



Dr. John Alexander Roberts

May 31, 1944 - December 12, 2018

It is with great sadness that the family of John Roberts say goodbye to a devoted husband, father, grandfather, brother and friend. John died Wednesday, December 12, 2018 at St. Peter's Hospital in Hamilton, Ontario.

John leaves wife Linda Cox, daughters Lynette Scott (Dave), Leanne Cummings (Dan) and Lisa King (Jay Henry), stepsons Matt Parsons (Leslie), Luke Parsons (Sarah) and Dan Cox (Dara), grandchildren Jackie, Katie, J.R., Chayton, Tehya, Riley, Quinn and Ella, sisters Beth Spence (Todd) and Wilma Caron (Virgil Wilson) and brother Owen Roberts (Angi). He also leaves many nieces and nephews who knew and loved Uncle John. As well, he leaves his beloved dogs Ben, Robbie and Cooper.

John was born in Chatham on May 31, 1944, the eldest son of the late Art Roberts and Evelyn Roberts (nee Cadotte). He attended a one-room schoolhouse near Mitchell's Bay for his primary education, and he went on to graduate from Wallaceburg District High School, the University of Windsor and what was then the University of Western Ontario.

In the workforce, writing and learning remained a constant in John's life. Early in his career, he worked at Random House, one of Canada's largest book publishers, editing manuscripts and working with some of the country's most prolific writers. He would go on to publish more than 40 books, including co-authoring a best-selling book on the Toronto Maple Leafs.

Ultimately, John resumed his graduate studies part-time and earned a Ph.D. He enjoyed a long and illustrious career as a tenured professor of language studies at Mohawk College in Hamilton. After retirement, he entered a new career as a supply teacher for Hamilton-Wentworth District School Board.

In education, his passion was for improving education for Indigenous students. This was driven in part by his own Indigenous heritage as an Anishnabe Metis. He developed curriculum that taught children from an Indigenous perspective, and advocated for better

funding for on-reserve schools. Many of his text books helped shape how high school students understood Canada's Indigenous peoples.

As an Indigenous leader, John founded the Canadian Metis Council and served as the director of education for the Ontario Coalition of Indigenous Peoples. He was an outspoken advocate for Indigenous rights and through the media drew attention to the plight of urban aboriginal and Metis populations.

He used his expertise in Canadian aboriginal culture to improve training for police services, publishing textbooks for basic recruits and officers that would provide a better understanding around Indigenous culture. John also served on the Hamilton Chief of Police's Committee for Minority Relations and was a former auxiliary member of the Niagara Regional police.

Wanting to know more about his own Metis heritage, John researched and wrote the thorough Roberts/Cadotte family history stretching back into the 1600s. He also wrote articles for the Ontario Genealogical Society, showing people how to research their Metis ancestry.

John was a huge animal lover and made many friends walking his dogs in his Queen St. E. neighbourhood.

A mass for John will be held Friday, December 21 at St. Joseph's Parish Church, 260 Herkimer St., Hamilton. Visitation will take place from 10 a.m.-11 a.m., followed by mass at 11 a.m. and lunch and celebration of life from noon – 2 p.m.

In lieu of flowers, donations may be made to the Native Women's Centre,
www.nativewomenscentre.com

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Events

DEC 21 Memorial Visitation 10:00AM - 11:00AM

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St. Joseph's Parish

260 Herkimer St., Hamilton, ON, CA, L8P 2H9

DEC 21 Funeral Mass 11:00AM - 12:00PM

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St. Joseph's Parish

260 Herkimer St., Hamilton, ON, CA, L8P 2H9

DEC 21 Reception 12:00PM - 02:00PM

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St. Joseph's Parish

260 Herkimer St., Hamilton, ON, CA, L8P 2H9

Comments



“ John was a valued and well-loved member of the faculty in the Language Studies department at Mohawk College. He is remembered fondly by his friends in the department and his students. Many of us have stories about how he helped us with our teaching and our lives, both with guidance and contributions to our work.

Personally, I remember all the times I met him at HAA park while walking our dogs and talking about our love of pets. He was a friend and a colleague, and he will be greatly missed. We all send heartfelt condolences to his family. We are making a contribution to the Native Women's Centre in John's memory.

Betti Sheldrick - December 21, 2018 at 11:04 AM



“ I knew John as the welcoming man who greeted everyone as they came into church for the 9 am mass every Sunday at St. Joe's. We had several chats about the importance of the simple act of making people feel welcome. As I read his obituary I now understand that John did this in every aspect of his life. Throughout his many careers, he reached out and welcomed everyone, making sure that no one was left out.

John truly understood the meaning and the importance of building Christian community.

Rita B - December 18, 2018 at 03:40 PM



“ Sandra Rombouts lit a candle in memory of Dr. John Alexander Roberts



Sandra Rombouts - December 16, 2018 at 09:14 PM



“ We are so sorry to hear of John’s passing. My best memories were of our early morning dog walks in the park, talking and having coffee while the dogs ran and played. Even after moving, John was a constant email friend, keeping us updated on the latest neighborhood news, and would always make time for coffee when we were back. John was a mentor and friend, he will be missed. Karen, Ivon and Maggie, Thompson MB

Karen Larman - December 16, 2018 at 08:25 PM



“ We don’t even have the words to say how much John meant to our family. He was the one person we could always count on to be there for us. He was a good friend and fellow animal lover. I will miss our morning talks while the dogs played. Our family could always count on him to show up for Birthday cake. Always had to “save a piece for John”. Claude will miss his Garage Sale and Costco buddy. The love he showed our new grandchildren was heart warming. Let’s not forget the Pow Wow drive of 2016. We will miss you more then you will ever know.



Arlene Laframboise - December 15, 2018 at 09:55 PM



“ Going to miss you at the arena
Carla and Wayne Miller

carla miller - December 15, 2018 at 09:17 PM



“ As an Niagara Regional Auxiliary Police Constable, I met John during my first Drill Practice. As he was former Military, he was appalled at my confusion of left face/right face and then laughing at myself during this display. He grabbed me by the shoulder and commanded, "get over here. Do what I do!" And from that moment forward, we were fast friends who volunteered as partners for anything we could! Always positive; always looking for a challenge and constantly encouraging me to write! He'd rub his thumb and forefinger together while saying, "it's a good gig!" I will miss you my friend and our yearly exchange of Christmas cards, along with so many others, for sure!

Tammy Kuhn - December 15, 2018 at 07:09 PM



“ It was an honour to know John. Many times we shared interesting conversations in the parking lot behind our houses. Solving many world problems while waiting for his three loves to finish their walk. He will be missed for sure. My love to you all.
Sincerely,
Marianne Ramacieri and Family.

Marianne Ramacieri - December 15, 2018 at 11:02 AM



“ John was an amazing boss that turned into a lifelong friendship. I met him in 1999 when I worked for him at the Canadian Métis Council. He took all of his staff under his wing and protected us. He was more than our boss... he was our warrior. He fought for the weaker and injustice. No matter how big or small John took the time to listen and always found the answers. There was or never will be another like him. Linda and the family you are all in my prayers. John until we meet again my friend.



Darlene Isaac - December 15, 2018 at 10:31 AM



“ John's influence and dedication to all extended beyond the Canadian borders. I was the President of the Greater Métis Counsel and witnessed him share his generosity, knowledge, commitment, and fight for fair Justice for all. He was truly inspirational to all people's, which had to do in a large part for my decision to enter Law School with the goal of helping others that are in need or disadvantaged. You will always be with me during this fight as your world contributions will live on. May you Rest In Peace.

Tony Lawrence - April 16, 2019 at 11:19 AM



“ Another great person taken too soon. I have known John for many years, meeting him the first time as one of my instructors at Mohawk College. Later I learned so much from John about our Metis heritage. He had a great love for animals, especially his dogs. He had my utmost respect and will be greatly missed. Debi Dion



Bailey Dion - December 14, 2018 at 02:38 PM



“ Laurence B. John lit a candle in memory of Dr. John Alexander Roberts



Laurence B. John - December 14, 2018 at 01:45 PM



“ We lost a great man to an ugly disease and we are heartbroken. Through it all, my brother-in-law maintained his sense of humour, kindness and feistiness. I will always be moved by his love of animals, especially his three loving dogs, I will always chuckle at his great fondness of hot dogs, I will always be inspired by his drive for justice and equality, and I will be forever grateful for the father figure he was for my husband, his brother, Owen Roberts.

Angi Roberts - December 14, 2018 at 10:35 AM