



## John Howard Toelk

October 12, 1959 - May 29, 2021

John Howard Toelk was born in New York City on Columbus Day, October 12, 1959, the third son and fourth child of Evelyn and Leonard G. Toelk. Sadly, John passed away on Memorial weekend, May 29, 2021 at Ellis Hospital in Schenectady, NY after fighting through irreversible illness.

Johnny was unique in every way. He first grew up in the Lower East Side of NYC where he attended P.S.63 and actively attended Sunday school and services at Middle Collegiate Church on 7th Street and 2nd Avenue. When he turned eight, his parents moved to the warm and family-oriented neighborhood of Ridgewood, Queens in NY and it was there that Johnny made friendships filled with warmth and great humor which lasted throughout his lifetime. It was there, in Grover Cleveland Park, that Johnny played competitive baseball on sunny afternoons and gentle summer evenings.

John was a “man of many hats”. He enjoyed cooking and preparing meats and specialty foods for the local butcher shop. He did many types of construction, moving, and furniture delivery jobs. In his last years, John drove for a livery service in Gloversville, NY where he was popular with his many regular clients and co-workers. But, perhaps his most favorite position in a lifetime was working at the Beacon Theatre in NYC and the West Side Pier. It was his favorite because there, he was able to experience the great rock bands of the day, meet the artists, and actually bring friends to the shows for

free, even allowing them backstage.

John's interests were many and varied. He loved exotic animals and had a collection of these including a giant tortoise, which he raised from a tiny "25 cent, 2-inch baby" right up until it was a huge one foot high and one-and-a-half-foot long creature with assorted colorful markings and bumps all over its shell. It would mosey around the apartment like one of the family. He loved beautiful birds and owned two precious parrots; one was a brightly, multicolored fellow that just flew into the neighborhood one afternoon; and the other, an African Gray named Buddy who died just two weeks before John. His Tropical fish collection was extraordinary and for years he served as an administrator for the FB Group: "Cichlids, Cichlids and more Cichlids".

John was a "green thumb" extraordinaire. His apartment was filled with bright and beautiful, thriving greenery. In spring, with the help of his Joann, he would excitedly begin his outdoor summer planting of peppers, tomatoes, and cucumbers. Johnny also loved to fish whenever presented with such an opportunity. It must have reminded him of those days when his own father would take him down to Coney Island to go fishing and crabbing.

Though they may never know this: John was probably one of the biggest fans of the Bronx Bombers that ever lived! His collection of Yankee memorabilia was everywhere, decorating all the walls in the den and furniture in the living room. He loved them Yankees!

John's love of music persisted throughout his entire life. His favorite band? ... The Grateful Dead!

John was just a hilarious guy with the biggest love for life you can imagine! It showed in his face, his smile, and by the mischievous twinkle in his eyes. The love of John's life and his best friend is Joann Cole. They did everything

together. She was “His Heart”, as he often reminded us all. They were a team and worked together on almost everything.

“Dear Johnny, there was no one like you and no person will ever come close to having the kind of generosity of heart, thoughtfulness and totally amazing sense of hilarity that you brought to everyone who ever knew you. With tears we say our “goodbyes”. Now, John, take your well-earned rest. We all look forward to meeting with you one day again in that peaceful place beyond the clouds. We send our love to you who brought so much joy to us.”

Johnny is survived by his only sister, Evelyn Toelk Neber; his Special Lady, Joann Cole, whom he loved and cared for; four nieces, Veronica Garbarino, Jeanmarie Tagliarini, Lisl McClellan, and Beth Schnurr; three nephews, Richard Donato, Scott Toelk and Manfred Neber; seven great-nephews; two great-nieces; and many dear cousins.. He will be sorely missed by his myriad of true friends who loved his endearing sense of humor and honest concern for each and every one of them.

Cremation was performed by Park View Crematorium, Schenectady. Services will be held by the family at a later date.

Arrangements are by the Robert M. Halgas Funeral Home, Inc. 111 County Highway 106 Johnstown.

# Tribute Wall

DS

“ *Deb S.*  
*Dearest John. You were a wonderful Uncle to Ronnie and her brothers and all of their children. Thank you so much for keeping in touch with them and letting them know you truly cared about them.*

*For me, as soon as I walked into Ronnie's you would make me laugh and I knew it was going to be a fun day. I will never forget you John. Your funny facial expressions are printed on my mind forever. Rest In Peace. You can now be the heavenly greeter for all of us.*



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**Deb Steinbrunner** - June 10, 2021 at 10:01 PM

VE

“ *Veronica lit a candle in memory of John Howard Toelk*



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**Veronica** - June 10, 2021 at 09:06 PM

EB

“ Uncle my only regret is that I did not see you more and talk to you more often. Only God knows what I would do to call you up and hear your goof ball jokes that always made me smile even if I was cryin! You were one of a kind, a big heart and a bigger personality, I cant believe your gone but you will never be forgotten, I promise to always keeo your memory alive and to always tell lil richie and mikey your black banana joke. I miss you, I love you always and 4ever now rest in peace uncle funk! ”



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**Emily Balestrieri** - June 10, 2021 at 05:26 PM

VG

“ Dear Uncleish, I am so saddened and heartbroken to know that I will never hear or see you in person ever again. I know I have many many memories stored in my head, on video and recording but I just want you back to make more. You were my diary who has now left with all my thoughts and feelings, memories and even some secrets. I will miss the deep conversations we had over the many years and the laughter. I could tell you anything..you were never judgmental, mean or phony. You were only loving to the end. I will never forget our last conversations while you were in the hospital they were very kind and loving. I prayed for a few miracles at that time and I received them by getting your calls. I feel blessed that I had you in my life as well as my families lives they will also miss you very much Johnny and Maria are very sad by your passing but they too also have such great memories with you. No one could ever make us laugh the way you did. You were one of a kind and you are so missed. I received your ashes yesterday and thought I was going to break in half. I could not even bare the thought of you being this way but I know in my heart you are with God, and my Mother and Father comforting you. I will do what you asked of me and have a memorial at Central Park. I will make it very special and beautiful just as you were. I Love you very much always have always will. Till we meet again, Rest in Peace my only Unclish ❤️🌹

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veronica garbarino - June 10, 2021 at 04:55 PM

EN

“ Rest in peace Brother. You will be so very missed. Love you.

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Evelyn Neber - June 10, 2021 at 01:38 PM