



## John Steven Latterell

March 29, 1961 - January 18, 2026

John Steven Latterell, age 64, of Andover, Minnesota, passed away on January 18, 2026. Born on March 29, 1961, John built a life of genuine connection. He valued relationships and invested in them with sincerity, curiosity, and a bit of wit and mischief that often sparked a laugh. He believed deeply in the dignity and potential of every person, approaching others as equals and offering support while honoring each person's responsibility to shape their own path.

John earned his degree in Education from Concordia College in Moorhead, Minnesota, and devoted his entire career to supporting youth who faced significant challenges. His early work took him to St. Croix Camps, then operated by the Children and Family Services Group of the Amherst H. Wilder Foundation, where he helped provide wilderness-based, short-term structured residential programs for court-referred adolescents from across the Midwest. He later spent more than twenty years with the Hopkins School District at the Off Campus School, teaching all subjects to junior high students receiving special education services for emotional and behavioral disorders. Between these roles, John also taught special education students through Intermediate District 287, serving youth throughout the west metro area of the Twin Cities. His calm presence, patience, and unwavering belief in each student made him a steady force for young people who needed stability most. Across every position, he brought compassion, humor, and a deep commitment to helping

students succeed.

John found his greatest joy in wild places and the challenge of moving through them under his own power. He loved both calm and not-so-calm waters, paddling and traversing remote regions including the Seal River, Hudson Bay, the Boundary Waters, Quetico Provincial Park, the Nantahala, and the St. John River. An avid outdoorsman, he spent many hours hunting pheasant, ruffed grouse, and woodcock and enjoyed exploring by mountain bike-whether on mid-west trails, in the red rock country of Moab, or along the White Rim near the Grand Canyon. His love of the trail carried him by foot deep into the Grand Canyon, and across the Porcupine Mountains, Wyoming's Wind River Range, the Badlands, Canadian Rockies, hills of Ireland, and the 100 miles of Scotland's West Highland Way. Wherever the landscape was rugged and the air was clear, John felt at home.

John's father laced skates onto his feet at the age of five, beginning what was a deep love of hockey. Growing up in St. Louis Park, he scored goals with peewees and bantams before skating for St. Louis Park High School. He continued his hockey career at Concordia College, where he was part of a determined Cobber team that earned a fourth-place finish in the NCAA Division II finals. He also played-and loved-baseball, volleyball, and soccer, and he followed sports with a passion that filled his home with the sounds of the game.

John was preceded in death by his father, Stephen McLeod Latterell; his maternal grandparents, Gladys and Elmer Longman; and his paternal grandparents, Harold and Elizabeth Latterell. It was his grandmother Elizabeth who taught him to recognize birds by their songs, identify trees by their bark and leaves, and appreciate the peacefulness of walking in the woods. Several aunts, uncles, and cousins also preceded him in death.

He is survived by his wife of 37 years, Rebecca Svatek, of Andover, MN; his mother Margaret Latterell of Plymouth, MN; his sister Susan (Miles) Thormodson of Richmond, MN; brother-in-law Augie (Suzan) Svatek of Desert Hot Springs, CA; and his niece, nephews, grandnieces, and grandnephews, who brought him great joy.

A celebration of John's life will be held at Minneapolis's Lakewood Cemetery Chapel on July 31 at 1:00 p.m., with visitation beginning at 12:30 p.m. A reception will follow in Lakewood's Garden Mausoleum Reception Area. John will be laid to rest at Lakewood Cemetery, near his father and beloved grandmother. Memorials may be directed to Friends of the Boundary Waters ([www.friends-bwca.org](http://www.friends-bwca.org)), an organization that reflects John's lifelong love of wild spaces.

John will be remembered not only by his family but also by the close, lifelong friends who walked beside him throughout his life. His friendships-deep, steady, and full of shared stories-were among his greatest treasures. His legacy lives on in the countless young people he guided, the landscapes he cherished, and the friends and family who loved him.