



John S. Pearson Jr.

March 4, 1962 - November 10, 2021

John Spellings Pearson, Jr.

John Spellings Pearson, Jr. was born in Memphis, TN on March 4, 1962 to Dr. and Mrs. John Spellings Pearson, Sr. Sadly John passed away Wednesday November 10, 2021 from a heart attack at his home in Memphis. While he was born in Memphis and returned there later in life, he spent his childhood years in Jackson, TN. John attended Old Hickory Academy and graduated from there in 1980. During his time in west Tennessee, you could find him on many frigid winter mornings duck or goose hunting with his father until his father's death in 1976. He always spoke so fondly of those times later in his life. After graduation from high school, John moved to Memphis and began his lengthy career in the culinary arts realm. If you ever had a favorite fine dining restaurant in Memphis over the last 40 years, John probably cooked your meal there at least once. Many key culinary institutions in Memphis have been lucky enough to have John work on their line, and he was a living, breathing oral history of the Memphis fine dining scene. John was the anchor of many kitchens, working the grill station, helping with the pantry, and occasionally at his most recent restaurant as the saucier- one of the most skilled and respected jobs in any kitchen. Many have said that John was an absolute joy to work with. Maybe you will recall his grandmother's Oc's Peas from the Squash Blossom, Crawfish Pie, Mussels in Jamaican Run Down Sauce, Snapper with Black Bean Buerre Blanc or Shrimp and Habanero Vanilla. His extensive experience and unflagging work ethic made him an incredible teammate, but his greatest quality was the sense of camaraderie and pride he brought to the kitchen and instilled in his colleagues. John was also the rare kind of individual who made his living with his hands, but whose curious mind thrived on every sort of intellectual pursuit. John was a fan of music, film, and writing, particularly of jazz and the works of Terrence Malick, David Lynch, Paul Thomas Anderson, Edgar Allan Poe, and Michel Houellebecq. He loved to discuss his passions with others, and many were the nights when John would be leading a post-shift seminar about the merits of his favorite cinematographers.

John is survived by his son, Connor Willis Pearson, and sister, Amy

Pearson Griffin (Will).

Please join us in celebrating his life Monday November 22, 2021 at 3:30 pm at the Williamson Park at 292 Willett Street in Memphis, TN where John loved to visit with his son Connor when he was younger.

In lieu of flowers, please consider contributing to the education fund that we have set up for John's son, Connor.

[https://www.gofundme.com/f/education-fund-for-john-pearsons-son-connor?
utm_source=cus-tomer&utm_medium=copy_link&utm_campaign=p_cf+share-flow-1](https://www.gofundme.com/f/education-fund-for-john-pearsons-son-connor?utm_source=cus-tomer&utm_medium=copy_link&utm_campaign=p_cf+share-flow-1)

Comments



“ Prayers for John’s family and friends. John was such a fun guy. My father was Johnny Cash’s drummer for years, and John and I had a “disagreement” over song lyrics one time. The line is “gonna flood you big river” and John swore it said “gonna f __ _ k you big river” 🤔🤔🤔 I don’t know why I’ve never forgotten that!!

Kim Lovelace - November 17, 2021 at 11:58 AM



“ So sorry to hear of John's passing. I have fond memories of him since the '80s. While I've been away from Memphis the last five years his remarkable posts on Facebook offered many surprises and a lasting connection. I hope a collection might be published in some form. All of it has been inspiring: writings about his relationship with his son, recollections of obscure glory in the restaurant world, amazing short jaunts of impressionistic fiction, and his photographs. Praises to you John. You are one of a kind.

David Leonard - November 16, 2021 at 07:00 PM



“ I have known John since the 1980's, Antenna club and Squash Blossom days. There were years where John would come by every Sunday with CDs, movies, groceries, some amazing new red wine to try. He would set up in my tiny half-kitchen / half darkroom and cook. The best meals I have ever had were all cooked by John. Some of the best conversations, some of the best times. John, cranky assed moods, perfectly phrased insults, hilarious always. One of my favorite people. When I turn back the pages, one of my best friends. I feel a deep pain over John's death, because like the song, I always thought I'd see him again. I feel shorted that last meal, that last movie, that last introduction to some amazing music I have never heard of...that last rant, that last good time. RIP John, my friend. My long-time friend. It just doesn't feel the same here without you.

Stephanie Sweda - November 16, 2021 at 07:57 AM