



John Ritz Allen

May 16, 1947 - October 17, 2019

John Ritz Allen passed away on October 17, 2019, at MercyOne North Iowa Hospice in Mason City, Iowa. John faced his difficult final illness with bravery, grace and a wicked sense of humor. He did not want to give in to the cancer that ended his life and fought valiantly even when told that no treatment would offer a cure.

John was born on May 16, 1947 in Mason City, Iowa to Al and Louise Allen of Clear Lake. He graduated from Clear Lake High School in 1965. John tried out college, but his true education came under the tutelage of his parents who owned and operated Allen Travel Agency in Clear Lake. He worked in the travel business for many years with his parents and brother, Jay. He went on to establish his own travel agency in San Francisco before returning to Clear Lake to join his mother, Louise, in running the Hilltop Motel.

John's unusual middle name of "Ritz" reflects a bit of Clear Lake history. The name is in honor of Charlie Ritz who operated the landmark Clear Lake Ritz Supper Club for many years with John's father, Al Allen. Many of John's friends called him Ritz and his name served as a poignant reminder to his family of his father's first business venture in Clear Lake.

John could be a walking contradiction — feisty one minute and enormously sweet the next. He was that rare person who always sent a hand-written thank you note for every gift and kindness extended to him. He was enormously sentimental and usually slipped an old family photo into every note, reminding us of childhood birthday parties at Witke's Restaurant, family gatherings at the Hilltop pool or festive dinners at the Northwestern Steakhouse in Mason City, where his family had dined since the 1940s. John delighted in playing poker and pool with the guys and relished shopping trips to Opportunity Village in search of treasure.

John was a true trouper during his final months, courageous in the face of a devastating illness. He remained a news junkie to the end, always surrounded by two televisions in every room to keep tabs on world events, which were always punctuated by John's

running commentary. He retained his feisty nature and sly sense of the ridiculous throughout his final days.

John is predeceased by his parents Al and Louise Allen of Clear Lake and stepson Lincoln Allen. He is survived by his daughter Libbey (Troy) Wood of Hillsboro, Oregon; stepdaughter Lisa (Mark) Miller of Prescott Valley, Arizona; stepdaughter Leslie Burgess of Afton, Michigan; brother Jay (Trish) Allen of Clear Lake; sister Teri Allen of Glendale, California; stepgrandchildren Morgan Duman of Wolverine, Michigan, Paige Burgess of Brighton, Michigan, Lindsay and Conner Rogers of Mason City, Gavin and Drake Allen of Cedar Rapids; niece Jessica Allen Kerr of Clear Lake; niece Diana (Nic) Dial and their daughters Penny and Cami, of Lakeville, Minnesota. The family would especially like to thank John's life-long friend Jay Posson who provided direct care for John and was a constant source of strength to his family through these past months.

A celebration of John's life will be held on Sunday, November 10 from 12:00 to 2:00 PM at the VFW in Clear Lake. All are welcome to attend. Donations in John's name may be made to MercyOne North Iowa Hospice.

Events

NOV **Celebration of Life** 12:00PM - 02:00PM

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VFW

219 Main Ave, Clear Lake, IA, US, 50428

Comments



“ Libbey, We were so sorry to hear about the death of your dad! Please know that we will be thinking about you and praying for strength and peace! We are in Florida so we won't be able to come to the service! We will continue to keep you and your family in our prayers!
Dave and Polly Suntken

Dave and Polly Suntken - November 04 at 08:28 PM



“ John was a unique individual and always treated me with kindness. I know he remained brave following his devastating diagnosis. My thoughts and prayers to all who loved him.

Linda Caslavka - October 24 at 11:46 PM



“ Sending condolences to John's loved ones. He was truly a Clear Lake original and will be missed as such. Such a loving obituary.
Ron and Bonnie Millard

Bonnie Millard - October 23 at 11:40 AM



“ Teri and Jay:

We are thinking of you in this time of sorrow. Let the memories turn to the best of times.

Fred and Paula Schultz

Fred B. Schultz - October 22 at 11:13 AM



“ Jay, I am so sorry for your loss. My deepest sympathies. Jay Jones

Jay Jones - October 21 at 09:32 AM



“ I am so sorry to all of the family of Ritz ..
Save a seat for the rest of your graduating class...
Jeri Ann Van Slyke (Tracy)

Jeri Tracy - October 19 at 05:49 PM