



John David DeHaan

August 13, 1948 - May 7, 2022

John DeHaan of Vallejo CA left this earthly home on Saturday, May 7, 2022. He is now in that eternal space where there is a challenging auto race course that rests next to an elaborate model train layout and an enormous dog run where he will watch the fur babies romp freely. He will also assure there is no fire as he will educate everyone on the dangers of fire.

John was born in Chicago, IL to Peter and Honore (Martin) DeHaan on 13 August 1948. John is survived by his sister Shirley (DeHaan) Anderson and sister-in-law Jeanne (Pociecha) DeHaan McCarthy, nieces, nephews, cousins, and scores of close friends worldwide. He was preceded in death by his parents, his brothers Norman R. DeHaan and Fred Busse DeHaan, his grand-nephew Erik J. Collette, his cousin and close friend David Martin, and many other loving souls.

John had a lifelong quest for success. As a child he was found training his pet rodent to type his name on a typewriter. That determination followed him his whole life. He thrilled at the science of solving the mystery of fire, crime and mayhem. His expertise, and systematic and methodical approach, in fire- and

explosion-related forensic science made him a most sought after private consultant. He accepted investigative cases in the U.S., Canada, Australia, New Zealand and the U.K. He authored books on fire investigation and published his research in many fire and forensic publications. John also earned numerous awards for his contributions in arson investigations, fire investigation and criminalistics.

When John had down time he loved working on his many unique antique cars, racing some of them on various circuits. He enjoyed collecting model trains and making friends with other hobbyists who shared his passion. Another of John's favorite things in life were his Irish Wolfhounds, Greyhounds, rescue and other dogs.

John was incredibly blessed with amazing friends and fellow conspirators who shared his adventures in life. Neighbors and co-workers were drawn in by John's enthusiasm, positive and upbeat personality, his infectious laugh and overall kind character. John quested the Joy of Discovery and shared that joy with everyone he encountered.

Needless to say, he will be sorely missed.

Interment will be private. Please remember John by supporting fire and law enforcement communities as well as your local dog rescue organizations.

Tribute Wall

LA

“ Well, this is belated ... and we are saddened to learn of John's physical transition just tonight - March 30, 2023 - after drafting a letter to him to resolve a few lingering issues about, as one writer recalled below, "his other amazing work in spontaneous combustion." Clearly John achieved much in his life and his legacy is indeed profound. He and we shared the stage at the 2002 CAAI conference in Monterey CA to argue the reality or mythology of SHC. We were writing to him to get insight and resolution about his - dare we say - less than honest dismissal of SHC by his experiment that burned candles wrapped in cotton that then had to be frantically extinguished before the burn chamber went flash-over rather than producing a limited "localized" fire as claimed to have done. Perhaps by now he has met with the consciousnesses of Dr. Bentley or fireman George Mott and many others, and has learned that their fatal fires aren't so easily resolved by igniting candles wrapped in flannel. May curiosity and learning continue, John.
-- Larry.

Larry Arnold - March 30, 2023 at 10:26 PM

MB

“ So much to say. John has been a friend to my family for years. Trains - life size and toy, cars, racing, motorcycles, science, law enforcement and vintage radio, we shared so much besides friendship. It was a shock to hear he was gone. We didn't get a chance to finish that last project, the Scott Allwave 23! It's beautiful, I wish he could hear it.

Michael F. Brookman - July 08, 2022 at 11:45 AM

GG

“ Thanks my friend for all you did for all of us in the fire investigation world. I'll miss your humor and friendship.

Gene

Gene gantt - May 23, 2022 at 10:03 PM

DT

“ Thank you to all who are sharing their memories of Uncle John, who was actually more like a big brother to me. Be assured I will be sharing these with my Mother, John's sister, as time and health allow.

Diane Taff

Diane Taff - May 22, 2022 at 12:39 PM

AP

“ 4 files added to the album Memories Album



April - May 19, 2022 at 02:51 PM

AG

“ I worked with John at the fire school for many years. While insistent on doing good science, he was also a source of great company. I was absolutely delighted that he agreed to contribute to our book. He will be missed as a great scholar and a wonderful and delightful person.

Alison Galloway - May 19, 2022 at 09:21 AM

JM

“ When I collaborated with Dr. Elayne Pope on the creation of the Forensic Fire Death Investigation Course, one of the first instructors that came to mind was Dr. John D. DeHann. John was elated that he would be working with human tissue rather than relating to numerous slides of fires past. We would go on to replicate actual fire scenarios so the students could get hands on training in a training environment. As with most academia instructors and those that have worked in the trenches John and I had our disagreements but in the long run science prevailed. With the information John obtained from his many tests he was able to present his findings at the AAFS.

As mentioned in previous postings, John was a friend and mentor to all of us. He will certainly be missed in all of our lives. Rest in peace John, you've earned it.

John madden - May 18, 2022 at 11:11 PM

RW

“ So sad to hear of of John's passing after meeting him many years ago. He was highly regarded here in Australia and a popular speaker at our conferences.

I last met with John when we had lunch in San Francisco a couple of years ago, sharing stories of wildfire investigations and some of his structure fire cases (along with his cars and companion dogs!) He was also good enough to tour me around the local area where he lived. A great guy and dedicated fire cause expert. We will all miss him here in Australia.

*Richard Woods
Canberra Australia*

Richard Woods - May 18, 2022 at 08:18 PM

CH

“ I remember when I first met John. It was at an AAFS meeting, during one of the social events, and I was a bit star-struck, since I was a criminalist doing Fire Debris analysis. Plus I even started at the Alameda County Crime Lab, just like he did (though many years later). I think I made a bit of a pest of myself, kind of like Lucy when she went to Hollywood. But he was just such a kind and down-to-earth person, it didn't seem to bother him a bit.

Since then, I had several opportunities to take classes he was teaching, and would frequently see him at other trainings and seminars. He was a wonderful teacher, mentor, and colleague. And one of my best professional moments was when he asked me to help with a workshop he was doing for CAC. When he told me was retiring, I sort of scoffed, saying I didn't believe he'd ever *really* retire. And sure enough, he kept showing up at trainings here and there. It saddens me deeply that I won't be seeing him again. The last time I saw him was a few years ago at a training class where I was able to introduce him to my colleague who was in training at the time. He told her that she had a great mentor in me. It was very sweet.

He will be sorely missed.

Christina Henry - May 18, 2022 at 06:42 PM

MR

“ I first met Dr John DeHaan when I was this snotty nose kid at my dad's ankles. I'll never forget listening to John talk about a simple bare frame of a Triumph Spitfire resting on blocks in his "garage". He spoke of it in such elegance and detail as if we're a breathing, living being. He offered to let me drive it when he was done restoring it and remarked he would be traveling to Scotland shortly to pick up some of the cars original parts.

I was dumbfounded by this eloquent man speak as if he was going to the shop to by a loaf of bread.

I returned at 16 and, of course, he let me drive the completed exquisite car.

I knew him from childhood as one of "dads friends" from his college days at Berkley in the 1960's. I grew to know him through life as a truly remarkable and inquisitive "thinking man" who held a true penchant for all things "Sherlockian" and intricate.

He truly terrified and captivated me once in my mid 20's by educating me on the caloric exchange of heat necessary to ignight a car using a bag of cheetoes... Of course as we did it in the process of teaching a CSI course. Let's not forget his other amazing work in spontaneous combustion, UL fire ratings and so many other incredible works. His continuation of Paul Kirk's "Fire Investigation" and so many other larger than life undertakings has inspired at least two generations of Fire Investigators.

I was lucky enough to know him most of my lifetime up to this point, first as a child with my father Joe Rynearson then as an adult as a professional. I am deeply saddened by the passing of your light John... But I have faith that you found a great deal of entertainment in seeing whats past the shackles of this physical world. Enjoy exploring the next great adventure and likely chatting it up with some old dear friends again.

Mike Rynearson - May 18, 2022 at 05:19 PM

WM

“ I am deeply saddened by the loss of John DeHaan personally and professionally. He had a way to make everyone feel special and that they were a good friend. My sincerest condolences to the DeHaan family.

I can't remember when I first met John, but it must have been in late 1980's because I seem to recall it took a couple of years convincing him (bugging him often in 1990 and 1991) to teach a low explosives analysis course with me. Finally, he found time in his crowded schedule and in 1992 we taught the first CCI low explosives analysis course. With every contact with John, I was learning something new – he was constantly experimenting and knew so much! When we met at seminars (e.g., CAC or AAFS) or other locations, our discussions weren't long before we were interrupted by others seeking his knowledge and counsel or just say "Hi". One of the most memorable times I had with John was at the SLOFIST Fire Death Investigation course where I was a student. I felt very privileged to be assigned to an experiment John was excited to conduct. His enthusiasm and interest in a topic were catching. I had no idea how long the experiment would take, but we ended up spending six hours and thirteen minutes together watching his experiment from start to finish. During that time we talked about many subjects in addition to the progress of the fire happening before us. He was a close colleague, friend, and mentor. John will be greatly missed.

Wayne Moorehead - May 18, 2022 at 01:29 AM

SR

Thoughts and prayers. John was a great wealth of information, always willing to share, never
To busy to answer questions and share information. He will be missed by many but always remembered for all of the contributions he made fir fire investigations to make it better for everyone else.

steve Riggs - May 19, 2022 at 07:13 AM

GJ

I first met John in the 1986 or 87 when I was first getting into Fire Investigation and had talked with him many times over the years and had a great discussion and lunch when he taught in Roanoke VA a few years back. . All of us here at Southern Fire Analysis & Fire Analysis Consulting Group are saddened to hear of his passing. His place in fire investigation will forever be bright and his absence missed by all who knew him and those to come in our industry. Gary Haun Jr.

Gary Haun Jr. - May 31, 2022 at 09:15 PM

RW

*I am shocked and so saddened by finding this notice on my forensics download....like others, I have been thinking of John a lot and kept telling myself to call...
I first met John and his close friend Monty McGill when they assisted me as a DA Investigator on a arson-double homicide in Humboldt County in the 1980's. No truer friends and mentor's have I ever had. I cannot recount all the enjoyable and innumerable phone and in-person visits, plus trial support, I had with John and Monty, who I am sure was waiting to welcome John home. Ah, the cars, the dogs...all of you have sure summed that part of John's life up! When I authored my first textbook on cold case homicide investigation, John was there to guide me with many of the ins and outs dealing with publishers; he just seemed a storehouse of wisdom and experience. When I came to then-College of Eastern Utah, now Utah State University Eastern in Price, their influence had a powerful impact as both donated time to come put on a 1-week hands on fire investigation course for me. We built the structures and they torched them to show the students, all fire personnel from the western states, the ins and outs of these investigations. Needless to say, they had rave reviews. Sadly, the financial crisis of 2008 precluded future classes, but his and Monty's willingness to teach and share experiences have guided me in the years since. I can think of so much to say, but suffice to say I feel the loss of a dear and close personal friend, it is a vacancy which can never be filled.
Carry on my dear friend, I will miss you forever....
"Cheers" as you would say...*

*Rachel Walton
Price, Utah*

Rachel Walton - July 18, 2022 at 05:15 PM

RW

I omitted that John introduced me to the fascinating world of forensics, and that he truly was-and is-a monument to this professional world. Thank you to John's family for sharing him with us....
Rachel Walton

Rachel Walton - July 18, 2022 at 05:20 PM

WM

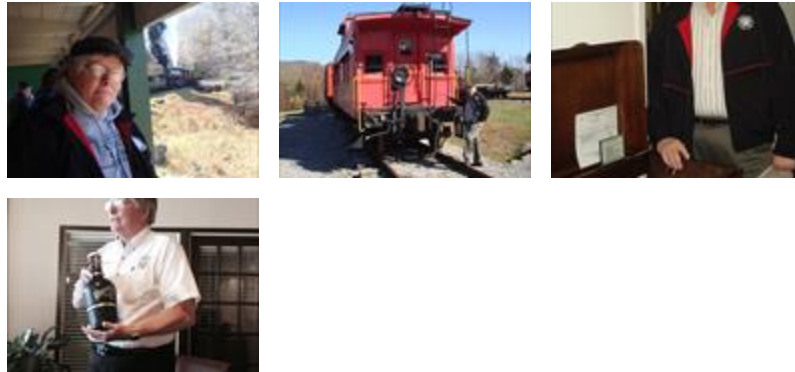
“ 11 files added to the album Memories Album



Wayne Moorehead - May 17, 2022 at 11:21 PM

DI

“ 4 files added to the tribute wall



David J Icovc - May 17, 2022 at 09:48 PM

VR

“ *From the Rynearson family, we offer our deepest and most heartfelt condolences to the family of Dr. John DeHaan. Please know how saddened we are to hear of his death.*

His passing leaves a great void in the criminalistics world where he rose to such great heights in his field and contributed so very much. I first met John in the late 60s when he and my son, Joe, were hired by the Alameda Crime Lab (California) upon their graduation from U.C. Berkeley. Both so eager in the start of their careers to contribute what they could to the betterment of law enforcement. John rose to great heights, as we all know, and gave to the world his expertise whenever called upon. He was the epitome of professionalism.

His friendship through the years was of immense importance and we shall miss him and his goodness forever. Thank you, dear friend, John. Rest in peace. Never forgotten.

Virginia Rynearson

virginia rynearson - May 17, 2022 at 07:43 PM

MF

“ I learned so much from John, not only about being an analyst but about being a criminalist! Early in my trace evidence career I knew of John but didn't know him. That all changed when he did some of his PhD experiments in Southern California and used the lab I was working in. I watched him work with rapt attention. I was thoroughly impressed by his enthusiasm, knowledge, skills, and passion (see John's CAC Founder's Lecture at https://www.cacnews.org/news/1st_q18.pdf). But more importantly was his willingness to share, teach, and mentor. I had my debris extraction apparatus set up in the fume hood and he suggested that if I make a few adjustments I might get better results. How right he was. I subsequently took every opportunity I could to attend his lectures, courses, and "controlled" burns (anyone that was fortunate to be a student knows what I mean by "controlled"). When he could, and wasn't globe trotting, he'd race in Coronado, CA, and we'd try to get together just shoot the breeze. He will be missed but his legacy will live on through those he helped along in their careers.

Marty Fink

Marty Fink - May 17, 2022 at 04:30 PM

VT

“ I am so sad to hear of John's death. John was a huge advocate for me when setting up the Tx Fire Marshal's lab, and so generous with his expertise, energy, and enthusiasm for scientific methods of fire investigation. His gifts of investigation and teaching have reached around the world. RIP John. I offer my deepest sympathies to his family.

Valerie Turner - May 17, 2022 at 03:04 PM

DB

“ 1 file added to the album Memories Album



Dave Berry - May 17, 2022 at 02:54 PM

DI

“ *Condolences to John's family and the many friends and colleagues he has left behind. His contributions to our industry will remain permanent as a founder of raising the professional bar, and chartering the avenues of education necessary for truth, justice and value in fire investigations. Rest in Peace my friend; you will be terribly missed. Donna Ingram, Partner, Ilove Ingram Group, LLC.*

Donna Ingram - May 17, 2022 at 01:40 PM

MS

“ *I was blessed to have John as my friend in the fire investigation community. I was fortunate enough to have him assist me in proving the guilt of a mother that killed her children in a fire. He has made so many contributions to the world of fire analysis that they can never be accurately determined. May God bless his soul, his family and friends. Michael A Schlatman Past President International Association of Arson Investigators Inc.*

Michael Schlatman - May 17, 2022 at 11:44 AM

CA

“ I first met John in 1981 in So. Cal. He was there to pick up one of his infamous cars! He made many, many contributions to our forensic community. John will be missed by us all. If there is a service or Life Tribute, please let us know. The photo below was from the October, 2021 CAC meeting.

Sincerely,
Carol Hunter



Carol - May 16, 2022 at 06:34 PM