



A Tribute to
John A. Bivens, Jr.
February 11, 1933 - October 2, 2022

John was born, in their family farm home, in the small town of Wingate, North Carolina. He was the youngest of three (oldest was brother, Robert and then sister, Edith). Community, family, and faith were central to his childhood and values he exemplified his entire life. He was fondly called *Uncle Johnny* by his nieces and nephews and *Poppy* by his grandchildren and great-grandchildren.

He met and married the love of his life, Mary Alice Walkup while stationed in Alaska, serving in the Army. He was a devoted husband of 65 years. Together they had three children, Rebecca (Becky), Margaret (Peggi), and John III and six grandchildren, Cameron, Nathaniel, Geoffrey, Jack, Carolyn, and Sarah and three great-grandchildren, Ava, Theodore, and Bennett.

John was a man of *Strong Stock* and *Strong Faith*. During their marriage, John and Mary Alice traveled from East Coast to West Coast, from the United States to China, Japan, Germany and more, including a Mission trip to Palestine where 1600 Olive trees were planted.

While John worked hard, family and faith were first and foremost in his life. For those of us lucky enough to be his family, we got to see first-hand the love described in Corinthians 13. His love was truly patient and kind. He protected his family and friends, trusted in love, and was hopeful for all he met.

He was a devout and active Christian. John studied the Bible his entire life, having grown up Baptist and later becoming a Presbyterian. He faithfully served as an Elder and Bible study leader. He enjoyed mission work and spreading hope through the message and teachings of Jesus. John was quick to support anyone in need and lend a hand. John's true legacy was his love of God and of other people. This is patently evident in all of his relationships, both personal and professional.

He was a nurturing man and had a kind smile for everyone. Even though he could be feisty when trying to implement changes in policies, John drew people to him through his kindness, tact, and diplomacy.

John had a keen intellect and was a lifelong learner. He received his B.S. from North Carolina State University after attending Wake Forest University. He later obtained his Master's in Urban Planning, along with his brother, Robert, from Georgia Tech University. He and Robert would go on to co-author a book on urban planning.

Professionally, John was a big thinker, visionary, and ahead of his time in many respects. He had the privilege of working on a variety of projects during his career which took him all over the U.S. and into Germany. John was instrumental in the establishment of all sorts of land use and transportation designs. If it involved roadways, mass transit, railways, highways, bikes, parks, or buses he understood how proper urban and transportation planning could help communities at large and the individuals in those communities.

His professional achievements were many. To highlight a few, he created a study for the City of Atlanta which was the basis for their current day MARTA public transportation system. He is responsible for creating Delaware's Cape Henlopen State Park. John was instrumental in the starting of Delaware Technical and Community College. At the Arizona Dept. of Transportation, he helped create Arizona Bikeways. His planning expanded the bus system in Anchorage, Alaska. He also worked to transfer the

Alaska Railroad from the federal government to the State of Alaska. John also marketed a rapid transit system that used magnetic levitation, a then cutting-edge technology.

There is an old proverb “Blessed is he who plants trees under whose shade he will never sit”. John did things for people he would never know. He worked to help communities full of people he never met, taught his children how to love and raise future generations, and won people to Christ. While the saying says John was blessed, we too, were blessed by having known him.

John died as he lived: surrounded by people who loved and revered him and committing his spirit to the forever family of God. He will never be forgotten and will be forever missed.

