



John Prior

January 19, 1939 - December 6, 2022

John Prior, 83 of Centralia, passed away Tuesday, December 6, 2022 at his home. John was born January 19, 1939 in Benton, Illinois, the son of Harl and Rema (Kelley) Prior.

He was preceded in death by his parents, four brothers, and one sister. He is survived by daughters, Debbie Redfeairn and husband Randy of Centralia and Toni Borum and husband Jeff of Ponchatoula, LA, three grandchildren, Ryan and wife Mindy of AR, Michelle Beatty and husband Alan of IN, Nicole Schwartz Sandahl and husband Ryan of Centralia, Gage Borum and wife Kimee of CA, Drew Borum and wife Lanie of LA; and nine great grandchildren: Sophia and Ole Redfeairn, Cooper, Lola and Lucy Beatty, Jordan Sandahl, Emery, Hudson, and Abbey Borum.

Many people will remember John as an avid stock car driver. He started racing in 1958 at area dirt tracks and progressed over the years in various types of cars with his last race in 2017. John came to Centralia to work as a mechanic at Bill Rick Ford before he became self employed in various endeavors including locating and drilling oil wells.

No services will be held. Memorial donations may be made to the donor's choice and can be accepted at Sutherland-Garnier Funeral Home and Cremation Services at 235 N. Sycamore St., Centralia, IL 62801, (618) 532-3523, who is honored to be of service to the family of John Prior. Online

condolences may be made to the family by visiting www.sutherlandfuneralhome.com and the Sutherland-Garnier Funeral Home Facebook Page.

Tribute Wall

CB

“ For time I met John, July 1996. I came home on leave to see my mom. She and Doc Meadows were down at his shop working on the “Dirt Track Car” and John was working the guys hard. Right away, I figured out that He was a motivator. The team was Getting body panels replaced and stickers up, checking the weight of the a brand new, (I think) crash resistant, Kevlar fuel tank. Adjusting the timing and fuel mix, topping off all the fluids, and making sure John’s car was as fast, stable and “safe” as possible; (This was before his hand was crunched a couple years later, when he got knocked out and his arm fell out the window and got hit by another car). Finally the team began placing an enormous titanium bar down the length of the car to increase rear wheel traction. Using leverage of acceleration, (nose rises/rear goes down) the bar lessens some of that and sends that downward force to the front tires to keep them from lifting up. Pretty amazing engineering.

So John comes over and my mother introduces me to him. My first immediate impression is that he’s a natural leader, a motivator, and passionate about whatever his interests are. I could tell that he had above average confidence and self-esteem, but also with that come taking risks. In business (which he owned) he obviously worked extremely hard and when it was time to work, he wore that hat. But when it was time to play, he could wear that hat just as well.

John, asked me if Titanium was strong enough? (tensile and Yield strength) I told him, “it’s roughly the same as steel but almost half as light, main difference is weight. Every time I met John in the years that followed, he took a few minutes to talk with me about his philosophy for business and politics. Then just as quickly, he was pulled away onto another issue and had to go fix that. He never stood still very long.

Chad Berck - February 08, 2023 at 11:06 AM

TC

“ I use to love watch him race I-70 speedway,he was a go getter

Tommy cantwell - January 18, 2023 at 08:46 PM

SW

“ I was shocked to hear of John's passing... he was a friend and a mentor... John helped me many times and I was eternally grateful for both his knowledge and wisdom, which he shared freely....Rest in peace John... maybe God bless you and your family....

Steve Wheat - December 20, 2022 at 09:19 PM

GA

“ We will always remember the good times we had going to many races with Betty, Debbie and Toni, especially when the girls were young. RIP, John.

Gary & Judy Atchison - December 20, 2022 at 08:23 AM

WH

“ Our condolences to family and friends on your loss! My first memory of Johnny was out on racetrack road at the racetrack and all the fun and excitement of watching the races!

Wayne & Vickie Houser - December 19, 2022 at 07:08 AM

JL

“ Please accept our sympathy on the passing of John.
We watched him race in Highland, Bentonville, valley park, mo. He was a very special person, remember the car teardowns at Highland, John sit down say Well we be here all night but I'm going home with cash, as never find what looking for, that happened a lot of times, tried to keep up with John on racing news.
He was great person, we will miss him, as I'm sure you will also
God bless to all

Judy luehm - December 18, 2022 at 06:21 AM

PB

“ Lawrence and I always had so much fun with John in Daytona! Life of the party! 😭🏁

Peggy Beal - December 17, 2022 at 07:04 PM

HP

“ You will be missed by many John Prior, but certainly these kiddos. They love you very much! We are all very fortunate to have had you in our lives. Fly High Billy Bob



Heather Pierce - December 16, 2022 at 09:28 PM

DR

“ So sorry, prayers for the family. RB has so many memories of John, 99 % involved racing. From Marion city speedway till he drove the semi carrying the race car to the Springfield Mile. We saw him a couple of months ago and he was on oxygen but still full of s—. Will miss him. Redbone and Dody Ray

Dody Ray - December 16, 2022 at 07:03 PM

MH

“ Sorry for your loss. Johnny was a fire cracker never a deal moment.always racing that car down the alley on 5th Street when twins were little he'd have mom upset when she just got them to sleep. Got a lot of good memories of him and Juvenile. May they both have a great time now in Heaven



Marie Hixenbaugh - December 16, 2022 at 03:37 PM