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## **John Olah**

September 30, 1952 - July 26, 2021

*Retired Policeman*

*Amazing Husband, Dad and Selfless Giver*

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Dear Friend,

John Olah was truly an altruistic human being, not just with his family, but also with the community, friends, and those nearby. He showed a sincere concern for the needs of others. I knew him best as a neighbor and as a volunteer for CU Maurice River. He was always quiet and thoughtful in his desire to assist. I asked him to help with an osprey platform construction party once, knowing of his skills in construction as well as his height, both of which are extremely valuable attributes for getting that job done. After he participated the first time he very quietly came up to me and said, "Just let me know if you need me again," and then he smiled, a big warm grin.

I observed John on many occasions with his wife Suzanne and his son John or simply "J Bear." With Suzanne, John was like radar, helpful with tasks and tuned in to her desires. He had a similar devotion to community. Suzanne often said that John would share in her responsibilities to the various non-profit boards on which she served. CU Maurice River was a continual recipient of his kindness. If Suzanne was setting up the Chili Bowl auction office to tally and sort everyone's booty, John carried the printer and supplies, moved the desks, chairs, extension cords ... whatever was necessary. Suzanne is the consummate organizer and John was her crew; they were a marvelous team.

One of his final acts was heroic in regards to Suzanne. The week before his death John insisted Suzanne get to the hospital, although she felt an emergency room visit was unwarranted. It turned out his intuition was correct: Suzanne had appendicitis and his insistence likely saved her life.

John and J Bear were often in cahoots. J Bear's communication challenges always seemed nonexistent with his father – they were clearly on the same page. One of my favorite stories of J Bear and John's plotting was relayed to me by Suzanne years ago. It seems a Comcast marketer solicited J Bear by phone, and asked if the family would like all the *bells and whistles* added to their Comcast package. Suzanne in her thrifty manner had opted for the "Basic Plan." But as the marketer asked J Bear about each package in her absence, he evidently gave his standard reply to anything he liked: "Yup!" Later Suzanne began to notice that John and J Bear were enjoying a full suite of programming. Instead of siding with Suzanne about the exploitation of J Bear's limited communication skills, both John and J Bear enjoyed their little unplanned conspiracy. J Bear's understanding exceeds his speaking ability, so I suspect he was very likely a bit more aware of his plot than we might think. Suzanne, being outnumbered, ultimately capitulated to the upgraded plan.

Observing John with J Bear, you witnessed a selfless devotion to his son's needs as they acted in tandem; it truly warmed your heart. They did everything together. I suspect John was the same with his daughter, but I got to know John and Suzanne when their children were adults and Tonya lives in Downingtown, PA. John always spoke highly of his daughter Tonya, son-in-law Mark, and his grandchildren. He absolutely loved his grandchildren.

My first knowledge of John was when he, Suzanne, and J Bear were building their home. They had paid for and ordered a post and beam constructed home, the building was fabricated, but when it came time to deliver it the company had gone bankrupt and everything went into receivership. They had to identify and prove they owned the beams that had been made for them. The frustration was beyond belief since they couldn't continue building their home without its bones. This was a very long process. Their diligence and their persistence impressed my husband and me such that we still remember it 16 years later.

John purchased a riding mower. When his friend teased him about having one for a postage stamp property he simply replied, "But I have to mow the neighbors' yards." When we first rented a home to a tenant next to the Olahs, John mowed the grass for the single mom who lived there at the time. I thought at first maybe he liked a damsel in distress. Well, he may have. But I came to learn that he mowed three other yards and furthermore he mowed for subsequent tenants who were far from being damsels. He did not charge; he simply liked making others happy. John was just a nice person, nice beyond the space provided here or possibly anywhere.

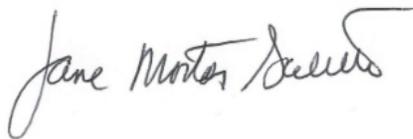
I learned that those for whom he mowed are planning on borrowing the mower to do their yards and Suzanne's. John would never have expected anything in return, but I mention this because John's life was one of example. He sought no reward, but by serving as an example, John improved his community.

John selected a fitting career: that of policeman. He chose that because he liked to help others. Fellow policemen at his funeral service shared stories about John as a prankster, a side of our friend that we didn't know. But they also shared a side that we all knew very well - that of devoted husband, father, and friend, a person who looked for ways to engage children and help families, and a man who served his town selflessly. I was away when his funeral took place so I had to watch a taped version of the service. Although I missed it, I knew that people who spoke there would wax on about John's disposition and kindness. And I also knew that he might be proud, but he would hate a fuss being made over him. John was modest.

Well, John, these are my final words to you, "Just own it; we all loved you and you will be missed."

Our heartfelt condolences go to John's family and friends.

Sincerely,



Jane Morton Galetto  
CU Maurice River Board President

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## John T. Olah

September 30, 1952 - July 26, 2021

Millville - John T. Olah, retired captain of the Millville Police Department died suddenly, yet peacefully at his home early Monday morning July 26, 2021. He was a Millville resident and 68 years old.

The husband of Suzanne L. (nee Gressman) Olah, the Olahs would have celebrated 50 years of marriage on September 18th of this year. They were high school sweethearts. John was born in Bridgeton and was the son of the late J. William "Bill" and D. Madge Pettit Olah.

He graduated from Bridgeton High School with the Class of 1971 and received his associates degree from Cumberland County College. He also attended Glassboro State

College (Rowan) and Stockton State College and Northwestern / Staff and Command School.

He served as a policeman for the City of Millville for 33 years. He started as a patrolman and served as a sergeant, lieutenant and retired as a captain in 2006.

John lived in the home he built on the picturesque Maurice River. His home often served as the setting for artists as they photographed or painted the scenes surrounding them.

Prior to building his home, he lived on Maria Terrace, also in Millville. He was an active member of the Millville Downtown Arts District and CU Maurice River. He enjoyed hosting events at his home. John loved nature and enjoyed watching Eagles and Osprey from his deck. He was a friend to all animals.

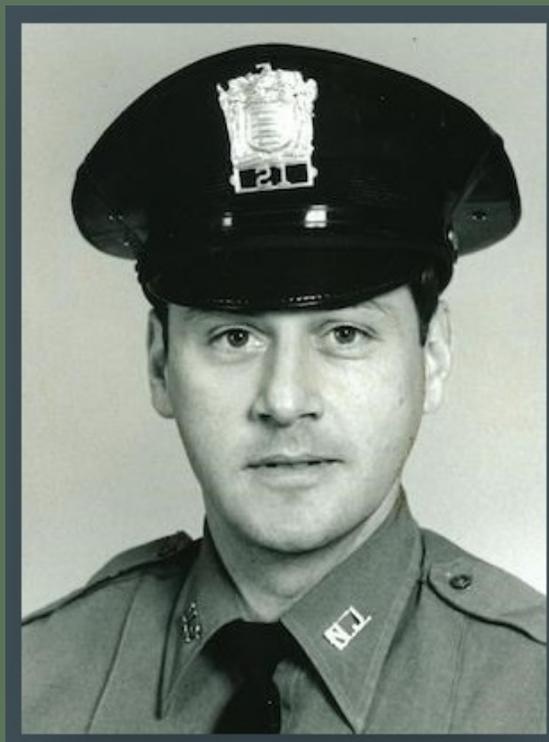
In addition to building his retirement home, John had the reputation of being a terrific handyman. He loved the outdoors and he enjoyed cycling and walking. He was totally devoted to his family.

Survivors include his wife Suzanne, one daughter, Tonya L. Stewart (Mark) of Downingtown, PA, one son, John W. "J Bear" Olah of Millville, four grandchildren, Nikole A. McDonald (Richard) of Millville, Elizabeth "Liz" D. Wonderlin of Downingtown, PA, Matthew Stewart and Ian Stewart of Downingtown, one great grandson, Quentin W. McDonald, one sister, Midge Cheesman (Dan) of Upper Deerfield. Additional survivors include a brother-in-law Wayne Gressman (Donna) and Wilma Olah of Bridgeton as well as a number of nieces and nephews. John was predeceased by his brother, William Bert "Mike" Olah.

Relatives and friends were invited to attend the funeral services at the Freitag Funeral Home, 137 W. Commerce St., Bridgeton on Friday July 30th at 12 Noon.

Memorial contributions are requested to Citizens United to Protect the Maurice River and Its Tributaries, Inc., PO Box 474, Millville, NJ 08332 or you may [click here](#).

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