



John J. Kurt

October 16, 1940 - May 8, 2026

John Julius Kurt, retired aviation mechanic, private pilot, and craftsman, died May 8 at the age of 85.

John was born in Anthony, Kansas, on October 16, 1940, and grew up on the family farm near Attica, Kansas. After graduating from Attica High School, he joined the U.S. Navy, serving aboard the USS Currituck, a seaplane tender, with deployments in the Western Pacific. His training eventually led him to American Airlines, where he spent most of his working life as an aircraft mechanic at the Tulsa maintenance base.

John retired from American Airlines but was never one to sit still. His so-called “retirement” years led him to more than a decade of work on commercial projects with Allied Refrigeration. Well into his 80s, he ferried vehicles across the country for a variety of Tulsa area car dealers.

John married his high school sweetheart, Sue Heath, in 1960. They eventually settled in Owasso, Oklahoma, where they raised their two daughters. John and Sue quite literally built their life together, constructing their home by hand. A private pilot, John also built and flew his own experimental aircraft. He had a true gift for fixing things, and throughout his life, he rarely turned down calls from others needing his help, advice or the right tools.

He also had a creative side. John crafted beautiful dining and coffee tables from slabs of timber. A member of Owasso First Methodist Church for nearly 60 years, he had his own sort of ministry, making decorative crosses from old copper pipe. He gave away hundreds of them to people across the country.

John enjoyed spending time with friends in his coffee, church, aviation and ATV groups. He volunteered for airshows in Lakeland, Florida and Oshkosh, Wisconsin. He and Sue lived part of the year in Florence, Arizona, where he loved exploring mountain and desert trails with friends in his ATV. In March, he was one of the drivers for an ATV veterans honor ride through the mountains with more than 100 participants, mostly veterans.

He was preceded in death by his parents, Julius and Ruth Kurt, and a brother, Paul. John is survived by his wife of nearly 66 years, Sue; daughter Kandi Kurt of Tulsa; daughter Kelly Kurt Brown and her husband, Mark Brown, also of Tulsa; grandsons Lucas and Jonas Brown; Sister Mary Ellen Burns of California; and brother Bob, of Kansas; along with lots of nieces and nephews. Plans for a celebration of life gathering will be announced at a later date. We encourage you to share your memories of John here, including details about any cross he may have made for you.

Tribute Wall

JL

“ So sorry to hear about John. He was such a great guy. I’m so grateful for the time he helped me move and for the visits we had when he and Sue would go for rides. Hugs and thoughts for Sue and girls.

Janet Hadsall Lucas - May 17 at 07:07 PM

JK

“ John.... An amazing guy with an awesome sense of humor. My bond with John and Sue started with me driving a golf cart at top speed right over the speed bump in front of their Arizona home. Since that day.... We became friends instantly and had several laughs about that “flying” golf cart. During our friendship I was gifted the most beautiful copper crosses, which I cherished then and even more so now!! Hugs to you my dear friends.



Joan Kleen - May 17 at 05:15 PM

YE

“ Worked with John on 3D avionics. Great person and fun to be around. He wasn't afraid to work and jumped at solving problems. Rip.

York Eaton - May 12 at 02:25 PM

LD

“ God made a fine human being in John Kurt. 🙏🌸
My heart and hugs to you, Sue, and to your girls. 🙏

Lana ❤️🧶 Sayre Day - May 11 at 11:14 PM

PY

“ I remember when I first met John, in Nov of 1985, underneath a DC10. It was my first day working at American Airlines.

Not being shy, John started talking with me and found out I was a pilot. John invited me to go flying with him soon after.

It was the start of a long friendship that included lots of flying, a couple of ski trips, and other activities.

John was generous, dependable, respectful, authentic, and processed a great sense of humor.

Everything you want in a true friend. Thank you John, appreciate what you did for me. Going to miss you.

Phil Yannaccone

Phil Yannaccone - May 11 at 10:27 PM

KS

“ We will certainly miss seeing John around TDS, out on the desert ATV trails and at the monthly Cowboy Church service in Florence. He was a kind, talented, true gentleman with a great sense of humor!!! Rest in peace friend and we will see you on the other side! And yes we have one of John's copper crosses proudly hanging in our dining room-an original treasure for sure! Blessings and comfort to you Sue and your family. ❤️🙏

Kathy and Tom Shaffer - May 11 at 05:25 PM

TE

“ John, Thanks for all the many, many fantastic years of fun, pranks, knowledge and friendship! You had helped more people and accomplished more in your wonderful life than many of us combined. God bless You, Sue and the kids! We will never forget!

Todd, Mary and Van.

Todd Evans - May 11 at 11:14 AM

JK

“ 1 file added to the tribute wall



Jacqueline King - May 10 at 01:24 PM

JK

“ 1 file added to the tribute wall



Jacqueline King - May 10 at 11:06 AM