



John Thomas O'Brien

November 1, 1948 - August 15, 2025

John Thomas O'Brien, 76, of Richland Center, WI, passed away peacefully on Friday, August 15, 2025 at Agrace Hospital in Fitchburg, Wisconsin, surrounded by his family.

John was born on November 1, 1948 in Milwaukee, Wisconsin, to John F. O'Brien and Elizabeth (Forken) O'Brien. John grew up in Milwaukee and graduated from West Allis High School in 1967. He served in the military as an artillery gunman during the Vietnam war with the First Calvary Division and received many honorable merits, including two Purple Hearts and a Distinguished Flying Cross. He was honorably discharged in 1969. After the service, John had several careers, including working for the Wisconsin Republican Party at the State Capital and the Wisconsin Agri-Dairy Business.

Throughout his life, John was an avid outdoorsman, hunter, fisherman, and conservationist. He was a talented photographer and woodworker, and loved sharing his work with others. He passionately pursued making Richland Center, WI, the first ever designated "Purple Heart City" in the United States, as well as advocating for and supporting the building of the Richland County Veterans Memorial Park, honoring more than 8300 local veterans.

He married Kathleen O'Brien (Caudill) on February 12, 1977. Together, they built a beautiful family, home, and gardens. They raised two girls, Elizabeth

and Meagan, who both graduated from Ithaca High School. John loved being a part of the Ithaca family, being involved with his girl's education, sports, and musical activities. They remained in their home, enjoying the quiet solitude after the girls went to college.

John is survived by his wife Kathy and his daughters, Meagan (Nick) Colangelo, Elizabeth O'Brien, Brother-in-law, Dan Caudill and Sister-in-law, Kim Caudill, and other family and friends.

He was preceded in death by his parents, John O'Brien and Elizabeth O'Brien (Forken), and in-laws, Norm and Lois Caudill.

A small celebration of life and burial will be held at Memorial Park in Brookfield, WI at a later time to be decided by the family. Arrangements are being managed by the Clary Memorial Funeral Home.

In lieu of flowers, memorial donations may be made to Agrace Hospice in Fitchburg, WI, or the local Richland Center VFW.

Tribute Wall

AS

“ I owe a great deal to John. He was my expert political advisor when I was a younger man, running for District Attorney. His advice was always sound: "If you're explaining, you're losing." John was quite a character besides. I remember him telling stories of his time as a private detective. You always knew where you stood with John. He did not suffer fools gladly. I'm very grateful he was willing to suffer through me. My sympathies to Kathy and the girls. -Andrew Sharp

Andrew Sharp - August 28, 2025 at 12:50 AM

GP

“ Extending sympathy...



Glinger parkhurst - August 26, 2025 at 09:44 AM



“ So sorry to hear of John's passing. Our deepest sympathy to Cathy, Meagan & Elizabeth. Jean & Rick Fruit

Jean Barreau Fruit - August 22, 2025 at 04:44 PM

VH

“ I am so sorry to hear of Johns passing. I have fond memories of when our girls were young and of the time we spent together. My heart goes out to you all.

Valerie H. - August 22, 2025 at 12:53 PM

WM

“ Dear Family, The beautiful wooden bowl that John made with wood from Fiddler's Green is displayed in our living room. It not only reminds us of his talent but his friendship. Our Sympathy, Walt and Loretta McCarthy

Walt/Loretta McCarthy - August 21, 2025 at 07:37 AM



“ To the family and friends of John Thomas O'Brien, another Comrade has been called to the high command. He has gone to the commander of us all. He offered his service to our country in a time of national need, and is now enrolled in that great spirit army whose footfalls cause no sound. But in the memory of man, their souls go marching on. Because of them, our lives are free, because of them the world is blessed. Our deepest condolences from Bower-Gunnill-Dalton VFW Post 2267, Richland Center, WI.



Margie Freeman - August 20, 2025 at 07:57 AM

VW

“ My sympathy to kathy and family



Virginia Wiedenfeld - August 20, 2025 at 07:46 AM

BC

“ We have known John for many years. I still have a picture hanging on my wall of my daughter and my husband that John took many many years ago. He was a man of many talents. Rest In Peace John. My sympathies to Kathy, Megan and Lizzie.

Barbara Clary - August 19, 2025 at 05:43 PM

KD

“ We always enjoyed having John as a neighbor. Our deepest sympathy to the family.
Joe and Kristi Durst



Kristi Durst - August 19, 2025 at 05:30 PM