



# Railsplitter Obituary



## **John W. Knuteson, J.D., C.P.A**

**John Knuteson 1949 - 3 April 2020**

John attended the University of Wisconsin-Madison on an Evans Scholarship and received a B.B.A degree with distinction in 1972. He is a 1975 graduate of Marquette University Law School. He was a Research Editor for the Marquette Law Review (1974-75) and received a Thomas More Scholarship (1974-75).

John received a M.B.A Degree from Marquette University in 1986. He is admitted to practice in the U.S. District Courts for the Eastern and Western Districts of Wisconsin, as well as the U.S. Court of Appeals, 7th Circuit. John is a Wisconsin Certified Public Accountant (1983-present), and a Wisconsin Licensed Real Estate Broker (1973-present).

John is actively involved in the community, having served as a Wind Point Village Trustee (1997-2000), Wind Point Village President (2001-2007) and is the Wind Point/ North Bay Municipal Judge (2007- present). John is a retired Lt. Colonel, U.S. Army (JAG Corps).

John's legal practice includes the areas of corporations, business law, estate planning, trusts, wills, probate, contracts, real estate, zoning, and municipal law.

He served as 84<sup>th</sup> Division JAG.



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WIND POINT — John Knuteson is being remembered this week for his tireless energy and dedication, the impact of which were felt locally and beyond.

Knuteson, a longtime local attorney and civic servant, died Friday after a short illness. He was 70. At the time of his death, he was serving as the municipal judge for Wind Point and neighboring North Bay. He was also a former Wind Point village president.

Even Cathy Knuteson, John Knuteson's wife of 43 years, struggled to remember how many organizations and activities her husband was involved in.

"He had a lot of energy," she said. "He's just been involved in a lot of things in this town."

Knuteson had a long history of public service, serving as a Wind Point village trustee from 1997-2000 and village president from 2001-2007. He had served as the Wind Point and North Bay municipal judge since 2007.

Knuteson also served on the Miller Park Stadium Board from 1996 to 2003, served as president of the Racine Area Manufacturers and Commerce (RAMAC), and was active in the Republican Party, serving as a delegate from Racine County to the 2008 Republican National Convention in Minneapolis.

"John will be greatly missed by so many of us," said Racine County Executive Jonathan Delagrave. "I knew John as a civic-minded person who loved being with his family and friends. He was also a person who always had a joke to tell and would help anyone who needed it."

Knuteson was also active in Downtown Rotary Club for 37 years and he served as president in the 1980s when Rotary International first allowed women to join. He was involved with the Evans Scholarship Foundation, which gave him a college scholarship and which he promoted and raised funds for. The scholarship provides funds to high school students who work as golf caddies. His love of sports was evident by the season tickets he held for the Green Bay Packers, Milwaukee Brewers and UW-Wisconsin Badgers athletics.



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“He lived 40 guys’ lives,” said his son, John K. Knuteson. “He accomplished so much you don’t know where to start and don’t know where it would end with how many people he touched.”

Knuteson also served 25 years with the Army Reserves, during which he attained the rank of lieutenant colonel.

He had a long career as a lawyer and was also a certified public accountant, though he didn’t have an accounting practice.

## Family life

Cathy and John met in college. His fraternity was across the street from her sorority.

“I would come back from class and find a flower in my mailbox or a nice little note,” she said. “He was a super nice guy.”

One year after they started dating, they were engaged and another year after that, they were married. They both had ambitious careers — Cathy’s resume is about as long as John’s — and together they raised three children, Stephanie, Sarah and John Jr. Cathy said he was a very supportive partner and was very active with raising their children while she was pursuing her master’s and doctorate degrees.

John Jr. said he looks back and wonders how his father did it all.

“Looking back at how busy he was and everything he was accomplishing, with his law career and the Army and all the things he loved to do, he was always there for us,” he said. “He was always there and always encouraging and positive and telling me I can be whatever I want to be. I had a great childhood and it was primarily because of him.”

## ‘A connector’

In addition to being involved with so many organizations, Cathy said John was never a passive participant. She recalled countless organizations where he didn’t just join but he learned everything he could and eventually would go on to lead the





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organization. One specific example she gave was when he joined the Wisconsin Golf Association.

“Another situation where he took it on and he’s learning things — he took a course and an exam to be a rules judge at tournaments,” she said. “He became first secretary and then vice president and then next up was president.”

Cathy described her husband as “connector,” always bringing people together.

“Whenever we went someplace he’d say, ‘Oh just a minute, there’s someone here I want you to meet,’” she said “I think you would be hard pressed to find someone in town who didn’t know who he was or his work.”

His former law partner Lee Valent has known John even longer than Cathy. They both attended UW-Madison under an Evans scholarship and lived in the same house. Lee also married Cathy’s sister, making John and Lee officially family.

“He was the uncle to my three children,” said Valent.

Valent remembered that he invited Knuteson to go to a brunch, hosted by friends of the family of Valent’s son’s fiancée, as a chance to meet the fiancée. Neither Valent nor Knuteson knew the family that was hosting the brunch.

“By the end of the short time we had been with them, he invited them to play (golf) down at Racine Country Club,” said Valent. “(Later) he writes a letter to them, to the parents, thanking them for inviting us to brunch and looking forward to them coming up to the Racine Country Club.”

Multiple people described Knuteson as “larger than life.”

“There’s a big void out there in the world now that he’s gone,” said John Jr.

That is one of the reasons his family is struggling to figure out to memorialize Knuteson. How can you properly pay tribute to someone who was a mover, shaker and connector who touched so many people’s lives, during social distancing?



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For now, the family is planning to hold a memorial once social distancing is no longer necessary, hopefully in June. They also plan to release information on charities people can donate to in his name.

Maresh-Meredith and Acklam Funeral Home in Racine is handling arrangements.