



Jon Charles Lyons

October 12, 2021

Jon Charles Lyons, 78, of Lancaster died unexpectedly on October 12, 2021 at home. His death was a shock to all given his active, vibrant, and full life. He will be sorely missed by so many. Jon had never retired and at the time of his death was working full time as an Administrative Law Judge in Philadelphia, a position he held for the past 10 years.

Jon practiced law in Lancaster from the late 1970s until his appointment as an Administrative Law Judge. He came to Lancaster from Williamsport, PA where he had been Director of Legal Services, which provided representation for the poor. Believing strongly in justice for all regardless of the ability to pay for legal counsel, Jon embraced this work with dedication. Shortly after arriving in Lancaster, Jon got involved in local politics, displaying a passion for good government that was responsive to the public. He enthusiastically campaigned for Lancaster City Council, and along with Janice Stork and Ron Ford, delivered a Democratic sweep in the fall of 1982. He later ran unsuccessfully for mayor and for representative of the 96th Legislative District, but never lost his keen interest in politics.

Jon relished sporting activities and especially embraced challenges. While he played a lot of golf and handball in earlier decades, he took up more demanding activities later in his life. Jon was an avid athlete beyond his years. He was an active, nationally recognized Level 3 ski instructor. This is the

highest level of accreditation offered by the Professional Ski Instructors of America. Being in his 70s when he attained the Level 3, Jon was the oldest person to ever achieve this level of certification. For the last ten years, during ski season, Jon went every weekend to Elk Mountain where he taught skiing. He also was a ski instructor at Vail and Winter Park. Jon sought out skiing adventures that would challenge and thrill, leading him to Chamonix in France and helicopter skiing in Canada.

About ten years ago, Jon took up race car driving. He was a certified high-performance driving instructor with the National Capital Chapter of the BMW Car Club of America. Just in the past year, he had driven at the Virginia International Raceway, Watkins Glen, and Summit Point. In August he attended the Lotus Driving School in England.

Jon was an enthusiastic road cyclist for more than 20 years and was still riding with the Lancaster Bike Club and other local groups throughout Lancaster County. He cycled 8,000—10,000 miles per year, participating in a number of charity rides. Among others, he rode the Gran Fondo in New York and in Philadelphia, the Covered Bridge, and the Civil War Century, which was one of his favorites because it had so many hills. For the last three years, Jon rode every weekend with a small group. They would cycle 100 miles on Saturdays and 50 miles on Sundays.

Jon graduated from Millville High School in 1961, and found his way on his own to The Citadel in Charleston, South Carolina. He was particularly proud of his Citadel degree and always wore his Citadel class ring, which was on his finger when died. After graduation, he entered Dickinson School of Law, but his studies were interrupted by a tour of duty in Vietnam where he served at the rank of lieutenant and assisted with helicopter rescue missions transporting wounded soldiers. After Vietnam, he completed his J.D. degree at Dickinson and later also served in the Pennsylvania National Guard.

Jon was the son of the late Dr. Charles and Edith (Watts) Lyons. He was preceded in death by his sister Carol Aurand. Jon is survived by two sons, Justin Lyons and Mervyn Ian Arnold-Lyons, both of Lancaster, his daughter Meryl and her husband Tim Miller of Brooklyn, and a sister, Yvonne Ryder, of McKinney, Texas.

A Graveside Service will be held at Donegal Presbyterian Church, 1891 Donegal Springs Rd., Mount Joy, PA on Tuesday, October 26, 2021, at 2:00 pm, followed by a Celebration of Life at the American Bar & Grill, 1081 North Plum Street, Lancaster from 4:00 pm-8:00 pm. Memorial contributions in memory of Jon can be made to Advoz Mediation and Restorative Practices, 8 N. Queen St. #210, Lancaster, PA 17603 or to Immigration Legal Services Program Lancaster Office, CWS, 308 E King St., Lancaster, PA 17602.

—Lovingly written by Marlene Arnold.

Previous Events

Burial

OCT **26**. 2:00 PM - 2:30 PM (ET)

Donegal Presbyterian Church
1891 Donegal Springs Road
Mount Joy, PA 17552

Celebration of Life

OCT **26**. 4:00 PM - 8:00 PM (ET)

The American Bar & Grill
1081 North Plum Street
Lancaster, PA 17603

Tribute Wall



“ *Jon Charles Lyons*

October 22, 2023 at 11:34 PM



“ *So sorry to hear of Jon's passing. He was a good friend and interlocutor and I always enjoyed our discussions. I regret that I had not seen him much in recent years but I will always cherish his memory.*

Philip Scalamogna, M.D. - May 05, 2022 at 10:25 AM



“ *I've had many hearings before him in Philadelphia. Proceedings with him were anything but conventional, and that was never a bad thing. He always honed in on those very specific pieces of evidence that led to a just outcome and meaningful decision. I had great respect for him as an adjudicator and am shocked and saddened by this news.*

Anonymous - November 19, 2021 at 04:16 PM

EC

“ Yes, as was said elsewhere Jon never answered the question "how are you?" with just an "OK" or a "Fine," his answer was always as enthusiastic as anyone could express.

I'll always have indelible memories of Jon, especially skiing. I remember him at Banff, Jackson, Taos, Jack Frost, Round Top and many other places. One image I couldn't shake if I wanted to try is of him blasting through thick encrusted boughs of pine trees on a steep powdered slope at Big White. He had skied into the trees with total abandon, ducking down and covering his head, then had a look of surprised glee when he emerged still upright on his skis.

Jon was a good friend to all, had a lot of guts and lived life with gusto!

RIP Jon.

Ed Cook - November 12, 2021 at 11:02 AM

TS

“ One of the kindest people I have had the privilege to meet. Always upbeat and ALWAYS about making Lancaster a better community. He was the rational voice in the room whenever there was a controversial project being offered. He saw the best in everyone. He will be sorely missed. My best to the family. Tom Smithgall

Tom Smithgall - October 30, 2021 at 01:20 PM

SL

“ *Sincerely, Megan, Jason, Riley and Logan purchased the Simply Elegant Spathiphyllum for the family of Jon Charles Lyons.*



Sincerely, Megan, Jason, Riley and Logan - October 25, 2021
at 05:15 PM

MN

“ *There are so many memories to share. Backpacking trips in the Wind River Range, the Bitterroots, and Wyoming. I remember when Jon caught a fish too big for the frying pan we had packed in. "So now what, Jon?" And of course cycling - hundreds or thousands of miles shared together. Some of them pretty tough; you needed to be in shape to keep up with Jon. And many collectively prepared meals: bouillabaisse, cioppino, the list goes on.*

It's hard to believe none of this will happen again but then we do have the memories.

Mike N.

Mike Nolan - October 25, 2021 at 03:57 PM

KR

“ *Kathleen R. purchased the Magnificent Life Spray for the family of Jon Charles Lyons.*



Kathleen R. - October 25, 2021 at 09:51 AM

PH

“ J-O-N never answered "How've you been?" with a standard "Fine" or "Good." Invariably his response was some ALL CAPS variation of "Excellent!" or "Outstanding!" His glass was never just half full, it was always overflowing.

Whether it was simply chatting, discussing how to make the perfect martini with a bartender, explaining in Great Detail how to make what was just a simple pot of rice for supper, skiing, or sitting around the fire after a day on the mountain, Jon approached it all with a gleeful enthusiasm and passionate intensity that occasionally seemed over the top, but was always engaging. With winter in the wings, it's impossible to comprehend that Saturdays will no longer end sitting by that fire with Jon as he struggles to stay awake long enough to watch the last glowing ember flicker out.

Oh, how we miss him,

Suzanne and Ralph, WEK, Ruth and Paul

Paul Heller - October 24, 2021 at 12:39 PM

RB

“ *My deepest and heartfelt condolences to all family and friends of Jon on his unexpected passing. Jon was my locker-mate at Golden Peak (Vail) for three years prior to COVID and I was looking forward to reconnecting with him this ski season. He was always a gentleman with a pleasant greeting whenever our paths crossed. May his memory be for a blessing and may he rest in peace.*

Richard Berger

Richard Berger - October 22, 2021 at 11:23 PM

SX

“ My deepest condolences to the family and friends of Judge Lyons. I represented many claimants in front of ALJ Lyons and he always treated people with the utmost respect and had a deep concern for all people who came before him. May he rest in peace.

Samantha Xander

Samantha Xander - October 22, 2021 at 01:03 PM

RE

“ I worked with Jon for 9 years. I would go to his office on occasion for a brief chat and to inquire how he was doing. No matter what the topic, each visit always ended in a pleasant, laughable ending. A friend and colleague. He will be missed. ALJ Warren.

Regina - October 18, 2021 at 02:45 PM

JH

“ Jon and I were ALJ's in Philly. He visited our family at the shore, brought his bike along, and entertained us all with memories of the Citadel and military service from Vietnam. Jon was a character but invariably a good friend, quick on the uptake and a pleasure to work with. He will be missed, May he rest in peace. Joe Hillegas

Joe Hillegas - October 18, 2021 at 11:33 AM

MC

“ I so enjoyed getting to know John at the track. We frequently talked and ultimately bonded over both owning a Lotus (an eccentric little sports car built in England). I was so looking forward to hearing about his experience visiting the Lotus factory and driving at the performance school in August. We discussed that trip all summer - I will miss his good cheer and witty intellect. My sincerest condolences go out to his family.

-Marc Caden

Marc Caden - October 18, 2021 at 10:05 AM

MM

“ Jon and I shared many a chat while at the track, sitting around the fire pit that he insisted we have. We may not have always had the same viewpoint, but we discussed the issues and could learn from one another. He didn't tolerate incompetence in the court room and I loved hearing him tell the person in front of him "Ma'am, you need to find yourself another attorney because the one you have is an idiot". Somehow I can hear him saying that out loud. He always had a one word response for me and I cherished getting him to say it--I shall be happy to continue to carry that torch forward. Jon, you are already missed.

Mike Meyer

Mike Meyer - October 18, 2021 at 08:50 AM

CC

“ *Jon was one of the most alive people I have ever known. Whatever he was doing he attacked with gusto: skiing, driving, cooking, golfing, philosophizing, dancing, etc. We were dear friends for many years. He called his children his ducklings and loved them dearly. I heard many stories about the three kids during our years of friendship. Jon was such a special person. A very deep thinker and great sharer of ideas. He will be lovingly remembered and deeply missed by many. Carole Campbell*

Carole Campbell - October 17, 2021 at 04:32 PM



“ *1 file added to the tribute wall*



Joseph Irwin - October 17, 2021 at 02:33 PM

MA

“ *Uncle Jon will be missed! I appreciated his support when he sat with me while at the bedside of his dying sister, (my mother), a year ago. His calm demeanor, and presence was a great help. After my mother's memorial service, we went on an outing to Williamsport Pa. for a picnic lunch, and boated on the river. At his young age he water skied.*

marilyn aurand - October 17, 2021 at 11:49 AM



“ *Simply Elegant Spathiphyllum was purchased for the family of Jon Charles Lyons.*



October 17, 2021 at 10:56 AM



“ *Jon was our classmate from first grade in Greenwood Elementary (Jon was Esther’s May Day partner in 6th grade) through graduation from Millville High School. We remember him as an active, outgoing young man with big dreams and strong ideas. Though separated in time and space over the years, we enjoyed reunited with Jon at our MHS Class of ‘61 50th reunion, ten years ago. During our conversation, Jon shared his experiences at The Citadel, including the time he spent with author Pat Conroy (writer of “The Great Santini” and other semi-biographical novels), when they were both worked on their college yearbook. Jon shared that the strict discipline at The Citidel was very difficult, but that it changed his life for the better. He will be missed by his classmates. We extend our condolences to his family.*

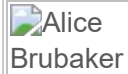
Chet and Esther McQuaide, Berkeley Lake, GA

Esther and Chet McQuaide - October 17, 2021 at 09:37 AM



“ *Very sorry to hear of this. Greatly enjoyed talking to him. A very accomplished individual who knew how to enjoy himself. Rest in peace. :(*

Nick Mandalakas - October 17, 2021 at 09:28 AM



Alice
Brubaker

“ My memories of Jon were in conjunction with the Lancaster Ski Club - on ski trips (how about dart game score keeping in Banff?) and at summer corn roasts. I would braid his pony tail when he had one. He even lent me his car to retrieve a left behind credit card. This is such sad news - he will be missed.

Alice Brubaker - October 17, 2021 at 08:11 AM



JG

I knew Jon when we were in the Lancaster ski club. He was a heck of a nice guy with such a friendly demeanor. One moment that really defines the kind of person Jon was was when he joyously congratulated a fellow candidate for winning the mayoral election in Lancaster. Jon was such a gentleman. Our world would be better with a few more people like him.

Jim Garlitz - October 22, 2021 at 04:09 PM



“ Jon will be sorely missed. His wit and demeanor were remarkable. His campfire-building skills were second-to-none. I enjoyed our fireside chats at the track with a Wiggle. Jon lived life to the fullest. Reminds me of the quote from the great racer, Jim Dunn: “why worry about death, it’ll come sooner or later.”

Joseph Irwin - October 17, 2021 at 07:46 AM