



## John Michael Smaligo

November 11, 1940 - May 7, 2024

Heaven got a lot more help on May 7, 2024 with the passing of John Michael Smaligo,

83. He will surely find welcome with St. Joseph, a fellow carpenter, on any projects heaven needs. John built or remodeled every home he ever lived in. You could always find him in the evenings with a tool belt and work boots on, tackling big projects and asking his son Johnny, "Wanna come work with me?" Like he ever had a choice.

John came into the world on November 11, 1940. Welcomed by his mother, Catherine "Kate" Smaligo, his father, John Smaligo, and his sister Catherine "Marie." The family soon added Myrtle "Myrt," Norman, and cousin Sandy. John didn't care much for school but he did love shop class, where he excelled. Being a good Catholic boy, he joined the seminary around the age of 14, but it didn't take. He was a strikingly handsome young man with gorgeous clear blue eyes and a welcoming smile, so the girls were relieved. He graduated from Collinsville High School in 1958, and gave the seminary one more try, just to be sure. As it turns out, he was sure. When his brother Norman decided to join the Navy in 1962, John said he'd join him. "Mom bawled her eyes out for Johnny," joked Norman, "but she told me to get the hell outta here." Nobody could deny that "Johnny" was her favorite.

During his four years as a Machinist Mate 2a Class, with two stops in Naples, Italy, John married a schoolmate and family friend, Mary. The marriage didn't last, but they remained friendly until her death. He lived in Harrison, New York

in the 1960's working as an engineer for New York Telephone. It was a career he would continue for several decades changing to other companies like Bell South, Southwestern Bell and AT& T.

John attended college on the GI Bill from 1969-1972, first at St. Gregory's University, then Central State University (now University of Central Oklahoma). He was a focused student, according to stories he told his kids while trying to encourage top grades. We've never seen transcripts, so this has not been verified. Regardless, he graduated and continued his work at the telephone company and running a drywall business in the evenings.

On September 21, 1971, he came to the aid of his mother whose car had broken down in Tulsa. Once he got her on her way, he decided to join his cousin at the Crystal Pistol club in Tulsa. He happened to catch the eye of a black haired farmer's daughter from Iowa named Jeanine Thompson while his cousin, Millard, was equally smitten with her friend, Janet. Fortunately, he was an amazing dancer, a skill his mother insisted he master. The two couples danced the night away and thus began a devoted love affair.

John and Jeanine were married in 1975 in Glenwood, Iowa where a third John Smaligo was born later that year. Jennifer and Joey came along each two years apart. John moved his family to Owasso and Jill was added to complete their family of "J's." Despite having four children, John changed only one diaper to his great chagrin and relayed the horrid event for years to come. Despite his reluctance for domestic duties, he was a wonderful provider for his family, wrestled his children every day after work, drove them all over the country on epic vacations where they were told to get out and look at the petrified forest and do with a "Smile on your faces!" and came to countless games, plays, assemblies and concerts over the years. John was active at St. Henry's Catholic Church and was compelled to attend many social gatherings at the insistence of his popular wife. After coaching only one of his kids' teams (Jennifer's - the Lollipops), he swore he would never do it again, he found that he was a better fit as the Future Owasso Rams baseball commissioner. He was always willing to help anyone with his building expertise - he could build

or fix anything and everyone knew who to call for help and he'd be happy to jump in and take over.

His love, Jeanine, died of cancer in 1994 which had a profound effect on his life. He regained purpose during a successful run for Oklahoma State Representative for district 74 as his children began leaving the nest.

Fortunately, he met Willie June Mitchell in 1999 and found happiness in a loving relationship again. He and Willie lived in Owasso for several years before moving to Arizona. It was there where John started wearing shorts for the first time in his adult life and got his very first hobby outside of work: swimming. John and Willie built his dream home in Collinsville - a hanger sized tool shed with an apartment inside. Willie is a good sport. John began showing some signs of memory loss and mobility issues in 2016 and received a Parkinson's and Alzheimer's diagnosis several years later. Willie has been an amazing caregiver with the patience of a saint. His children are in awe of her devotion. John moved into the Claremore VA in November of 2023 where he received outstanding care. We know if he were able, he would love to especially thank Willie, Uncle Norman and Jill for all their care and sacrifice. The family would also like to extend a thank you to the Claremore VA staff and residents.

He leaves behind his devoted wife, Wilma June Smaligo of Collinsville, OK, his children and stepchildren John Smaligo, Jr. (Lesa) of Tulsa, OK, Jennifer Mangini (oseph) of Prattville, AL, Joe Smaligo (Erin) of Fort Worth, TX, Jill Smaligo of Tulsa, OK, and Robert Geller of Broken Arrow, OK, Susie Norton of Tulsa, OK, Christopher Mitchell of Collinsville, OK, grandchildren and step grandchildren Preslea Borin of Los Angeles, CA, Alexandra, Joseph, Vincenzo and Isabella Mangini of Prattville, AL, Athan, Abigail, Jack and Asher of Fort Worth, TX, and Blake Geller and Paige Robertson of Tulsa, OK, Nicole Wheeler of Collinsville, OK, Ryan Norton of Denver, CO, and Noah Mitchell of Collinsville, OK.

He is preceded in death by his wife Jeanine Smaligo, his parents Catherine

and John Smaligo, his sisters Marie Cooney and Sandy Bilyeu.  
If you have any tools of his still, please keep them with his blessing.

A Rosary Prayer service will be held 7:00 p.m. Sunday May 12, 2024, at St. Henry's Catholic Church in Owasso. Funeral Mass will be 10:00 a.m. Monday, May 13, 2024, at St. Henry's Catholic Church with Father Matt LaChance officiating. Final resting place will be at Exira Cemetery in Exira, Iowa. The family requests memorial contributions be made in John's memory to the Claremore Veterans Center-Benefit Fund, P.O. Box 988, Claremore, Oklahoma, 74018. Arrangements and services were entrusted to Mowery Funeral Service of Owasso.

[www.moweryfs.com](http://www.moweryfs.com)

# Previous Events

## Memorial Fund

MAY 12. 7:00 PM (CT)

Claremore Veterans Center- Benefits Fund  
P.O. Box 988  
Claremore, OK 74018

## Rosary

MAY 12. 7:00 PM (CT)

St Henry Catholic Church  
8500 N Owasso Expy  
Owasso, OK 74055-2137  
(918) 272-3710

## Funeral Mass

MAY 13. 10:00 AM (CT)

St Henry Catholic Church  
8500 N Owasso Expy  
Owasso, OK 74055-2137  
(918) 272-3710

# Tribute Wall



“ A contribution was made to Claremore Veterans Center-Benefits Fund in memory of John Smaligo. Kevin & Sherri Lefler  
2 Thessalonians 3:16 Now may the Lord of peace himself give you peace at all times in every way. The Lord be with you all.

Sherri Lefler - May 12, 2024 at 02:33 PM

“ Dear Smaligo Family,  
Please know my thoughts and prayers are with each of you at this sad time. Praying you will find comfort in your memories now and always.  
Love to all - Jeanie Mayr Woods West Des Moines, IA

Jeanie Woods - May 12, 2024 at 01:14 AM



“ Peaceful White Lilies Basket was purchased for the family of John Michael Smaligo.



May 10, 2024 at 06:20 PM

“ Margaret Huffman planted a [Memorial Tree](/store/Product.aspx?ProductId=4518) in honor of John Michael Smaligo.

Margaret Huffman - May 10, 2024 at 06:20 PM

SL

“ Seth L. planted a [Memorial Tree](/store/Product.aspx?ProductId=4518) in honor of John Michael Smaligo.

Seth L. - May 10, 2024 at 05:19 PM



“ Beautiful in Blue was purchased for the family of John Michael Smaligo.



May 10, 2024 at 05:19 PM



“ Large Basket Garden was purchased for the family of John Michael Smaligo.



May 10, 2024 at 10:04 AM

UI

“ United Rentals, Inc purchased the Tender Tribute for the family of John Michael Smaligo.



United Rentals, Inc - May 10, 2024 at 09:46 AM



“ *Simply Elegant Spathiphyllum was purchased for the family of John Michael Smaligo.*



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May 09, 2024 at 05:38 PM



“ *Nabholz Construction Team planted a [Memorial Tree](/store/Product.aspx?ProductId=4518) in honor of John Michael Smaligo.*

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**Nabholz Construction Team** - May 09, 2024 at 04:39 PM



“ *Nabholz Construction Team purchased the Serene Retreat for the family of John Michael Smaligo.*



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**Nabholz Construction Team** - May 09, 2024 at 04:39 PM



“ *VSC FIRE & SECURITY purchased the Simply Elegant Spathiphyllum for the family of John Michael Smaligo.*



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**VSC FIRE & SECURITY** - May 09, 2024 at 02:44 PM

BJ

“ I first met John when I was building a garage in Owasso. He just happened to drive by and saw the action, I was in over my head. He took over and helped me finish the 30x50 garage with a hip roof around 1985. I then helped him to build his house in Owasso by the airport just for the experience. He was a wonderful man and always friendly to everyone. I remember him telling me that if you don't like something, get elected and change it. A great man, RIP. Bird & Paula

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**Bird Johnson** - May 09, 2024 at 01:14 PM