



John Leslie Potter

May 27, 1936 - March 31, 2024

John Leslie Potter, a long-time Benicia resident, nuclear engineer, Naval veteran and pilot, died March 31, 2024 in Vallejo. He was 87.

Born May 27, 1936 in El Paso, Texas, he was accepted to the U.S. Naval Academy in Annapolis, MD, graduating in 1958. He was a Weapons Officer on the nuclear submarine USS Mariano G Vallejo stationed at Mare Island. He retired as a Commander in the Navy,

In 1969, John married Judith Wandell, the widow of his shipmate and friend John Wandell and mother of four. The family moved to Palo Alto, where John attended Stanford University, earning a master's degree in nuclear engineering and an MBA..

The family settled in Benicia in 1971. He worked for Pacific Gas & Electric Company spending most of the next 25 years in the design and operation of Diablo Canyon Nuclear Power Plant.

John served as a Blue and Gold Officer interviewing candidates for the U.S. Naval Academy for 38 years and counseled more than 50 students for entrance to the Naval Academy. Talking to young people about their future was one of his passions.

John was a member of Benicia's Finance Committee and served on the School Board. He was a member of the Benicia/Tula Sister City Program. He was a Commissioner on the Solano County Airport Land Use Commission for 8 years. For 15 years he served on the U.S. Naval Academy Alumni Association Board as a Trustee and was a member of the Governance Committee.

His love for aviation followed his first flight in El Paso at the age of 13, and he finally acquired his own aircraft at the age of 50. He belonged to the Mount Diablo Pilot's Association since 1975 where he served as president and board member. John established the monthly breakfast and safety meetings and was awarded an honorary membership for his loyal service

John is preceded in death by his first wife, Priscilla, mother of Jeffrey Potter. He is survived by his wife, Judith, children Jeffrey (Margee), Christopher (Stephanie), Susan (John), Deborah (Allen) and Timothy (Amy); 10 grandchildren; 3 great-grandchildren, and cousins Jane (Ron) West, Bill (Linda) Fletcher, Judy Fletcher and their children.

A memorial service with military honors will be held on Saturday, April 13 at 1:00pm at St. Dominic's Church in Benicia, with a burial on Monday, April 15 at 9:30 a.m. at the Sacramento Valley National Cemetery. In lieu of flowers, donations may be made to the Tunnels to Towers Foundation or Doctors Without Borders.

Cemetery Details

Sacramento Valley National Cemetery

5810 Midway Road
Dixon, CA 95620

Previous Events

Mass of Christian Burial

APR 13. 1:00 PM (PT)

St Dominic's Catholic Church
475 E I St
Benicia, CA 94510
(707) 747-7220

Graveside Service

APR 15. 9:30 AM (PT)

Sacramento Valley National Cemetery
5810 Midway Road
Dixon, CA 95620

Tribute Wall

RF

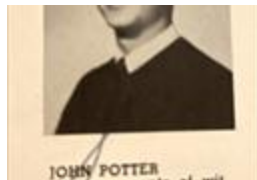
“ 5 files added to the album *John's Senior Year HS Experience at Austin HS in El Paso, TX 1954*



Richard Fairall - August 25, 2024 at 03:20 PM

RF

“ 1 file added to the album *John's Senior Year HS Experience at Austin HS in El Paso, TX 1954*



Richard Fairall - August 25, 2024 at 03:13 PM

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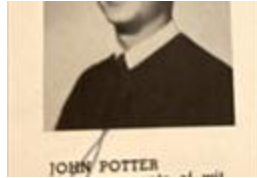
“ 1 file added to the tribute wall



Richard Fairall - August 25, 2024 at 02:56 PM

RF

“ 1 file added to the tribute wall

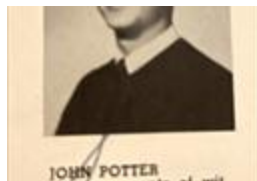


Richard Fairall - August 25, 2024 at 02:54 PM

RF

“ I went to Austin High School in El Paso TX with John ('50-'54) and knew him as a Good Friend and BMOC (Student Council, Varsity Cheerleader, Senior Class Officer, R.O.T.C Officer, etc.). He was obviously well-know and well-liked, actively participating in HS social life and already beginning to demonstrate his superb leadership skills. I wish I could have shared more of his adult life beyond reconnecting at class reunions. To family and friends: You were fortunate to have had him in your lives; cherish the memories. I'm attaching a couple of photos of him from those days and one of him trying to cheerlead again at our 50th reunion.

Richard L Fairall (Larry)
rfairall@verizon.net



Richard Fairall - August 24, 2024 at 12:25 PM

DD

“ I had the pleasure of knowing Mr. Potter when I was in high school. His daughter, Sue, was my high school buddy. Mr. Potter was always very good to me, and welcomed me into his home many times. I remember he took us for a tour of Diablo Canyon Nuclear Power Plant and also went with us to see the movie China Syndrome. Another time he took us to see an opera in San Francisco. He was very generous. And as I read his obituary, and realize how accomplished and successful he was, I am also impressed with how humble he was. My deepest condolences to Judy Potter, Sue and all his family.

Della Duggan-Moore - April 17, 2024 at 07:18 PM

RW

“ John was a wonderful man that I miss dearly. He was who I went to for advice after my father passed away. John was known by a variety of names throughout his life: John, Johnny Bird, Cuz, Potter, Potts, Commander, Dad, Smokey Joe, Painless Potter, Uncle John, Don Juan, and I'm sure many more. Hopefully he will get to fly his plane and go fishing in Heaven.

Ron West - April 04, 2024 at 12:12 PM

JW

“ 3 files added to the album Young John Potter



Jane West - April 03, 2024 at 03:17 PM

ME

“ *My heartfelt sympathy goes out to Jude and family and friends of John. A life so well lived and shared. May your special memories bring you every comfort in your loss.*

Marie Earp

Marie Earp - April 03, 2024 at 12:12 PM