



John William DeWalt

November 12, 1973 - March 16, 2025

DeWalt, John William "Jack" chanpha yuha hoksila, was born on November 12, 1973, to Sandy and Bill DeWalt in Cudahy, WI. On March 16, 2025, after a courageous five-month battle with NUT carcinoma, a very rare and aggressive cancer, he finished his fight surrounded by his family at Abbott Northwestern Hospital in Minneapolis, MN. The dedicated efforts of Drs. Hedstrom and Leach, along with countless exceptional caregivers at Abbott, provided Jack and his family extra precious time together for which they are forever grateful. Jack was raised in Caledonia, WI, where he spent his childhood exploring the woods across the street, leading neighborhood kids on countless adventures. One of his favorite pastimes was building ramps in those woods and riding his dirt bike. He attended Case High School in Racine, WI, before graduating from Wayzata High School in Wayzata, MN, in 1992. Jack continued his education at Minneapolis Community & Technical College, earning an associate degree, then went on to the University of Minnesota, where he double-majored in Political Science and Native American Studies, graduating in 1998. Jack found his true calling in law and earned a scholarship to attend Hamline Law School, graduating in 2002. During his time at Community College he was introduced to Dakota history and tradition, and soon became part of the adopted and chosen family within the Prairie Island Indian Community. Through those relationships, particularly with Grandma Lone Owen, he found a transformative spiritual path of healing and recovery along with an abundance of love and support. In the early days at Prairie Island, he

met Michael and Lois Weir, who first became close friends and eventually his in-laws. On August 13, 2000, Jack married the love of his life, Larina Vosika-Weir, in a beautiful ceremony at Prairie Island in Welch, MN. Together, they built a life filled with love, respect, and joy, raising three wonderful children: sons Cole and Greyson, and daughter Keya. Jack began his legal career in 2002 as an attorney for Legal Aid, traveling across the state handling cases for those in need. The friendships and family he gained at Prairie Island guided him toward focusing on tribal and family law. After legal aid, he formed a partnership with Israel Gobena, a law school friend, which helped him grow both personally and professionally. In 2007, he joined Walling, Berg, & Debele, expanding his expertise in family law and forming additional friendships that were crucial to his success. In 2014, Jack partnered with two of those friends and colleagues, Melissa Chawla and Marian Saksena, to form DeWalt, Chawla + Saksena, LLC. One of Jack's dreams was to open his own firm, and he took great pride in celebrating its 10-year anniversary. Jack believed in fighting for what was right, not just winning cases. He was particular about his work and seldom took on a client unless their story spoke to him. Once he did, he was all in. Solution-driven and not focused on problems, Jack took professional risks, always putting his clients' best interests first. His brilliance lay not only in his legal expertise but also in his ability to find unconventional paths to success. He had a unique gift for guiding clients through their pain and anger, toward resolutions that prioritized inner peace and child-centered solutions. Because of this gift, he became a go-to attorney for high-conflict and complex cases, valuing compromise but never backing down from a fight when necessary - whether in the courtroom or beyond. Jack was deeply committed to justice and giving back to the community. He mentored and taught students at numerous law schools, volunteered at conferences, and contributed to committees where he felt he could make a difference. Throughout his career, Jack received multiple awards, but his true pride came from helping others live better lives. He was fully devoted to family and honored traditions, both old and new. Jack often

said, "In the DeWalt family, if you do something once that everyone enjoys, it becomes a tradition." He made time for the people and places that mattered most to him. Though he spent most of his life in Minnesota, Jack was a die-hard Green Bay Packers and Milwaukee Bucks fan, while also holding a deep love for the Minnesota Timberwolves. He recently and somewhat reluctantly became a golfer, and would cringe if someone called him that. Despite his initial hesitancy, it clearly brought him joy to spend time hanging out on a course, with his brothers Craig "Champ" Camp and Nick Western Boy, even in the rain. He looked forward to fishing each summer with his sons and father-in-law in Canada and was always striving for the perfect BBQ recipes for his big green egg. Music played a central role in Jack's life, with an eclectic taste that embraced many genres. Together, Jack and Larina attended countless concerts and loved discovering new music to share. He treasured the moments spent singing and drumming with his family from Prairie Island. Although Jack was generally an introvert, content to curl up with a book by the fireplace at home with his family, he was gregarious in groups and one of the best at forming lasting friendships - even with those who may have started as adversaries. Many recall his trademark laugh and recognizable voice, which was often heard across almost any room he entered. Jack chose his friends based on internal qualities rather than status or achievements, and his door was always open to anyone who shared the values he respected: hard work, a drive to fight for what's right, compassion, an eagerness to learn and grow despite setbacks, integrity, love, and kindness. Regardless of background, Jack looked past flaws and welcomed others. You didn't need to be perfect to earn his acceptance, but you had to be kind, respectful, and strive to be your best. Jack had a special talent for making even the simplest moments feel extraordinary. As his career and means expanded, he loved sharing his favorite places with his favorite people. Whether squeezing into Al's for breakfast, enjoying an anniversary dinner at Alma, or having family meals out where nothing was off-limits, Jack ensured every experience was meaningful.

He worked hard to create memories that now provide solace to his family and friends, helping to fill the void left behind. No matter what he did - whether in his career, friendships, or role as a husband and father - Jack invested himself fully. His dedication led to remarkable achievements, but more importantly, it created profound relationships. His clients experienced an unmatched commitment, his friends knew they had a steadfast confidant, and his family was surrounded by a love so deep it will continue to shape their lives and future generations. In August 2023, Jack led his family on the journey of a lifetime, to Japan, to visit the memorial of his grandfather, Lt. Rodney Nicholson, a P-51 mustang pilot who heroically sacrificed his life in 1947 by steering his malfunctioning plane away from a school in Kitakyushu. Deeply moved by Lt. Nicholson's selfless act, the school's principal, Maeda-san, built a shrine in his honor and later advocated for the construction of a larger memorial to preserve his legacy. The story of his grandfather's sacrifice held deep meaning to Jack and in preparation for the visit to the memorial site, he taught himself Japanese. During that visit, he delivered a heartfelt speech to community leaders and news reporters at a ceremony honoring his grandfather's extraordinary bravery. It was within that speech where Jack left his true legacy; he reminded us "What is important in this life is each other. Be kind to those around you, even those you do not know". Jack is survived by his best friend, wife, and partner of 27 years, Larina; his sons, Cole and Greyson; and his daughter, Keya. He also leaves behind his father, Bill; mother-in-law, Lois Vosika-Weir; father-in-law, Michael Weir; sister, Terri (Matt Drymalski); sisters-in-law, Michaela (Mark Nizinski) and Tanya (Dan Erickson); brother-in-law, Gavin Weir (Vicy); nephews, Alec, Luke, and Bennett; nieces, Honora, Ruby Sue, and Malia; and many other cherished family members and friends. Jack was preceded in death by his mother, Sandy DeWalt, and his grandparents, Rodney Nicholson, Jack Smythe, Marian Smythe-Baxter, and Johanna & Joe DeWalt, as well as many other beloved family members. In lieu of flowers, the DeWalt family kindly asks you to consider donations to the Minnesota Indian Women's Resource Center

(miwrc.org) or the Legal Rights Center (legalrightscenter.org). Services in remembrance of Jack will be held Saturday, April 12, at 11am with visitation one hour prior, visitation also to be held the evening before from 5-7pm, all at: www.Washburn-McReavy.com Hillside Chapel 612-781-1999 2610 19th Ave. N.E., Mpls

Previous Events

Visitation

APR 11. 5:00 PM - 7:00 PM (CT)

Hillside Chapel
2610 19th Avenue N.E.
Minneapolis, MN 55418

Visitation

APR 12. 10:00 AM - 11:00 AM (CT)

Hillside Chapel
2610 19th Avenue N.E.
Minneapolis, MN 55418

Chapel Service

APR 12. 11:00 AM - 12:00 PM (CT)

Hillside Chapel
2610 19th Avenue N.E.
Minneapolis, MN 55418

Tribute Wall



“ Washburn-McReavy Funeral Chapels created a Chapel Service for John William DeWalt in memory of John William DeWalt



Washburn-McReavy - April 12, 2025 at 08:11 AM

SR

“ Jack had a laugh that would dispel all anger, anxiety and argument and replace it with pure joy. His humanity, patience and laugh will be missed.

Susan Rhode - April 12, 2025 at 07:53 PM



“ Beautiful in Blue was purchased for the family of John William DeWalt.



April 10, 2025 at 09:31 PM



“ A [Memorial Tree](/store/Product.aspx?ProductId=4518) was planted in honor of John William DeWalt.

April 09, 2025 at 09:27 PM



“ *Enchanted Cottage was purchased for the family of John William DeWalt.*



April 09, 2025 at 09:27 PM



“ *Jack was an incredible attorney. He was there for my family and me during one of the most difficult family court cases. He provided guidance and reassurance during the tough times. A brilliant human being and an excellent lawyer. RIP Jack..: you will be missed. Maura S.*

Maura - April 09, 2025 at 04:03 PM



“ *Simply Elegant Spathiphyllum was purchased for the family of John William DeWalt.*



April 08, 2025 at 10:35 PM



“ *A [Memorial Tree](/store/Product.aspx?ProductId=4518) was planted in honor of John William DeWalt.*

April 08, 2025 at 10:35 PM



“ A grove of 3 [Memorial Trees](/store/Product.aspx?ProductId=4518) was planted in honor of John William DeWalt.

April 05, 2025 at 08:03 PM