



John Henry Korte

July 18, 1929 - June 9, 2020

John H. Korte II died peacefully in his home in Napa, CA on June 9th, 2020, a month before his 91st birthday. He was surrounded by his loving family and wife of 56 years. John had fought a courageous battle with prostate cancer and suffered a broken hip from a recent fall on June 2nd. John was a man of great faith and didn't fear his death. His life was full, he enjoyed countless friendships, family and a daily walk with Christ. We are devastated with his passing, but he looked forward to being reunited in heaven with his son John and his many friends and family.

On July 18, 1929 John was born in Oakland, CA to, John and Eda (Muller) Korte. He was the middle child of a large family which included his three sisters, Claire Carriere, and Betty Serke both deceased, Edie Driscoll (Steve) and his brother Clem Korte (Barbara). Their home was located on 33rd Avenue in Oakland, CA, in the family friendly Fruitvale District. The Korte home was a popular place and always bustling with kids from the neighborhood.

He grew up in a devout Roman Catholic family and attended elementary and high school at St. Elizabeth's, (class of '47) located right behind their house and could be accessed by a gate in their fence. John was a stellar athlete, playing basketball throughout his days in school and beyond. He raised homing pigeons, was very knowledgeable about them and loved caring for them. John served as an altar boy for 14 years and attended daily mass until the recent "Shelter In Place Order" which required virtual

Mass. From age 10 to 15, he sold newspapers in the neighborhood on E14th street in Oakland, “Hey mister, wanna buy a paper!”. To his final days he enjoyed reading the paper and it was not uncommon for him to cut out articles and mail them to his family and friends.

In 1951, John was drafted into the army and offered an all expenses paid trip to Asia (i.e. Korean War, “The Forgotten War”). He proudly served his country as part of the 19th Infantry, 24th Division and spent a brutally cold winter on the front lines. Following that winter, while on leave in Japan, and preparing to return to Korea, he was recruited by the regional Army Basketball Team. He was offered the opportunity to play basketball in Japan and not go back to the front lines, and he accepted. He always said, “basketball may have saved my life.” (explains why there has always been an impressive basketball court in the Korte backyard!). His love of the game continued with years of refereeing games throughout the Bay Area as a proud member of the East Bay Athletic Association for 25 years. After returning home from Korea he continued to work for the Federal Government by taking a job as mail carrier for the United States Postal Service. He enjoyed the job, but realized his calling was to become a firefighter. In 1958, John joined the Alameda Fire Department and after one rookie year was pursued as a ‘first-round’ draft choice of the Oakland Fire Department (OFD). With OFD, he accomplished an exceptional and remarkable 36-year career, advancing from hose man to Lieutenant and then to Captain. More importantly, were the many exceptional friends that came with the job. (If you’re reading this you know who you are...and thank you!) John attended countless funerals, wedding and fireman breakfasts, maintaining many of those friendships until his passing. John spent the last 25+ years of his career at 8 Engine/5 Truck with OFD and achieved multiple recognitions from City, State and Federal agencies for community service and valor. His career was exemplary to say the least. He loved the Fire Department and he always said God blessed him when he got this job and the family that came with it.

In the early 60's, John found his true love, Lois Ladenburger. She was a beautiful young nurse who ironically grew up right around the corner. At 35 years old he convinced her to marry him in August 1964. The Fireman and the Nurse proceeded to expand their family, welcoming four children into their lives. John III (deceased), Joe, Jean Marie, and Greg. The young Korte family enjoyed an exceptional community and rich cultural experience living on Nevil St. in Oakland, CA.

In 1981, John and his family moved to Napa for a new beginning outside of the growing Oakland City. The Napa Valley was familiar territory since John's parents both grew up in the famous wine country and he spent many summers there growing up. John loved the Napa Valley and always said it was, "God's Country". His family has been lucky to continue to expand with marriages and has welcomed seven grandchildren over the years. For the past 39 years John and his loving wife Lois have grown, shared, worshiped, laughed, cried and loved in their Napa home. He was a member of the Native Sons of the Golden West and the International Association of Firefighters Local 55 where he enjoyed the many friendships and events they shared. It's been an incredible journey and his life has positively impacted too many of us to count.

John will be remembered most for his strong Catholic faith, incredible memory and his ability to always be counted on. He loved his children and grandchildren with his whole heart. His faith, family and friends were the driving force in his life and gave him great peace in his later years. He sent many thoughtful and funny handmade postcards to his grandchildren and friends. He loved his backyard and spent countless hours caring for his beautiful garden. We are sure he is helping supervise in God's garden. John is survived by his wife Lois Korte, his children Joe Korte (Susan), Jean Hensley (Lain) and Gregory Korte (Jeri) and his loving grandchildren Emily, Audrey, and Clare Korte, Taylor, Camille, and Lain John Hensley and Brayden Korte as well as numerous nieces, nephews and extended family.

John will finally join his eldest son John Henry Korte III in heaven. He was a loving husband, father, brother, grandfather, friend and a true hero to many! He will be missed greatly and will continue to inspire and guide those who knew and loved him.

Due to COVID restrictions a small private Funeral Mass and burial took place 6/17/2020. We will be having a Celebration of Life in the future when we are allowed to have large gatherings.

In lieu of flowers the family would appreciate memorial donations be made to St. Apollinaris Church St. Vincent de Paul Society at 3700 Lassen St., Napa, CA 94558 or St. Jude's Foundation at 501 St. Jude Place, Memphis, TN 38105.

Cemetery Details

Tulocay Cemetery

411 Coombsville Rd
Napa, CA 94558

Events

Details are pending.

Tribute Wall



“ *John Henry Korte*

September 29, 2022 at 04:54 PM



“ *John Henry Korte*

September 29, 2022 at 02:55 PM



“ *John was very good to me from the moment I met him in the Spring of 1990. The Oakland fire department family was a very tight-knit one, so it wasn't always easy being a new partner of a long-time firefighter. My husband, Michael Triplett, worked with John on Engine 8/Truck 5 until Mike's death on July 3, 2000. John continued to stay in touch with me for many years afterward which I was always honored and grateful for. I also loved his wife, Lois, who, like John, welcomed me with open arms. I'm so sorry to hear about John's passing. ~ Chris Triplett,*

Chris Triplett - December 27, 2020 at 11:15 PM

TG

“ John was such an amazing guy. He was always there to bring a smile to anyone that was in his path. I was so blessed to have the chance to grow up with John. He and my dad, Vic, went to high school and played sports together. My fondest memories of John, besides all of them, was watching him ref the boys CYO basketball games in Oakland when I was a cheerleader. He would always make a special point to come over and chat with me. I felt so special. Thanks for the wonderful memories, John. You will always be remembered. Please hug Mom for me. I'm sure she is thrilled to see a very familiar face! Love to all of the Korte Family.

Terri Goodwin Gardella - June 30, 2020 at 09:20 PM

DO

“ I remember my mom telling me about Bob being involved in the rescue of a child that was crushed in the cypress structure in the 89 earthquake

Dennis Ouimette - June 30, 2020 at 06:37 PM

TM

“ One of a kind. John never failed to call and check up on my parents. He and my dad grew up together. When John called, it was a perfect day in my dad's book! Bless you, John, for the wonderful, caring person you were here on earth and are in heaven!

Teresa Cox Mulvey - June 23, 2020 at 09:25 PM



“ Healing & Hope Sympathy Basket was purchased for the family of John Henry Korte.



June 22, 2020 at 11:32 PM

DP

“ *The world is truly diminished with the passing of John Korte. What a wonderful man, role model, friend. My love and condolences to the family, as John will be greatly missed by all of us.*

Donna Prewoznik - June 20, 2020 at 01:45 PM

TK

“ *I only just found out that this wonderful man is no longer here to tease me. I was talking with him one day at DJs Growing place when my little mother stepped in front of me and demanded to know who he was and why was he talking with her daughter!! He always asked how my spit fire mother was every time we saw each other after that. So sorry that he is gone, but happy I had the pleasure to know him.*

Take care John. If you meet my family up there, tell them I say Hi and miss them too.

Terry Kane

Terry Kane - June 19, 2020 at 03:45 PM

JC

“ *A wonderful man who will be sorely missed. A Mass will be offered for him on Tuesday, June 30, at 9:00 a.m. at St. Thomas Catholic Church.*



John and Mary Ann Charlesworth - June 18, 2020 at 03:43 PM

JK

“ 1 file added to the tribute wall



Joseph Korte - June 17, 2020 at 08:29 AM

JK

“ 1 file added to the album Memories Album



Joseph Korte - June 17, 2020 at 02:23 AM

MA

Dearest Uncle John, thank you for the best childhood memories, wisdom and abundance of laughter. Give Claire and Vic the biggest hug. Love always. Rest easy good sir.

Matthew Acosta - June 17, 2020 at 12:17 PM

JJ

One of my early mentors in the OFD. Always a smile and asked about my family. A true fireman and a better man. Shared a love of basketball, the #1 sport for Oakland kids in the 50's. RIP and may the Lord smile when he sees you coming.

JOHN M IRONSIDE - June 22, 2020 at 08:15 PM

ML

God must of needed a supreme angel! John was a great and dear friend to our family and my Dads best friend from high school until my Dads last day. Glad they will be causing some commotion in heaven together!

Mari Lynch - June 22, 2020 at 10:16 PM

JF

John was one of my most dearest and cherished clients. We only saw each other twice a year during tax season but I always looked forward to seeing and making time to talk about just any subject that happened to come up. John always bought me a danish from the Buttercream Bakery every year when he would stop by to pick up his returns and I so looked forward to receiving this most generous gift. I will miss John immensely and tax season won't quite be the same.

I am sure all the Angels were singing and rejoicing when John arrived to welcomed him with Love and Open Arms!

Joseph Fucito - June 30, 2020 at 09:01 PM

BW

I can't say that I remember ever meeting John but I do remember receiving a scholarship to Justin-Siena as a graduating 8th grader that was in honor of John Korte III in the 1990s. Such a kind gesture that meant a lot to me and won't be forgotten. Rest in peace John, you were a good man!

Branden Woolley - July 02, 2020 at 05:58 PM



“ *Emerald Garden Basket was purchased for the family of John Henry Korte.*



June 16, 2020 at 06:41 PM