkmeier (currently a civil engineering major at GaTech), Brad Birkmeier (currently at FSU), and Ivan Larson (currently a computer science major at Northwestern).

He is predeceased by his parents, his brother Carroll "Jeeper" Larson, sisters-in-laws, Lee Larson and Linda Lear Fincham, brothers-in-laws Richard Fincham and Clark Bening. He is survived by son Eric (ex-Lise), daughter Jennifer (ex-Greg Birkmeier), grandkids Abby, Brad, Ivan, sister Lori Larson Butler (Bill), sister-in-law Christine Lear Bening, and numerous nieces and nephews. He will be remembered as an intelligent, honest, generous, unassuming, decent man, a loving husband, father, grandfather, uncle, colleague and friend, and as an unself-conscious, loud, and messy eater of corn-on-the-cob!

A memorial service will be held at St. John's Episcopal Church of Tallahassee on Saturday, February 17, 2024 at 11:00 a.m. with a reception to immediately follow. In lieu of flowers, memorial contributions may be made to St. John's Episcopal Church or to Big Bend Hospice.

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

# Previous Events

## Memorial Service

FEB 17. 11:00 AM (ET)

St. John's Episcopal Church  
211 North Monroe St.  
Tallahassee, FL 32301

# Tribute Wall

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“ John was a wonderful brother, & friend! I send my love to our family in Tallahassee. Thank you to Jennifer & Eric for all your updates when he was recovering, it was so appreciated! I know you know just because I am not there, does not mean I dont care. Know that I miss him alot, & am very proud to have had him as my brother ❤️ Remember the good times, as I know you will! Don't forget to stop & smell the roses 🌹🌹 Sending my Love to you all 📧 Aunt Lori

Lori Butler (Larson) - February 16, 2024 at 11:48 AM

BF

“ Bryant withers and family purchased the Sentiments of Serenity Spray for the family of John Weston Larson.



Bryant withers and family - February 15, 2024 at 02:56 PM

BF

“ Bryant withers and family planted a [Memorial Tree](/store/Product.aspx?ProductId=4518) in honor of John Weston Larson.

Bryant withers and family - February 15, 2024 at 02:56 PM

GM

“ I first met John in 1950 when we both members of the freshman class at Iowa City High School. He easily made friends with his classmates because he was a straight A student, a good athlete, a class leader, who had an easy going, laid back, friendly personality. And, he was one of the few kids in the class that had his own car, a yellow 1948 Olds 98 convertible that I recall riding in on several occasions.

After high school, we went our separate ways, but would see each other at class reunions. Then, when I retired and my wife and I moved to Naples, we we always stopped and went out to dinner with Marty and John whenever our travels took us thru Tallahassee. What really nice and gracias people they were.

John Larson was much more than just a high school friend to many of his classmates in the City High class of 1954, he was an inspiration. And, for those who knew him well, he will truly be missed.

Our deepest condolences to the Larson family.

Gerry and Ruth Myers  
Naples, FL

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**Gerry Myers** - February 15, 2024 at 12:09 PM

BB

“ John was a wonderful person. I knew him through teaching at the College of Law many years ago and he was always warm, genuine, and fair-minded. After that I would occasionally run into him at Elder Services when he and Marty were delivering Meals on Wheels, or outside St. John's. Just an all-around good guy. Sincere condolences to his family.

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**Barbara Busharis** - February 12, 2024 at 01:06 AM