



John Francis Nihen

June 26, 1928 - August 2, 2017

John Francis Nihen, a resident of Yreka since 1993, passed away at Madrone Hospice House on August 2, 2017.

John was born in Boston, MA on June 26, 1928, the son of Jerome Michael Nihen and Martha Murphy Nihen. He was preceded in death by his sisters, Margaret Wilson, Elizabeth Dugan, and brother Jerome Nihen.

John graduated from English High School in 1945. Following high school, he joined the U.S. Navy and served as an Aerographer (flight weather forecaster) for seven years. After his discharge, John worked as a weather forecaster at Weather Services in Boston, and became a professional member of the American Meteorological Society.

In 1955, John decided to resume his education, and he attended Massachusetts Institute of Technology, where he studied chemistry, literature, and philosophy.

He was employed for 10 years at TRG Inc. in Boston as a scientific programmer and mathematician, working on antenna and radome R&D. One of his projects was formulating and programming the mechanical design of the first feed of the Arecibo radio telescope in Puerto Rico, at the time the largest in the world. He also worked on the radar detection system that ensured the

U.S. adequate time to repel an enemy air attack.

In 1968, John and a colleague co-founded AutEx in Wellesley, MA. He was the Director and Vice President with complete responsibility for the design and implementation of the communications and information retrieval system that facilitated the trading of large blocks of securities. Early in the 1970's, John moved to California and was employed by TCI Inc., Mountain View, designing and installing HF antennas and related R&D.

In 1974, he joined Applied Technology in Sunnyvale, a division of the ITEK Corp. (ATD/ITEK) of Massachusetts, which involved radar warning and defense technology. While at ITEK, he was one of four employees selected as "Engineer of the Year" for the corporation's first ITEK Honors Program in 1978. He was honored for inventiveness and willingness to work super-human hours and for incredible performance in designing, writing, and supporting the Compass Tie Program software. During this time, John spent many months living and working at military bases perfecting the program. John left ATD in the early 1980's and continued working in the defense industry until his retirement in 1989.

John met his wife, Susan, while they were both working at ATD, and they married in 1983. They moved to Yreka in 1993, enjoying the small town atmosphere and the natural beauty of the area. John especially loved hiking the trails of Greenhorn Park. They took many road trips and traveled all over the U.S. and Canada. They particularly enjoyed the Oregon Coast, and Bandon was a favorite destination.

John loved to cook, and found great pleasure in fixing meals for family and friends. Early in his life, he had taken up baking bread, which helped him relax from his high-stress profession. He loved music of all kinds, falling in love with opera as a young boy when his father took him to a live performance. His

favorite opera was "Tales of Hoffman." Musically talented himself, he could sit at a piano and play almost anything; as a young man, he often played at piano bars for extra money. John was an avid reader, with a deep love of literature, and he liked to write poetry. Since his AutEx days, he had been interested in the securities industry, and wrote a quarterly investment newsletter for family and friends for several years.

John always remembered the hard times his family and friends experienced during the depression, and he helped many people in his lifetime. When John was 15, his father died, and since the age of 13, he had been working after school and on weekends to help support his family.

John will be missed by family and friends for his keen mind and wit. He is survived by his wife, Susan; sons, John, Jerome, and David; his grandchildren, nieces, and nephews.

A memorial service for John will be held on Thursday, August 17, 2017 at 1 p.m. at Girdner Funeral Chapel in Yreka, with snacks and beverages to follow. In lieu of flowers, memorial contributions may be made in John's name to Madrone Hospice, Inc., 255 Collier Circle, Yreka, CA 96097.

Previous Events

Memorial Service

AUG 17. 1:00 PM (PT)

Girdner Funeral Chapel
202 S. Oregon St.
Yreka, CA 96097
(530) 842-3434
<https://www.girdnerfuneralchapel.com>

Tribute Wall

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“ I worked with John at Applied Technology from 1974 to 1981. During that time, we developed a product for the government which was very successful and provided much business to the company over many years. John and I solved many problems together, we traveled together supporting the product and I gained great respect for his ability and his work ethic.

John started out as an individual contributor on the software development team. He loved to tell anyone who would listen, that he had been programming since 1954. More important than programming experience, he also had extensive experience in solving real world problems, integrating hardware and software, and developing specialized algorithms. None of the other software engineers had any experience close to that. By the end of the project, John had rewritten all of the code in his style, and integrated it, and made it work. He became the one-man software team.

I know John also had an interest in the stock market, and I suspect he did not need the job except as a hobby. That, and his one man team status, permitted him a lot of independence. When he felt the need, he would let anyone know what he honestly thought, whether it be a secretary, program manager or vice president. I have never worked with anyone who was less concerned with political correctness.

The government had awarded two identical contracts for this development. The company with the best product and the best production price at the end, would win the competition. A lot of people contributed to the success of Applied Technology, but John's tireless efforts and his desperately needed expertise were the most significant factors.

Mike Paff

Mike Paff - September 19, 2017 at 05:01 PM