



## John Louis Chew Jr.

May 13, 1944 - January 10, 2021

John Louis Chew, Jr., 76, died suddenly of a heart attack in Harwood, Maryland on January 10, 2021. He was born at the U.S. Naval Academy. He was the son of VADM John L. Chew and Helen L. Chew and beloved step-mother Julia P. Chew.

John attended schools in Annapolis, England, Italy and graduated boarding school at St. James Episcopal School in Hagerstown, MD. He graduated from The George Washington University, but completed one semester at Sophia University in Japan. His graduate studies began at the University of Maryland, and he completed his Masters degree at the University of Virginia.

In 1969 John and Bunny met on Capital Hill, and both ended up working for the same Congressman. John then started his career as a Park Ranger with the National Park Service (NPS). He created and started the concerts on the National Mall, which have continued since it began in 1971, during his first station at Capitol National Park. In 1972, the NPS transferred John to Prince William Forest Park, near Quantico, Virginia, as a mounted Ranger, bringing him back to his love of horses. John was instrumental in starting one of the first living farm gardens in a National Park.

In 1973, the NPS took John and Bunny to Lake Mead National Recreation Area, where life as a Park Ranger was all encompassing; law enforcement, desert search and rescue, canyon wall climbing and water rescue, and boating. While here, John dove into attending every class where he could expand his knowledge of emergency medical aid in difficult areas. He not only became a scuba diver, but an instructor as well. John also began rock climbing, conducted a large study of big horn sheep, rescued park patrons from mines, earned his Coast Guard captains license, backpacked through the mountains, and rafted through rivers, all to learn more about saving lives and the environment. With his wife by his side, he even participated with a gathering and documenting new species of desert flowers. In 1976, John and Bunny moved to Sequoia National Park. He was District Ranger for the Kern Canyon area which included Mount Whitney. Again, a mounted ranger, but with pack mules in tow, John started his plans for Emergency Medical Services

(EMS) for the NPS to get serious. Here he added mountain rescue, small airplane accidents, winter cross skiing, ice mountain climbing, serious rock climbing, and heli-skiing to his expertise. He also became a National Ski Patrol and Instructor to use his survival skills while making ice houses for protection to manage avalanche areas. John, along with his team, received a Presidential Citation for a mountainous cave rescue and extraction, which took four days. Amidst the chaos of rescue work, John and Bunny welcomed the birth of a son, with a rather scary trip down switchbacks to arrive at the hospital 15 minutes before actual delivery.

John was then transferred to Shenandoah National Park for another of his strengths: he could relate to any person, in any situation. He defused a volatile situation within a couple weeks and then turned his focus to EMS for the NPS. The only thing missing on this assignment was a horse. He began mentoring the younger rangers and developing a program to work with local community hospitals and EMS. Forest fire suppression in the Park became more pronounced with communities close to those mountains, causing another aspect of EMS management to enter his career. While awaiting the arrival of his new daughter (again down the switchbacks in heavy fog), John was managing a particularly large fire on the east side of the mountains. The Director of the NPS and Secretary of the Interior then requested John go to Washington, DC for six months to draft the first NPS EMS Reference Manual (RM 51). He also was the second group of Rangers to the Alaska Lands Bill to help calm fears that the government was not going to make residents change their way of life. John was assigned to an area in which the locals had burned the NPS plans, so John and another Ranger (the size of a linebacker) stayed glued to each other's hip 24/7 and at the end of three months, were having beers with locals.

Park Service advancement meant a desk job and he was offered a job with Department of Transportation, National Highway Safety Administration (NHTSA), which included EMS and he saw an opportunity to make a difference in rural EMS services. John developed a program to assess EMS systems from State Level to County Level. By the time he retired, this various teams of Doctors, EMS Directors and Paramedics from around the country joined in writing curriculum for air, land, and water to improve delivery of EMS. All 50 states, and many local jurisdictions all over the country were completed in 10 years and many asked for second assessments to evaluate their progress. The last impactful project was a brainstorm and publication of the EMS Agenda for the Future, done in Nova Scotia, with a group of 12 amazing State EMS Directors and Doctors from across the country; together they developed a blueprint for EMS.

Deciding to retire, John formed The Emsstar Group, providing consulting services for

States/Countries to develop their own specific plans for the future of EMS systems. The University of Pittsburgh employed him as an Adjunct Assistant Professor to consult overseas. His Emsstar team conducted EMS classes in England, and an assessment of both Saudi Arabia (and began development of their system) and Qatar.

After a successful run with Emsstar, Queen Anne's County, Maryland, was looking for a new EMS Director and John decided to get back in the field. For more than eight years he transitioned the county into a system utilizing the new EMS model, and the mentoring and teaching that went with that change. This was a perfect ending to his incredible career(s) in the outside world.

Even in retirement, John continued to live the life of an outdoorsman, but his focus changed. The best of John's passions were his family and friends. Fondly known as Bubba, John considered himself extremely lucky to have both of his children close by. His family expanded with Denby's husband, Jason, then Keely (13), and Grayson (11). Jake married Stephanie and Jules (5 in a month) and John IV "Jack" (2) joined the family. John's patience, mentoring, affection, enjoyment, and tenderness was amazing. Keely got the bug for horses (and all animals) at an early age, thus her bond with John began and it was amazing. An accomplished equestrian herself, she and John had their own language and Keely got that "horse whisperer" ability like John. Grayson ("G" to Bubba), completely and wholeheartedly embraced everything outdoors, including fishing, baseball, soccer, hockey, bow targeting and on and on. Aside from fishing the Chesapeake Bay, John made sure G fished inshore and offshore in North Carolina, and off the coast of Florida. They also seem to have bonded on love for spicy potato chips (it was private between them and very comical). Jules and Jack, although a bit young for the larger endeavors, provided unending entertainment and affection with Bubba. Together they also had a special unique bond as well. Jules shared special messages with him that she insisted to send even after his death. John was in love with all the grandchildren, and was lucky to spend time with Jake, Denby, Jason and Stephanie doing all of the activities he loved.

John leaves behind the love of his life, Bunny. They would have celebrated their 50th wedding in July 2021. John and Bunny lived and loved life together in a way that only true soul mates could. After moving with the Park Service all across the US, John and Bunny called Annapolis home for 30+ years. They have enjoyed an amazing group of friends, neighborhood and each other. Many days were spent cruising the Chesapeake Bay on their boat, Miss Molly. Most recently, John and Bunny were found attending hockey and baseball games, horse shows, dance recitals and babysitting grandchildren.

The family will be having a Celebration of Life in July.

In lieu of flowers, the donations may be made:

- The John Chew Conservation/Habitat Fund, 1273 Bugeye Court, Annapolis MD 21403.
- OperationSecondChance.org
- Make a Wish America – [Https://secure2.wish.org](https://secure2.wish.org)

# Comments

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“ Bunny,  
Sorry to hear of John's passing.

Bunnie Gill

**Dianne Gill** - February 16, 2021 at 12:56 PM

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“ Bunny,

I am very sorry for your loss. I feel privileged to have know John for so many years. I have so many great memories with John, My favorite one, is the amount of time John spent mentoring me on how to work with my dogs. Watching John work with the dogs will always be one of most cherished moments. He was a special guy.

RIP John, thank you for being my friend

**Chris Brown** - February 14, 2021 at 05:50 PM

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“ Bunny I was shocked and devastated to hear of John's passing and wanted the family and you to know that hardly a day has gone by since that I have not thought of John and what a wonderful, caring man he was and so generous of both his time, talent and resources. In reading John's obituary I was amazed at what an incredible life John was blessed to have led and having only really interacted with John through Ducks Unlimited and waterfowl hunting I had no idea of how many lives John had touched. Of course we also had our bond of being fraternity brothers and though we did not attend the same school and we were a few years apart we were nonetheless brothers.

One of the last times I saw John typifies the kind of man that he was in my humble opinion, Patty and I were looking at buying a boat and wanted to attend the Annapolis Boat Show and I called John to get the scoop on where to park, etc. and he insisted we come by your home, park there and he would drop us off and pick us up afterwards which he did and I believe he even gave us tickets to the Show! I will never forget his kindness, his smile and all that he did for DU and Conservation and hope that the wonderful memories you have of John will help the family and you to ease the pain of his loss. PA & God Bless...

Chip Heaps

Chip Heaps - February 01, 2021 at 06:22 PM

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“ John was a tremendous resource in 2003, when we were building Maryland's first Homeland Security program. He was willing to help and was incredibly generous with his time.

Dennis R. Schrader

Dennis R. Schrader - January 30, 2021 at 01:52 PM

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“ Since 1963 when we met I have not known a world without John. We pledged SAE together that year, were initiated together in 1965, and we lived together in 1966 and 7. Since then we kept in touch, sometimes more sometimes less. Our recent Drum Point weekends were special. As fraternity brothers we sang countless times that we would always be "our bonds celebrating 'till death separating old pals from me." Not that has come to pass. So when that song comes to mind in the future, so will John.  
PA John Hanson

John Hanson - January 30, 2021 at 11:30 AM

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“ I first met John while we were at GWU in the late 1960's. Our first connection was through our fraternity, SAE, but it grew into over 50 years of friendship with John, Bunny and his family. We hunted together, skied together, vacationed together, and yes, partied together. He was there when I needed help and he gave you the straight story, whether you liked what he told you or not. When the good time rolled, John would join in. He had a kind word for everyone. He has already been missed by many that were close to him and his smile, approach to life will be with me for the rest of my days! RIP & PA, John Chew

**Fred Spurlock** - January 29, 2021 at 01:02 PM

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“ I remember John with great affection. Dan Hall

**dan hall** - January 29, 2021 at 09:55 AM

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“ Emerald Garden Basket was purchased for the family of John Louis Chew Jr..



January 28, 2021 at 10:43 AM

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“ Bunny,  
I thoroughly enjoyed working with John over the years and respected him tremendously. Sorry for your loss, he was one of a kind. I can still hear him saying, "Hey bud" when I walked through his door. He will be missed.

Gregg Todd

Gregg Todd - January 19, 2021 at 09:03 AM

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“ I remember meeting John at Willow Beach in 1972 when our Albright Training Ranger Class traveled to Lake Mead. It was our first glimpse into boating operations there. John stood out as a confident and personable Ranger. Plus he was wearing green boating shoes! Little did I know I would be assigned to Callville Bay in May 1973. I did not know John well but he certainly gained my respect. It sounds like John enjoyed an ambitious and accomplished career. And I remember Bunny as a tiny person with a great personality. RIP John!

Skip Prange - January 30, 2021 at 10:01 AM

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“ Dear Bunny;  
I was so sorry to hear of John's passing. Please know that my thoughts and prayers are with you and your family at this sad time.  
Emily Goddard

Emily Goddard - January 17, 2021 at 06:18 PM

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“ Dear Bunny and Family,  
Words can not express how sad we are to hear the news of Johns passing. We have had many years of knowing John and loved to see him come back from fishing with his beautiful family. Our boat was behind his and we would have wonderful conversations.  
How he loved to talk about fishing and hunting. He will be greatly missed by all of us who knew him.

Our thoughts and Prayers to you and your Family,

Tony and Cindy Nicholas

TONY C NICHOLAS - January 14, 2021 at 02:51 PM

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“ John was a customer some time ago. A really good man. Always a pleasure to work with him. So sorry to hear of his passing. My sympathies to his family. Wally Campbell

**Walter Campbell** - January 12, 2021 at 05:28 PM