



# John D Phifer

DEC 27, 1981 - DEC 10, 2022



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## **John D Phifer**

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### **J** OHN DAVIS PHIFER December 27, 1981 - December 10, 2022

John D. Phifer, Mary Van Bergen's beloved son, died suddenly of a heart attack on December 10, 2022. Though born in Columbia, MO and spending childhood years in Littleton, CO followed by experiencing several family moves, John lived his last seven years as a resident of North Ridgeville, Ohio. He was a proud graduate (2006) of Washburn University, Topeka Ks (alma mater of his maternal grandparents, Dr. John & Virginia Davis).

As shared by his loving Cleveland area family: To know John was to love him; he brought joy to everyone around him; he was a kind and gentle soul; he was caring and thoughtful with an infectious laugh; John had a sweet soul that was recognized and adored by many; John had a special energy that made it impossible not to love him; he was a joy to be around. And a proudful comment from his District manager at Taco Bell: ...I wish I could have half the staff that is as sincere and hardworking as John.

John's first job, at 14, was at the Red & White grocery store, Isle of Palms, SC. He loved the job, and the social interaction. During high school years in Mt. Pleasant, SC, John continued his scouting achievements with Troop 15 (and special friends Alan & Chip Maglione): being awarded the Order of the Arrow by his fellow Scouts, followed by achieving Eagle Scout. John and his "Bobdad" had fun scouting memories of father & son overnight aboard the USS Yorktown (in the midst of summer heat) and scout golf tournaments, to name a couple. His college years at Washburn were augmented by robust friendships with dorm friends; including a college bestie, Eric Moriarty, who taught him how to fish. A particularly rewarding job for John was to be a part of the Culver's family working under the tutelage of Owner Jim Wolfson in Springfield, IL. Following graduation in '06, he enjoyed all of the benefits of living and working by the ocean at The Club at Hammock Beach, Palm Coast, FL. Shortly after moving to North Ridgeville in 2015, John joined his Taco Bell "family" on 02/18/2016; where he worked until his sudden death.



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At age 6, John learned to ski at Winter Park; a sport the family enjoyed together for years. Along with being a voracious reader, John enjoyed many venues of music: creating mixed tapes over some 25 years reflect his broad taste. His favorite Cleveland cousins activity was their bowling outings. (Organized by his cousin, Tracy) During covid, John's 40th was celebrated with a family tailgate party in the bowling alley parking lot! John treasured his weekly lunch outings with his Uncle Jeff Sharp, and all of the Holiday family gatherings. Family travel enriched his life: his 21st birthday family Caribbean cruise; a memorable cruise to Havana in 2018 with 35 extended family (where John was continually awed by the old cars!). And oh, those road trips! Most recently, our September '22 two week 2,700 mile journey: visiting Sister Barbara Shulte (Founder of Havern Center, Littleton, CO, where John attended school for 6 years) and Sister Marlene Spero at their Loretto Motherhouse in Nerinx, KY; 3 days at Dollywood & Gatlinburg; 3 days in Hawkins, TX with John's "from birth bestie", J. Dustin Myers & Mom Mary's bestie, Beth Myers Dunahoe; culminating, after picking up Bobdad in Little Rock, with 3 glorious days in Heber Springs, AR with John's Aunt Jody and Uncle Doug Miller.

Treasured family memories over the years with John: the years & years of written notes to and from Santa left on Christmas Eve alongside cookies & milk – caringly returned inside John's stocking until the next year...in 2009, Santa responded he didn't like fruit!...in 2014, he wrote back that the chocolate milk was a nice touch; the ritual with Bobdad of John's receiving #2 all over haircuts with the Wahl clippers; nightly family dinners with grand conversations, laughter, & cajoling – followed by John & Bobdad's ice cream ritual; John's cards & notes always contained his original cartoon creation, "Mr. Happy".

Through John's onset of schizophrenia in 2006 until his death, he handled it with dignity and compliance to the requirements of managing this difficult mental health disease. Within his Nord Center Family, they share that John's disease management was a true success story.

It was just 8 days following John's beloved Bobdad's (stepdad of 29 years) passing when John joined him to be with our Lord, forever in peace. John leaves behind his mom, Mary(Davis) Van Bergen; loving step brothers Scott Van Bergen & Matthew Van Bergen (wife Sara, & Sydney, Shea, & Bowen). Mary's dearest family; sisters Barb Murray and Jody (Doug) Miller, & first cousins Mary Chrystine Miller-Sullivan ( Sean, Nate & Annie) and Bradley Davis Miller. Along with dear friend to Chrys – Mike Gross. John's devoted extended family: Aunt Carol Van Bergen, Aunt Mary (Van Bergen) & Uncle Jeff Sharp; Aunt Gayle Van Bergen; Uncle Kenny Loye; Robin Van Bergen (Tom) Carson. John's Cousins, who adored, loved & supported him: Greg & Jennifer Van Bergen (Taylor & Katie); Michelle Van Bergen-Sullivan & Joseph Sullivan; Kristen Van Bergen-Cole & Chris Cole(Darien & Reece); Jason & Michelle Sharp (Katelyn & Justin); Brian Sharp & Kelly Zurowski; Dr. Tracy Loye-Masterson & Chris Masterson (Lainey & Graham); Erica Loye-Adlakha & Raj Adlakha (Sophie).



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John's surviving Phifer family members; half-brothers Tony (Nancy) Phifer, Michael Phifer, & Jeremy (Julie) Phifer; & father , Anthony C. Phifer.

A Private gathering will take place to celebrate John's life. He will be inurned with family at Mt. Hope Cemetery, Topeka, KS.

In lieu of flowers, the family suggests a memorial in John's memory to The Nord Center (for continued mental health services within our community and bringing light to perceived stigmas surrounding mental illness), 6140 S. Broadway, Lorain, OH 44053; or online donations at [nordcenter.org](http://nordcenter.org).



## Tribute Wall

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JR

**Josh R** posted:

Dear JohnYour infectious smile , sincerity , integrity, hard work and kindness is missed everyday ❤️ .

January 5 at 6:47 AM

BD

**Beth Dunahoe** lit a candle in honor of John.

So thankful for the time we had together in September. John and Dusty had a really special time together. John has been in our lives since the day he was born. Little things excited him he loved old tapes and recorders. I gave him an old one that I had and he was so excited. What a delightful young man he was and so loving and kind. We need a lot more "John Phifers " in the world today. I know you are resting in fhe arms of Jesus and you have been united with your Bobdad. I will miss your sweetness and your laugh. You will be forever in our hearts..



December 23 at 3:59 AM

TY

**Tyler** posted:

I will always remember John, miss him and think of good times spent together. Happy to know that he's at peace and with his "Bobdad."

December 22 at 1:16 PM

SC

**Scott** posted:

We will miss John's laughter and positive spirit this Christmas!

December 19 at 8:43 PM

MI

**Mackenzie Ice** lit a candle in honor of John.

December 19 at 11:23 AM





## **Memories only last if you share them**

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



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