



John Hiram Kirby

May 8, 1942 - November 20, 2023

John Hiram Kirby, 81, of Taylors, South Carolina, passed away peacefully in his sleep on November 20, 2023.

John was born May 8, 1942, to James Elford Kirby and Helen Louise (Gordon) Kirby in Greenville, South Carolina. John moved to San Diego, California with his parents when he was 15. After John graduated from Hoover High School in 1960, he attended City College in San Diego. John loved to fish, surf, and scuba dive.

While at City College, he met Carol Jeanne Molitor, who was a Senior at San Diego High School. The two schools were next to each other, and John would walk past the building where she had choir every day, and she would wave to him from the window. They married in San Diego on March 16, 1964.

John fulfilled his dream of becoming a pilot and went to work for Flying Tiger Line, the first commercial cargo airline in the United States. His time with Flying Tigers took him and Carol to New Jersey, San Mateo, and finally back to San Diego, and it took John around the world. In 1968, John and Carol welcomed their daughter, Catharine, into the world.

After retiring from Flying Tigers, John worked in retail and sold real estate. What John really loved was working with plants. He built a greenhouse over the garage of his home where he set up a hydroponic garden. He created, patented, and sold the formula for plant fertilizer he named Green-Gro. His vegetable gardens were always prolific, and he and Carol maintained a pristine yard full of beautiful trees and flowers.

John's love for fishing prompted him and his closest friends, Al Fleming and Dave Sansum, to build a wooden boat in his garage. It was a beautifully crafted fishing boat that saw many trips on lakes and in the ocean.

In 1991, John returned to South Carolina and settled in Taylors. He was joined by his mother, Helen, and wife, Carol. He built two green houses and opened a nursery where he grew and sold bedding plants. Clear Creek Nursery was well known to people in the area. He also worked for Lowe's Gardening Department and the Southern Connector.

John loved living on his farm. When he finally "retired," he enjoyed bush-hogging, keeping a garden, tending his chickens, keeping bees, and spending time with Carol and their bloodhounds. When his daughter and grandchildren would come to visit, he loved taking them striper fishing at Lake Hartwell and Clark's Hill. They often fished together at Lake Robinson.

John's wife, Carol, died suddenly in January, and Catharine came to stay with him. After this, he spent a good deal of time sitting on his front porch waving to his neighbors and listening to his favorite Clive Cussler novels. John and Carol were together 64 years, and he missed her every day until he went to be with her.

Family Who Went Before

John was predeceased by infant brother James David Kirby, who died Jan 22, 1938, Father James Elford Kirby, who died June 4, 1973, his mother Helen Louise (Gordon) Kirby, who died July 26, 2007, and his beloved wife Carol Jeanne (Molitor) Kirby, who died Jan 4, 2023.

Family He Left Behind

He is survived by daughter Catharine Kirby, granddaughter Lauren Nannery, grandsons Bret Bendixen (Kellsey) and Connor Bendixen, and great-granddaughter Quinn Bendixen.

A Private Memorial will be held at his home. In lieu of flowers, the family requests donations be made to St. Jude Children's Research Hospital or South Carolina Wildlife Federation, organizations dear to John's heart.

Online condolences may be made to www.thewoodmortuary.com.

Tribute Wall

LU

“ *My sympathy and prayers to the family. I am Linda Kirby Underwood of Greer. My grandparents were Walter & Ola Kirby, and my father Charles W. Kirby. I remember my grandparents speaking of "F" who would have been John`s father.*



Linda K Underwood - December 12, 2023 at 11:20 PM

SF

“ *Spartanburg Methodist College faculty planted a [Memorial Tree](/store/Product.aspx?ProductId=4518) in honor of John Hiram Kirby.*

Spartanburg Methodist College faculty - November 27, 2023 at 10:35 AM

BC

“ *Becky Clayton lit a candle in memory of John Kirby*



Becky Clayton - November 26, 2023 at 08:50 AM

CK

“ 9 files added to the album Family Photos



Catharine Kirby - November 25, 2023 at 09:10 AM

NS

Loved seeing John's pictures with the times he enjoyed.

Nancy McMillan Smith - November 29, 2023 at 07:02 AM