



## *John Strachan*

**Dec. 11, 1936 - Oct. 30, 2024**

John Strachan passed away at this home in Morganton NC on October 30, 2024 with his wife Joyce and son Don at his side.

John was born December 11, 1936 to Donald Cheyne Strachan and Arline (Warnock) Strachan. He grew up in Westport CT and Burlington VT. John graduated from Bowdoin College and the University of Virginia School Of Law. He was married to Susan Smith 1959 - 1976 and they had three children.

Following law school, he and his family moved to Anchorage, Alaska in the early 1960's, seeking new opportunities at the cusp of growth of this new frontier. He experienced firsthand the drama of the 1964 earthquake of Alaska. John was a partner in various law firms throughout his 45-year career in Anchorage, eventually settling on private practice. John married Joyce Epley Lanier in 2004, closed his law practice, and the two built a home in Morganton NC in 2007. They enjoyed retired life - exploring the countryside and historical sites, traveling, birding, researching and documenting family history, and making new and valuable friends among their church community and neighbors. John was a member of Glen Alpine United Methodist Church, The Sons of the American Revolution, and other historical organizations in Burke County.

John was a man of dry humor and wit. He enjoyed reading, particularly historical non-fiction. He was an avid reader of first edition material about Captain Cook's voyages. He restored several vintage cars, including his grandmother's 1923 Buick, which he drove in the 4th of July Parade in Anchorage and his 1966 Austin Healy which he drove in a Glen Alpine 4th of July parade. Keen to learn new skills and proud of his

Scottish heritage, John learned to play bagpipes, a test of patience that was not inherent in his personality. In Anchorage, he renewed his childhood enjoyment of horses, owning several over the years, and enjoyed riding with his many friends in the horse community.

John is survived by his wife, Joyce, and sister, Sharon Surhoff (AZ). His children Donald Cheyne Strachan (NY); Elizabeth Strachan and husband Bruce Richter (AK), and Margaret Strachan Tyler and husband Ethan Tyler (AK), and grandchildren Faith Strachan; Johanna, Christine, Kate, and Jack Richter; Rebecca Tyler; Joyce's son Jonathan Lanier, wife Ashley, and children Vinny and Lillian (AK)

Preceding him besides his parents were his sisters, Leonie Sanders, Gail Frazier, and Blair Hall; granddaughter Holly Charland.

Graveside services will be held at Burke Memorial Park at 1 p.m., Saturday, November 9, 2024 with Rev. Logan Miller officiating.

Memorials in lieu of flowers are appreciated. Glen Alpine United Methodist Church, Box 576, Glen Alpine, NC 28628; Historic Burke Foundation, PO Box 915, Morganton, NC 28680; or a Helene rescue organization of your choice.

Sossoman Funeral Home and Crematory Center is assisting the family with the arrangements.

# Tribute Wall

Just reading this now . Jan 3 2026. Sorry to hear you are gone. You were my father's attorney and he admired you. We shared your German heritage. You were a friend I trusted. I shared a love of horses with you, I laughed at your bagpipes. One of your friends was a clown. Good bye dear John

—Bonnie Wedekind Albright

Mrs. Strachen and Family: We are so sad to learn that John passed away. He was such a brilliant lawyer. We admired him greatly. He left many very important Alaska court cases especially regarding due process rights which live on in Alaska case law precedent. So glad if he was happy in Morganton in his final years. We will mail a Mass card to the address we have in AK Directory of Attys. We are praying for your family during this very difficult time. May John rest in peace. Sincere condolences, Tom and Theresa Obermeyer and Family Anchorage, Alaska

—Tom and Theresa Obermeyer

Oh John, how sad I am when a dear friend shared your obituary. We rode together in Anchorage and across the northern part of Ireland. What fun we all had over the years. Also, my Christmas Eve dinners with the fine china and silver had added class when you came. The beef and Yorkshire pudding were of your favorites. At our age we are saying good-by to many of our friend and so I bid you a fond farewell, dear John. Cheers, Robin

—Robin Holm

John was a mentor and a dear and loyal friend. His intelligence and his dry wit were superior and matched only by his generosity to those less fortunate. He cared passionately about taking care of his clients and in leaving wherever he was, better than when he entered. When you wanted an intelligent conversation, you looked to John for an erudite discussion. Well spoken, highly educated and unfailingly polite, he was a scholar of the law and of history, My deepest condolences to Joyce, Don, Elizabeth and Margaret each of whom I was privileged to meet when John practiced in Alaska. He is deeply missed. Jamilia Griffin George

—Jamilia George

Dearest Joyce and family, it is with great sadness that we acknowledge John's passing. It was a joy of my life (Stanlena) to share a birthday with John and to enjoy his (& Joyce, Phillip, Barbara and Gerald's) company at our annual birthday party. To my friend since 4th grade, I am sure that we will all meet again at Jesus' feet when the time comes. Our prayers are for you as you continue this earthly journey with the memories he has left behind. All our love, Gerald & Stanlena

—gerald & stanlena allen

John was such a delightful friend! We rode horses together and made adventures out of common interactions. John married my sweet neighbor Joyce Lanier on 11/04/2004 at 4:04PM (his humor). Rosa Meehan and I served as "Bestmen" (also John's humor) at their wedding. I am so thankful that John strengthened his relationship with God and enjoyed the company and conversation of his fellow church members. May the Lord bless you, Joyce, as you continue your earthly journey. Thank you for loving my friend and being such a fine companion for the past 20 years.

—Mary Bolin

Joyce, I am so sorry to hear about John. There were so many things that he did that were to be admired! He will be missed in many circles of the community.

—Susan V. Houck

I am sad to hear the news of John's passing. John and his lovely wife, Joyce, had a love of history and family. John was smart, kind, and level-headed. The love and respect he had for Joyce was evident. My heartfelt condolences go out to Joyce and the family.

—Laurie Johnston