



John William Demos

May 12, 1940 - July 10, 2024

John William Demos, (A.K.A. “Baba”) The man. The myth. The mustache. John (the Generous) was born in Danville, Illinois in May of 1940 to radically hospitable Greek immigrants, William and Anastasia “Tasia” Demos. Their home was on Walnut Street was filled with cousins, prayers, meatballs, and Greek dancing in the living room.

John blazed on the scene in kindergarten not knowing a word of English-but he was a fast learner and quickly picked up a new language, reaching fluency by first grade. He regularly worked shifts at his dad’s diner-delivering bowls of soup and bracing cups of hot coffee to paying (and nonpaying) customers alike. John often spun grand tales about the colorful regulars who frequented the Main Café, many of whom were transient men who traveled on the freight trains that regularly passed through town.

John’s legacy of generosity began at that diner, with each cup of coffee served to an otherwise overlooked soul in need. When John asked his dad why he regularly fed these nonpaying customers, his father replied gently, “Yianni, you’ve never been hungry.”

John took those words to heart. He served more cups of coffee and bowls of soup. He peeled potatoes in the basement of the diner and officially launched his entrepreneurial journey by subcontracting his paper route to his beloved little brother, Andy.

John was the first in his family to pursue higher education. During his lifetime,

he helped to make education possible for several other students too. He graduated from Butler University (go Dawgs) in 1962 and headed to law school for a few years before thinking better of the idea. He grew his legendary handlebar mustache in the late 1960s, rode motorcycles in a shimmering star-studded helmet, and got his pilot's license.

John's love life also took flight when he met his soon-to-be wife/best friend, Mimi Cazana, one divinely orchestrated day when he called a local TV station in Indianapolis where she was regularly on-air. After tuning in (and personally verifying that she was brilliant, kind, and captivating) the two fell head-over-heels in love and had a Big Fat Greek wedding on September 2, 1973.

Their bouncing baby girl (and biggest fan), Stasia, made her debut a year later in September of 1974 – completing their little family. John was a present, patient, hilarious, and absolutely beloved husband and father.

John was also a generous employer and “gatherer of people.” He started Guardian Moving & Storage, Atlas Van Lines in the early 1970s and eventually served on the Atlas Van Lines World Group Board of Directors. “ It all began with one small van” over 50 years ago and is still operating and prospering today under the leadership of a dear friend. One of the hallmarks of the company that John's employees never wanted to leave. Several became career-long employees and lifetime friends.

John later owned and managed a local Remax Real Estate office in conjunction with his interest in the development of industrial properties. He successfully launched multiple small businesses and encouraged others (both practically and financially) to do the same.

John's life was one of quiet generosity, personal integrity, and bold adventure. Fishing expeditions took him around the globe to Belize, Alaska, Africa, and Canada. But his favorite fishing hole was at his family cabin in southern Indiana, where he would bait a hook with a fat night crawler for his little girl and then clean their bluegill for dinner.

John lived out his faith in quiet, but lavishly generous ways and was the living definition of a “lifter of people” and a Good Samaritan. He made the world a

brighter place by listening to friends and strangers alike with a compassionate heart. He loved his family and friends steadily, beautifully, and fiercely and it changed people for the better.

John is receiving a raucous heavenly welcome from a multitude of loved ones- including his parents, William and Anastasia "Tasia" Demos; his nephew, Bill Demos; and his mother and father-in-law, John and Katherine Cazana.

John is survived earthside by his loving wife of fifty years, Mimi Cazana Demos; his adoring daughter and son-in-law, Stasia Demos Mills and Matt Mills; his all-time favorite grandson and namesake, John Silas Mills; his brother, Andy Demos (Betty); his sisters-in-law, Teddi Fritts and Brenda Demos; his nephew, Jim Demos (Stephanie, Nick, AJ, and Lucas); and a glorious throng of friends, colleagues, employees, and fellow brothers and sisters in Christ at Spirit of Joy Church who consider him family.

A Celebration of Life will be held at Spirit of Joy Church, 3535 Kessler Boulevard East Drive, Indianapolis, IN 46220, Monday, July 22, 2024, with visitation at 11:00 a.m., followed by a memorial celebration at noon.

Following John's committal (and a holy bluegrass sendoff) at Oaklawn Memorial Gardens, 9700 Allisonville Road, Indianapolis, IN 46250, we will celebrate his generous, magnificent life with root beer floats, prayers, stories, and a family-style dinner at Maggiano's Restaurant, 3550 E. 86th Street, Indianapolis, IN 46240.

We hope you'll join us.

Come as you are-any attire is welcome. Many of us will wear a bright color or a favorite shirt in honor of John's life rather than black.

In lieu of flowers, please consider continuing Baba's legacy of generosity by making a memorial gift of support to medical missionaries, Drs. Steven & Katie Hoyt, at <http://www.simusa.org/give> (project number 97245) as they are in need of funding for medical supplies to support the Galmi Benevolent

Hospital in Galmi, Niger. Alternatively, contributions made by check may be made payable to Spirit of Joy Church with this ministry noted on the memo line.

Otherwise, you can also celebrate John's life and legacy by pausing to notice someone in need of encouragement and taking the time and care to do it.

And finally- Many Greek Orthodox Christians employ the traditional celebratory greeting "Christ is risen," during the Easter season. The customary response is "Alithos Anesti" (Ἀληθῶς ἀνέστη), which means "He has risen indeed."

John uttered these words throughout his life. And so, in honor of John's foundational Greek Orthodox roots, we celebrate by saying,

"Christ is Risen."

He is risen indeed.

(Luke 24:23-24)

Cemetery Details

Oaklawn Memorial Gardens

9700 Allisonville Rd.
Indianapolis, IN

Previous Events

Visitation

JUL 22. 11:00 AM - 12:00 PM (ET)

Spirit of Joy Church
3535 Kessler Boulevard East Drive
Indianapolis, IN 46220

Celebration of Life

JUL 22. 12:00 PM (ET)

Spirit of Joy Church
3535 Kessler Boulevard East Drive
Indianapolis, IN 46220

Tribute Wall



“ *Crystal Cross Bouquet was purchased for the family of John William Demos.* ”



July 19, 2024 at 09:07 PM

AH

“ John lived a good life. He did the right things at the right moment and provided hope, love and encouragement to all he met. I have never seen him sad, always happy and looking forward to another day. He loved his big comfy cars and it seems he loved to drive around Broad Ripple and see what was out there to enjoy. He was a family man and his life revolved around Stasia and Mimi.

One of my fond memories of John.

I remember a time when he brought a Triumph TR6, I believe, to his house on Candlewood Ln. He said it was being stored in one of his warehouses for Stasia. It sat in his driveway for some time. I would talk to John about it, as I had a number of British sports cars years earlier. He said there was something not working and I suggested we move it to our garage next door and I would take a look. He agreed and soon we had the car in the garage. I raised the bonnet and soon found a broken vacuum line hose connector. I said we could remove this and see if it could be repaired. He stood over me watching everything I did. I had a sufficient set of automotive tools to remove the part. One of the fittings to be removed was difficult and I used 'liquid wrench' liberally and let it settle in hoping to loosen the part. We let it set for some time and I began applying torque to the small pipe fitting. It broke! I could see concern in John's face, but I said not to worry, this happens and it could be replaced. I sent John to the hardware to buy a hose part fitting and I managed to remove the broken piece while he was away. John returned with the item I requested and reassembled the hose connector. I think John was happy to have the TR back in his driveway.

When one lives a life filled with family and friends, he is a rich man. The following is an observation based on the famous WT Grant study of 268 Harvard students begun in the early 40's to find out what is 'happiness'. I believe this applies to the way John lived his life too. He was the quintessential family man.

“The surprising finding is that our relationships and how happy we are in our relationships has a powerful influence on our lives and health,” said Robert Waldinger, director of the study, a psychiatrist at Massachusetts General Hospital and a professor of psychiatry at Harvard Medical School. Close relationships, more than money or fame, are what keep people happy throughout their lives, the study revealed. Those ties protect people from life’s discontents, help to delay mental and physical decline, and are better predictors of long and happy lives than social class, IQ, or even genes.

Long live John Demos in our hearts.

Andrew Hawks

Andrew T Hawks - July 17, 2024 at 11:57 AM

SM

Thank you for this beautiful tribute, dearest Andy. I have the loveliest memories of you and he tinkering around with that car.

Sending big hugs to you from over here.

-stasia

Stasia Demos Mills - July 31, 2024 at 11:33 PM

PK

“ John was a wonderful man. I meet him when he ran Guardian. I learned a lot from him and will remember his kindness. Prayer to the family. My heart goes out to all of you.

Patty Kramer - July 17, 2024 at 08:20 AM

CL

“ *John was a dear friend for many years. We met at Butler University, he was best man at our wedding, and then he and Mimi have continued to be very good friends all these years. He will be missed.*

Carole Lightfoot - July 16, 2024 at 08:50 PM

SM

Love you, Auntie Carole. My papa adored you. ❤️

Stasia Demos Mills - July 16, 2024 at 09:52 PM

JR

May all the special things about John live inside our hearts forever. May we all find comfort in happy memories. Our thoughts and prayers are with the Demos family.

Jack & Patti Reyome

Jack + Patti Reyome - July 21, 2024 at 02:14 PM