



John Lawrence Gray Jr

December 1, 1953 - October 3, 2015

John L. Gray, Jr.

December 1, 1953 – October 3, 2015

Atlanta

John L. Gray, Jr. passed away on October 3, 2015 peacefully in his home after a 13-month battle with brain cancer.

John was born in Cartersville, GA on December 1, 1953, the only son, and youngest child, of the late Anne Holtz Gray and J.L. “Pete” Gray. He attended high school as a boarding student at The Westminster Schools in Atlanta, graduating in 1972. He went on to earn his Bachelor’s Degree in English from Washington & Lee University in 1976.

John taught fourth and fifth grade English at Woodward Academy for two years before moving into a career in Corporate Communications, Public Relations and Marketing. First with Koepnick & Horne and the Umphenour Agency; however, his career and passion was the thirty-two years he spent with the RTM Restaurant Group/Arby’s. John was so proud of the work he did for multiple brands – Arby’s, Mrs. Winner’s/LEE’S, Wendy’s and Shoney’s.

John is survived by his wife and best friend, Elizabeth “Liz” DeBoor Gray; his son John L. Gray, III (Sarah), his daughter Elizabeth Winship Gray McEver

(Hayward) and her children, William and Milly, all of Atlanta; two sisters Carol Gray Brown (Frank) of Rome, GA and Mary Gray Hart (Clark) of Cartersville. John had a special affection for his cousins from Wisconsin - Mary Beth, Katie, Rose, Fred and Annie, aka the Appleton Foxes. John admired, loved and respected his late cousins Bobby Rearden and Tom DeBray, who served as best man in his wedding.

John was a long-time member of Capital City Club and Piedmont Driving Club; serving on the Capital City Club Governing Board as a Director for three years, sharing his expertise with the Food & Beverage Committee.

John was kind and generous, with a quick smile and infectious laugh. He never met a stranger. A talented writer, John drafted short stories, poems, speeches and toasts that all evoked the exact, intended emotion for his audience. John was an avid sports fan, enjoying watching his Green Bay Packers and Georgia Tech Yellow Jackets at Grant Field. He was passionate about attending the horse races, particularly at his favorite track – Keeneland in Lexington, KY.

During his career at RTM, John served on the Board of Directors for Big Brothers Big Sisters of Metro Atlanta; chaired the “Atlanta Dream Team” to help the 1996 Olympic bid effort; and supervised the direction of the Arby’s Charity Tour, raising over \$50 million for the Arby’s Foundation and youth mentoring organizations throughout the United States.

Visitation will be held on Wednesday, October 7 from 11:30AM-1:00PM at Trinity Presbyterian Church, 3003 Howell Mill Road, Atlanta, 30327. Funeral Service will follow at 1:00 PM.

Visitation in Lexington, KY will be at St. Peter Catholic Church, 125 Barr Street, Lexington, 40507 on Friday, October 9 from 1:00PM – 2:00PM

followed by a Funeral Mass and burial at Calvary Cemetery, 874 West Main Street, Lexington, KY 40508.

Cemetery Details

Calvary Cemetery

874 West Main Street
Lexington, KY 40508

Previous Events

Visitation

OCT 7. 11:30 AM - 1:00 PM (ET)

Trinity Presbyterian Church
3003 Howell Mill Road
Atlanta, GA 30327

Service

OCT 7. 1:00 PM (ET)

Trinity Presbyterian Church
3003 Howell Mill Road
Atlanta, GA 30327

Visitation

OCT 9. 1:00 PM - 2:00 PM (ET)

St. Peter Catholic Church
125 Barr Street
Lexington, KY 40507

Mass

OCT 9. 2:00 PM (ET)

St. Peter Catholic Church
125 Barr Street
Lexington, KY 40507

Tribute Wall

CK

“ John was a classmate and roommate at Westminster School dormitory during class year 1971. We both served on the Tull Hall Service Council, John could always be looked up upon as an outstanding individual, may he be remembered forever.

Chris Kahlson - June 06, 2025 at 06:09 PM



“ John Lawrence Gray Jr

October 08, 2022 at 11:37 AM

JB

“ Dear Liz and Family,
My deepest condolences to you and your family. We are praying for your family.
Jennifer and Bryan Blasingame

jennifer blasingame - October 14, 2015 at 10:04 AM

EN

“ I am so sorry for your loss. I don't remember life without John as Anne and my mother were good friends. I have many happy memories of playing with him and his sisters. We always had to play "Chemical Products" where Pete worked. I also got my worst spanking with John when we hid from our mothers. Dads were called and they were about to drag the pond behind his house. He was a very special person to the Nelsons.

Elizabeth Nelson - October 07, 2015 at 06:08 PM

IG

“ My deepest condolences to Liz and the entire family. I was so sad to hear of John's passing. I had the pleasure of working with John when I was invited to run Marketing Event Partners back in 2000-2001, and John was in his leadership role at RTM. John took me "under his wing" in a way; he always treated me with respect, and always made time for me when I needed his counsel or a sounding board. John completely embodied the core principles of RTM and made everyone around him a better person, as individuals and as professionals. He was a teacher, he had very high expectations of those he worked with, and along with that came feedback to make you better and praise for a job well done. What I will remember most of all is John's laugh. I still vividly remember the crazy bets we would make on the golf course, usually playing an "emergency nine holes" after completing another successful Arby's Charity Tour event somewhere around the country. One of John's favorite lines was "fast pay, fast friends", meaning that when you lose a bet, you pay up on the spot and avoid risking damaging a good friendship.
-- Ira L. Gleser

Ira L. Gleser - October 06, 2015 at 10:31 PM

DR

“ My condolences to the wife and family of John Gray... Attended school with John until he left for Westminster. John was just the cutest boy in school, with a beautiful smile. I remember going to a party at his house on Cassville Road and being impressed with the first 'zip line' (or something similar) that he had there to play on. We all missed him when he and Mark Shaw went off to school in Atlanta. He left this world too soon... Deborah Kown Royer (Class of 72 Cartersville High)

Deborah Royer - October 06, 2015 at 01:13 PM



“ Peaceful White Lilies Basket was purchased for the family of John Lawrence Gray Jr.



October 06, 2015 at 10:11 AM



“ John was a dorm student at Westminster in Atlanta, Georgia, in 1972. He had no car. I would drive him and other dorm students like Mark Shaw W'72 around Atlanta. John was nice. He was my friend. We will miss him.
Matt Flournoy W'72, in Marietta, Georgia.

Matt Flournoy - October 06, 2015 at 07:38 AM



“ Dear Liz and all those that loved John,

Brenda and I were very sad to learn of John's passing. John was a trusted confidante, especially during the last few years. I will miss him and the jokes we shared, the conversations and experiences we re-lived and of course, our emails and texts during the Packer Games! I enjoyed so very much, working with him at Arby's and on the Arby's Foundation Board. John truly made a difference in the lives of so many people. Please know of our prayers and our confidence that Our Lord gathered him up into His arms and led him to the place reserved for those who loved Him. Chuck Sliker

Chuck Sliker - October 05, 2015 at 04:10 PM



“ *Beautiful in Blue* was purchased for the family of John Lawrence Gray Jr.



October 05, 2015 at 12:39 PM



“ *Kathryn B. purchased the Gift of Grace Bouquet* for the family of John Lawrence Gray Jr.



Kathryn B. - October 05, 2015 at 12:08 PM



“ *Secret Garden Basket* was purchased for the family of John Lawrence Gray Jr.



October 05, 2015 at 10:44 AM



“ *Tonya Y. purchased the Strength & Solace Spray* for the family of John Lawrence Gray Jr.



Tonya Y. - October 05, 2015 at 09:58 AM