

John Harding Swenning

September 15, 1942 - December 13, 2022

John Swenning was born in Kingsburg, CA, Sept. 15, 1942, where he attended school from grades K-12. Before graduating in 1960, he was an outstanding athlete in both football and track & field. In fact, John was a high school All American in football his senior year, and he was selected to play in the California State All Star Shrine game at the L.A. Coliseum.

John graduated from Fresno State University in 1965. He was hired by the Fresno County Sheriff's Department as a Deputy Sheriff and promoted to Sergeant in 1969. In 1972 he became Chief of Police in Kingsburg, and in 1986 he served as Acting Chief of Police in Selma. In 1987 he was appointed Assistant Sheriff for the Fresno County Sheriff's Department and retired as Undersheriff in 1999.

John wrote and published two books, a biography of his uncle, Gust Swenning, a World War II war hero who was awarded the Navy Cross posthumously, and was the namesake of a WWII Destroyer Escort, DE 394. His second book, Vengeance, was a mystery novel. John also wrote and performed cowboy poetry at numerous Cowboy Poetry venues.

John was preceded in death by his mother and father, Harding and Alice Swenning, sister Joanne Allison, and brother-in-law, Craig Westlund.

John was married to his first wife, Mary Lou Girtz for 28 years. The couple has two sons, John Jr. and Jeff. They ultimately had four grandchildren. John married Jenny Delaney Ward in 1993 and was blessed with 29 years of love and happiness.

John is survived by his wife, Jenny; sons and their wives, John & Joelle, Jeff & Heather; grandchildren, Haylie & husband Ryen Simpson, BaCall & husband Luke Burns, Scott Silva, Nicholas & wife Becca, Jessica, Gus & Stormy Swenning, Jacob & Tara Fletcher and their spouses Ryan & Sabrina, Alex, & Tyler Brandon & wife, Leah, Dustin Brandon & wife Julie, Trevor Price, Dustin & Katie Manfredi; Brianna & Isaiah Aimalefoa, Raul Alvarez; eight great grandchildren: Willow Grace Swenning, Sophia & Elijah Mathis;

Colton & Ezekiel Fletcher; Avery, Evelyn, Kate & Beau Brandon, Jaxxon & Acelynn Aimalefoa; Daughter & son in law, Sheri & Perry Brandon; & stepson Todd Fletcher. John is also survived by his loving sister, Jane Westlund and nephew, Craig. Jane was John's beloved caretaker.

A memorial celebrating John's life will be held on Friday, January 27th, 11am at the Worship Centre Church, 2830 Manning Avenue, Fowler, CA 93625.

The family requests that in lieu of flowers donations be made in the name of the Katie Trevino Scholarship fund, Kingsburg High School, 1900 18th Avenue, Kingsburg, Ca 93631.

Previous Events

Celebration Of Life

JAN 27. 11:00 AM - 12:00 PM (PT)

The Worship Centre Church
2830 E. Manning Avenue
Fowler, CA 93625

Tribute Wall

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“ I was deeply saddened today (upon hearing from a friend), of Johns passing. I would like to offer my heartfelt, sincere condolences to his wife and sons. I first met John when he was an 8th-grader at Roosevelt Grammar School in Kingsburg while I was a sophomore at Kingsburg High School. Our C-class basketball team played John and his grammar school team where we instantly developed an ongoing friendship.

Later, in high school, we both competed in track and field in the same events, the shot put and discus. In his senior year, John won the Valley title in the Varsity shot put, setting a new school record! His Dad, Harding, had promised John a car if he would win. John and I also lifted weights together at his parents home in his garage my senior year in high school, and he came out to my parents farm on Stroud Avenue where the two of us would take turns lifting a heavy plow bar overhead to see who could do the most reps?

John had a wonderful sense of humor, and we bonded readily, almost as brothers, because he was half Swedish, and half Armenian, whereas I was 100% Armenian. We shared many jokes concerning our ethnicities. During a particular class in high school, he and I would have some serious staring contests to see who could keep a straight face the longest, before breaking up each other in laughter which got our teachers attention!

As the years, passed, I moved from Kingsburg to Fowler, before moving to Visalia where I have presently resided since 2001. I was surprised to find out later, that John was living in Fowler as well. Had I known, I would have looked him up to reminisce about the good ole days we spent together in Kingsburg. I know I'll one day see him again as I have quipped: "Death is merely an inconvenience, whereas growing old...sucks!"

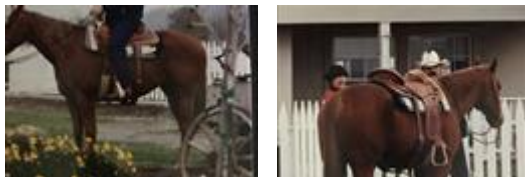
Rest in peace my Viking friend,

Sam Lukes (Class of '58)

Sam Lukes - January 24, 2023 at 08:25 PM

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“ 2 files added to the album Memories



Nancy Jane Kilgore - December 29, 2022 at 02:35 PM



Surprise Christmas Saddle for John and Red from Jenny

Nancy Jane Kilgore - December 31, 2022 at 05:32 PM