

John Charles Cunningham

February 18, 1945 - October 21, 2023

In Loving Memory of John Charles Cunningham

****UPDATE****

A Celebration of Life is planned for Saturday April 6, 2024 from 2-5 PM at the Plymouth High School Cafeteria, 8400 North Beck Road, Canton. Please visit Sally Cunningham's Facebook page to RSVP. Questions can be directed to the Funeral Home to pass along to the family.

John Charles Cunningham, 78, of Plymouth, Michigan passed away October 21, 2023, of complications from a stroke. John was born February 18, 1945, in Petoskey, Michigan to the late Betty and Dick Cunningham. He was married for 55 years living the happiest, fullest years life could offer with family and friends. Surviving are his wife, Sally (Shalla), sons - Eric (Casie), Adam (Paula), and Ryan (Michelle) and three grandchildren, Sloane, Reese, and Logan. John's journey began in Alpena, Michigan, where he grew up with his parents Dick and Betty Cunningham. It was during his time in Alpena that he discovered his passion for golf while working on his family's golf course. He grew up hunting and fishing with his dad continuing these activities as a member of the Remington Hunting Club. John graduated from the University

of Michigan with his masters and a member of the gymnastics team. John's impact on education was immeasurable as he dedicated 40 years of his life to teaching science fiction and literature at Plymouth Canton High School. His love for literature lives on through the thousands of students he taught, the stories he told during class and the countless friendships he formed with his colleagues over the years. Having summers off allowed him to move his family forward with his ability to do roofing and siding with his best friend Al DuBois. This "Cunningham Construction Co." was a chance to pass on skills to his sons, who worked with him every summer, and also to save and build his dream house where he and Sally still lived today. He pitched in modified fast pitch softball leagues well into his 60s proudly playing with all three of his sons. He cherished coaching his sons in basketball, baseball, and gymnastics--never missing their games. His greatest passion was gymnastics, which he poured his heart and soul into for over 55 years. The Canton High Schools gymnastics program forever changed when John started coaching. John's influence was evident in the love and support he received from his gymnasts over the years. Known affectionately as JC or Jayce by all who knew him, his impact on his "gym daughters" was profound and enduring. He was able to coach thousands of gymnasts and still found a way to show each one they were special and important. He was more than their coach. He not only helped them with gymnastics, but also their

everyday life. He was a mentor and a shoulder to cry on. It didn't matter if it was your first day doing gymnastics or if you were on his state championship team in 2014. He knew what a powerful experience being a part of a team is and shared that with every single girl who crossed into the gym.

His coaching activities, organizations and contributions came with many accolades such as being inducted into four Hall of Fames at the national, state, local, and a special one to him--his hometown Hall of Fame. These among many others highlighted the mark he left on the sporting world.

He had a fondness for life's simple pleasures--a bottle of Diet Mountain Dew, feeding the birds,

crossword puzzles and playing Words with Friends. He cared for his wife dearly walking 11,000 steps-a-

day with her for three years straight enjoying every flower and cat they crossed to ensure he could

travel the world with her and continue to play golf and poker with his friends.

If you knew John, he was known for savoring the sites and the food, and striking up conversation with

anyone who caught his infectious smile and jovial tone. John Charles Cunningham's memory will live on

through the lives he touched, the lessons he imparted, the love he shared with his family, friends, and all

those who had the privilege of knowing him. He will be deeply missed and never forgotten.

A celebration of life is being planned to honor him in April. If you would like to contribute to his legacy,

please go to his Go Fund Me page: <https://www.gofundme.com/f/john-cunning>

hams-legacy.

Arrangements by Vermeulen-Sajewski Funeral Home, Plymouth, Michigan

Previous Events

Celebration of Life

APR 6. 2:00 PM - 5:00 PM (ET)

Plymouth High School
8400 North Beck Road
Canton, MI 48187

Tribute Wall

GE

“ Oh Sally, I am so sorry to hear of John's passing. My first UM Football Boss as a Ticket Taker Gate #10. I loved sharing my kettle corn with John. His hugs and infectious smiles are embedded in my heart & mind. I miss you both. Sending you huge hugs & love. May John Rest In Heaven!

Gail Estes - April 06, 2024 at 10:21 AM

L(

“ Dear Sally and family,

First, I want to send my condolences to you. I know John (Coach) passed away in October and the celebration of his life is April 6th. I will unfortunately not be able to be there. Of course, I wanted to let you know John had a huge positive effect on my life. Not just in gymnastics, but in many other areas, too. He was always correcting my grammar. I'm so thankful because I became a reading/language arts teacher. He also pierced my ears at a time when I wanted them so badly. The year I coached with him (1980-1981) was such a great time! He was such an encourager and his kindness knew no bounds! To tell the truth, I was not a great gymnast, but he always made me feel like I was, and he taught me skills that helped me be a collegiate cheerleader. I am forever grateful and will remember him always! Sincerely,
Lori Evans(my maiden name was Agnew)

Lori Evans (Agnew) - March 13, 2024 at 04:40 PM



“ John Charles Cunningham

December 07, 2023 at 05:11 AM

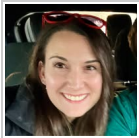
OL

“ JC and I opened Canton HS. He was a devoted teacher and coach. He was always talking about Sally and the boys. Always had a smile and was glad to see you.

My thought are with Sally and the boys.

Orlean Baker Lewelling

Orlean Lewelling - November 18, 2023 at 10:43 PM



“ We will be forever grateful for John's friendly, neighborly attitude and generosity. The day we moved in, he came over with his snowblower to do our driveway so the moving truck could get in through all the snow! Every spring, he gave us bulbs to plant in our garden, and he always welcomed the kids to play in his yard. He is so appreciated and missed.

Brittany Henke - November 11, 2023 at 10:37 AM

LF

“ I had the distinct pleasure of working with John just two doors down the hall at Canton HS and from the first noting what a stabilizing influence he (along with his pal and fellow English teacher, Dudley Barlow) had on the atmosphere of his comrades along that hall. Invariably congenial and cooperative, John always supported others, always pitched in, always maintained a sense of humor about him. You could not have requested a better colleague.

Larry Francis

Larry Francis - November 09, 2023 at 01:46 PM

PB

“ It was a pleasure to know John. I use to call coach on the golf course. We had numerous laughs together and he complimented me after a few years that my game improved. When I hit the ball in the woods he would just smile, since he knew he would be on the hunt for more golf balls. Couldn't hold him back.

Pete Briley - November 01, 2023 at 02:51 PM

DB

I knew John for 40 years and whenever I needed help with a project, he was always there. You could count on him to lend a hand when you needed help. He was hilarious, loved sports and his family and friends above everything. Above all he was a good and decent man! He will be missed by everyone who knew him. When God calls the roll, I guess you have to go but I think God called the wrong man way too soon! I guess I have to wait a little while before we can play golf again!

David Bryant - November 01, 2023 at 06:04 PM

MD

“ I met John for the first time many years ago with his good friend Dave Bryant at Kensington golf course. Following the round, Dave asked me if John could join our "MEDEX" senior golf league. And the rest is history, as John proved to be one of our most skilled and loved individuals. John would often talk about growing up on his family's golf course near Alpena and hunting for wayward golf balls with his dad. This propensity for finding golf balls led to this day often emerging from the thicket covered in multiple bush-like thorny plants (Moose Ridge 2022).
John often talked about his wife Sally and his love for his sons who he enjoyed competing with on the golf course. John will not only be missed by his MEDEX friends but by everyone's lives he touched.
Rest in peace my friend.

Michael Davis - November 01, 2023 at 02:28 PM