



## John P. Griffin

August 5, 1960 - August 31, 2024

John Patrick Griffin was born August 5, 1960 in Vancouver, WA to Byrl, and Sharon Griffin. After Sharon's passing, John was raised by his Scoutmaster father, Byrl, and his stepmother, Evelyn - who was simply "Mom" to him. He grew up on Alki Road with his siblings Jerry, Laura, Donnella, and Lonnie. A proud "Westside kid," he attended Ben Franklin Elementary School, Shumway Junior High School, and Hudson's Bay High School - graduating in 1978. After high school, he worked at Riverside Golf and Country Club for a few years before deciding to finish his degree through night school at Portland State University in order to become a teacher and coach. That decision paved the way to change countless lives for decades to come.

John - or "Griff" as everyone called him - hit his stride as a teacher. After two years in the small town of Huntington in Eastern Oregon - where he was runner-up for 1988 Oregon Small School State Teacher of the Year - he returned to Vancouver as a teacher and coach at Mountain View High School. As head coach of the Mountain View Girls Basketball Team, he took the Thunder to the WIAA state tournament four times, including a runner-up finish in 1995. John was named Greater St. Helens League Coach of the Year multiple times and coached the Washington team three consecutive years in the Northwest Shootout exhibition all-star game against Oregon.

In addition to the success of the basketball court, Griffin led Mountain View's mock trial team to top finishes at state, taught AP U.S. History and Law and Justice, and ran a school-wide Mock Congress that helped students learn

about how our government works.

Following his time at Mountain View, John was a successful administrator at Fort Vancouver High School, Heritage High School, and King's Way Christian Schools. John always had a softspot for the underdog and set up successful mentorship programs, DYMS and BOWS, to help young students succeed by pairing them with role models and offering needed guidance to navigate the world. It's believed every student enrolled in these programs graduated from high school.

His last role as coach was as an assistant for the Camas High School Girls' Basketball team with some of his closest friends, Scott Thompson and Mike Dillman. He capped his coaching career by cutting down the nets in the Tacoma Dome when the Papermakers won the state title this past Spring. In retirement, John kept a busy schedule through the Alki Road Mentoring program he established. Part of this work consisted of John giving history lessons at retirement homes. The lessons proved to be quite a hit and the number of attendees at each lecture continued to grow.

More than his professional success, he embraced his role as a family man. A husband fully in love with his wife, Jan; a father who adored his children, Drew, Kayla, and Brig; and most recently - a doting 'Pappy' to his four grandchildren. Not one for boredom, every long car trip with his kids presented an opportunity to play a full board of 'Jeopardy' in the car with their Dad making up the questions and playing Alex Trebek as they went. He was liable to break out at any given time with a rendition of his favorite hits - Three Dog Night's "Joy to the World," Frank Sinatra's "Fly Me to the Moon," and Neil Diamond's "Sweet Caroline" were favorites. With a work ethic that never stopped, every time he visited his kids or grandkids doubled as an opportunity for a home improvement project.

An avid outdoorsman, his 'happy place' was sitting in a duck blind at sunrise with a friend or family member and a good hunting dog. He loved spending time at his property on the Little Klickitat River, a location that served as the spot where he proposed to Jan and where he built a cabin from the ground up.

He often enjoyed kayaking, rafting, fishing, and deer hunting -anything to get outside with nature.

John will be remembered for his warm and engaging personality. He was a force of nature in any room he entered. It wasn't unusual for him to end up engaged with deep conversations with complete strangers within minutes. His guidance and advice changed the lives of countless students and players for the better. He was a true "Renaissance Man" who could seamlessly "shoot the breeze" about the best one-hit-wonder 1970s Classic Rock bands, how key World War II battles were won, or what type of flowers would best complete a yard. He never stopped trying to learn more.

John is survived by his wife of 26 years, Jan; his children, Drew Griffin (Ann) of Alexandria, VA, Kayla Torgerson (Erik) of Vancouver, and Brig Griffin of Washougal; his grandchildren Eve, Norah, Jack, and Grant; and his siblings Jerry, Donnella, and Lonnie. He is preceded in death by his mother, Sharon; his father, Byrl; his stepmother, Evelyn; and his sister, Laura.

A Celebration of Life will take place on September 28 at 1 pm in the Hudson's Bay High School Gymnasium. In lieu of flowers, please consider donating to the John Griffin Legacy of Excellence Fund with the Fort Vancouver High School Boosters. The following link has been setup to help facilitate donations: [my.cheddarup.com/c/the-john-griffin-legacy-of-excellence-fund](https://my.cheddarup.com/c/the-john-griffin-legacy-of-excellence-fund)

# Tribute Wall

JW

“ *What an amazing man and a huge loss to this world. I am honored to have known him, to have been hired by Griff, and to have witnessed his joy for life, for sport, and for his family. Much love to the family.*

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**James Wolverton** - September 27, 2024 at 12:00 AM

MS

“ *Grew up on the "west side" with John followed him through all 3 same schools. Played first bounce or fly on spring /summer nights with other neighborhood kids. I have so many good memories of John My condolences to his family his was a life well lived*

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**Melanie StephensM** - September 15, 2024 at 12:00 AM

PB

“ *Being close friends with Griff, despite the brief time, was both a Blessing and a privilege due to our many shared interests; i'm confident I'll see him again in Heaven.*

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**Paul Bardzik** - September 13, 2024 at 12:00 AM

MR

“ *Rest well knowing that you have planted seeds of personal growth and civic engagement in many children as an educator, coach and friend.*

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**Mark Ross** - September 13, 2024 at 12:00 AM

JS

“ John played baseball my dad was his coach Les Kern my dad was very proud of John and his accomplishments he will be forever missed

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**Juli Simmons** - September 13, 2024 at 12:00 AM

MR

“ Griff was dean of students at Heritage when I was Principal there. He was always coming up with ways to help students or promote student activities. One year he convinced all the male administrators to wear tuxes around the school to promote the upcoming prom. When my friends saw Griff and I in a picture with our tuxes they asked me "when was the wedding!" I will truly miss the ability to be able to talk to Griff or see him at sporting events. I am so sorry for the families loss but know that his spirit will live on in the lives of the many youths he has inspired  
Mark Ross

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**Mark Ross** - September 13, 2024 at 12:00 AM

AG

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

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**A Memorial Tree was planted for John P. Griffin** - September 05, 2024 at 12:00 AM