



John Baker Willette

December 24, 1942 - May 4, 2025

It is with great and loving sadness that we announce the passing of John Baker Willette on May 4, 2025. John was preceded in death by his parents, Cyril and Virginia; and his brother, Tom. John is survived by Kathleen, his loving wife of 51 years; children, Shannon Michelson (Nick) and Carin Hanson (Brady); grandchildren Henrik, Jordyn, Malia, Carter, and Cesar; siblings, LouAnn Willette (Dominican Order), Colleen Eckman (Michael), Steve Willette (Phyllis), Mark Willette (Ginny), and Jane Willette (John Lofswold); and many nieces, nephews, cousins and friends.

John was born on December 24, 1942 in Minneapolis, MN. His early years were spent living in south Minneapolis and attending school at St. Albert the Great Elementary School. He spent his freshman year at DeLaSalle High School and then enrolled in preparation to become a Christian Brother. This took John to St. Louis, Missouri, where he began his brotherhood preparation and completed his high school education. He then returned to St. Mary's College in Winona, MN to continue his brotherhood preparation and obtain his English undergraduate college degree. While at St. Mary's, he also obtained his master's degree in education. John, now Brother Andre, took up residence and teaching at Cretin High School in St. Paul, MN. John left his brotherhood preparation and teaching at Cretin in the late 1960's. He joined the staff of St. Agnes High School for several years.

John met Kathy while both were attending the University of Minnesota Graduate School in education. John was seeking a doctorate degree while Kathy was a research assistant/graduate student seeking her master's degree. They were married on June 21, 1974 and lived in Shoreview, MN. Kathy went on to teach in District 624, White Bear Lake, for 34 years, retiring in 2008. John went on to join the Brooklyn Center Social Security office as a claims representative for 30 years, retiring in 2005. They have lived in New Brighton for 48 of their 51 years of marriage, just recently having moved from their home there to a New Brighton townhouse. Both shared the passion for teaching, writing, and reading. They enjoyed Gopher sports, theater, music, taking care of their home, vacationing on the North Shore, parenting their two daughters, and welcoming their two sons-in-law into the family in 2009. They spent many happy hours with their close friends and with their 5 grandchildren, ages 2-11.

John had many interests. He was a lifelong fisherman, golfer, reader, card player and North Shore vacationer. He was known by many for his kind, gentle and caring ways. He was also known for his incredible hugs, his sense of fashion (think a lot of plaid), and his quirky sense of humor. He was especially fond of puns and provided his share of witty comebacks for each and every conversation. He was most definitely a "people person." He was a devoted and loving husband, father, father-in-law and grandfather to his family. To his friends, John was forever loyal, an aspiring golf putter, and a sometimes wily card player. He loved Gopher sports, the Minnesota Lynx, Twins, Vikings, writing, jazz, theater and movies. He will be sorely missed among us for John Baker Willette was truly "one of the good guys" of this world.

A celebration of John's life will be held on Friday, June 20, 2025 at 11 AM with visitation at 10 AM with luncheon to follow mass at Saint John the Baptist Church, 835 2nd Ave NW, New Brighton, MN 55112. The funeral mass will be

livestreamed on YouTube for those unable to attend in person. The family wants to extend their sincere gratitude to the awesome staff of Allina United Hospital (Circle 4900), the staff of Langton Shores, and the staff of St. Therese Senior Living at St. Odilia for their expertise and loving care of John and of all his family.

Donations are preferred to Twin Cities PBS (tpt.org), the Golden Gopher Athletic Fund, or the Ralph Reeder Food Shelf of New Brighton.

Previous Events

Visitation

JUN **20**. 10:00 AM - 11:00 AM (CT)

St. John the Baptist Catholic Church
835 2nd Avenue NW
New Brighton, MN 55112

Memorial Service

JUN **20**. 11:00 AM - 12:00 PM (CT)

St. John the Baptist Catholic Church
835 2nd Avenue NW
New Brighton, MN 55112

Tribute Wall

EJ

“ John was a very good friend of my father's. Whenever I stopped by during their poker games, he was always kind and inquisitive, and ready with a joke!
My sincere condolences to his family.

Eleise Jones - June 20, 2025 at 09:35 AM



“ Peaceful White Lilies Basket was purchased for the family of John Baker Willette.



June 18, 2025 at 04:31 PM

LW

“ I am John's older sister, just a year older. I've put up some photos of our growing up together on 36th Ave. in Minneapolis. We played together, and often with others in the neighborhood. We played cards, board games, ice skating in our backyard rink (which we built and maintained). John passed me up in height when he was about five. His birthday was December 24, and he hardly ever got his own party. He complained that we just combined it with Christmas. Besides, the day before Christmas was almost always a "fish day." As adults, we didn't see each other as much, but I always enjoyed his humor and openness to others. Go now is peace, faithful friend of God. You've been a wonderful brother. LouAnne

LouAnne Willette - June 15, 2025 at 05:05 PM

LW

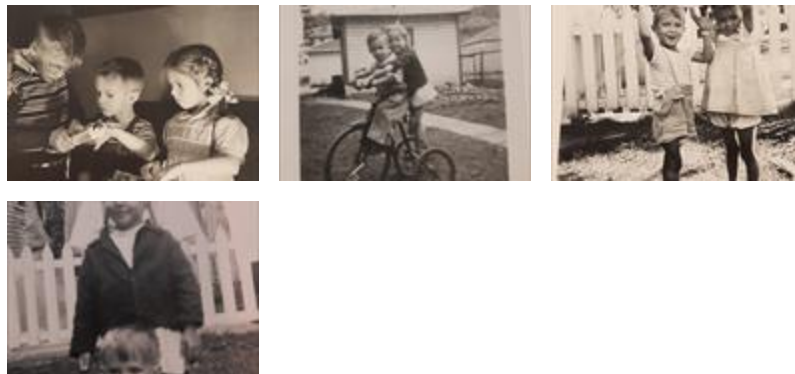
“ 3 files added to the album *A Sister's Reflection 2*



LouAnne Willette - June 15, 2025 at 04:38 PM

LW

“ 4 files added to the album *A Sister's Reflection*



LouAnne Willette - June 15, 2025 at 04:07 PM

BO

“ *I was a student of John's at Cretin High School. He was one of my memorable teachers: young, fun and approachable. He had an influence on my choice for my first career, that of a secondary school English teacher. It would have been interesting to sit down with him and discuss the paths our lives took. I offer my condolences to his family.*

Brian O'Rourke - CHS '68

Brian O'Rourke - June 15, 2025 at 11:57 AM

KS

“ I met John through his daughter, Carin and had the honor of being around the dinner table at Carin’s home with John and Kathy on several occasions. John’s gentle demeanor and kind eyes always stood out to me. As a new MN resident it was fun to learn about MN from John. I knew Minneapolis/St Paul was a welcoming place, and John and Kathy were the perfect representatives of the spirit of the twin cities being a place where all people are valued and deserve dignity and grace. John will be greatly missed, but his legacy will be one that lasts for generations.

Sending love and light to Kathy and family.

Keesha S - June 14, 2025 at 07:36 PM