



John Willis Bowlin

December 20, 1941 - February 5, 2024

John was born December 20, 1941 to Leon and Lenita Bowlin in Shubuta, Mississippi. He grew up in Ashland, OR and had lived in Vancouver, Washington for the past 50 years. He retired from the City of Vancouver, Public Works Dept. in 2003.

John's true and enduring passion in life was the 5-string banjo. As a performer, John brought joy and awareness to all who heard him play. Always a judicious collector and talented luthier, he had no greater joy than to save a hundred-year-old instrument, repair it, and help it find its way into the hands of an aspiring musician. John became famous for his development and production of the Model 1865 Bowlin Fretless Banjo, John's banjos were handcrafted, made one at a time and highly valued by those lucky enough to own one. He placed them from Ireland to Japan and all over the United States.

John loved his family very much and will be greatly missed. He is survived by the love of his life, Sally Bowlin, who he was with for 64 years; his daughter, Kelly Haverkost and her husband, Ken Haverkost of Ridgefield, Washington; his granddaughter, Betsy Cantrell of Beaverton, Oregon; his grandson, Grady Haverkost; his two great granddaughters, Logan and Harley Cantrell of Beaverton, Oregon; and his brother, Bob Bowlin of Brush Prairie, WA. A special thanks to John's good friends, Ron Lunceford and Brooks Masten who were a great joy to John and a support to his family in their time of need. Final arrangements are being handled by Evergreen Memorial Gardens. Per

John's request, there will be no service.

Tribute Wall

KS

“ Dear Sally -- I was a classmate of John's at Ashland High School and am very sorry to lean of John's death. The years pass far too quickly, don't they? It sounds like John has been an honorable, generous man and has had a good life with you and your family. I extend my sympathies to you.
Warmly, Karen Fieguth Smith

Karen Fieguth Smith - February 16, 2024 at 12:00 AM

AB

“ We are deeply sorry for your loss ~ Evergreen Memorial Gardens Cemetery, Funeral Chapel and Crematory

A Memorial Tree was planted for John Willis Bowlin - February 09, 2024 at 12:00 AM