

John D. Westbrook Jr., Ph.D., age 64, of Clinton Twp., NJ passed away on Monday, October 18, 2021 at home.

He was born on May 15, 1957 in Newport News, VA. He spent his childhood in Virginia, and later resided in western New York State, New Jersey, and in Clinton Twp., NJ for the past 16 years.

He was the son of the late John D. Westbrook Sr. and Elinor (Turner) Westbrook.

John was the devoted husband of Bonnie J. Wagner-Westbrook, Ed.D., celebrating 39 years of marriage in August.

John was a Research Professor at Rutgers University, where he designed innovative databases, ontologies, and other technologies for management of complex biological data utilized by millions of users worldwide. He received the Biocuration Career Award from the International Society for Biocuration in recognition of his work. He published more than 120 influential scientific publications; was a mentor to many students, postdoctoral fellows, and junior colleagues; served on countless committees; and was a beloved and highly esteemed thought leader within the Protein Data Bank and other scientific resources.

Those who knew John used these words to describe him: loving, kind, brilliant, gentle, generous, patient, practical, caring, a wise counselor, strong, steadfast without rigidity, insightful, calm, unperturbable, a scientific gentleman, open, sympathetic, thoughtful, collaborative, good-humored, a team player.

John was a person of deep intellect and passion: He could refine complicated ideologies, mysteries and issues into real-world concepts and strategies to be put into motion to benefit the greater good. He respected others and was always invested in supporting colleagues and organizational efforts for the future.

John also honored, nurtured and supported his greater family without falter or reserve. He was a dutiful neighbor who always helped when needed.

In his youth, John enjoyed sailing, photography, golfing and, in later years, classical jazz music and home projects. He also loved felines and helped care for many currently in his home and in the community over the years.

John will always be remembered for being humble, selfless, and positive. He was a wonderful life partner to Bonnie. He supported her career and, in retirement, efforts with many community projects.

Survivors in addition to his wife include many cousins including Chandler Turner (of Portsmouth, VA), Ann (Turner) Heyes (of Tasmania, Australia) and Louise (Turner) Brown (of Oakland CA). John is also survived by his devoted Mother-in-Law, Joan N. Wagner of Clinton Twp., NJ. Joannie regarded John as a son, not as a Son-in-Law.

In addition to his parents, John is also predeceased by many beloved Aunts and Uncles and his Father-in-Law, Elmer E. Wagner.

Visitation will take place on Saturday, November 6, 2021 from 2-4 pm with Memorial Service at 4pm. at Scarponi-Bright Funeral Home, 26 Main Street, Lebanon, NJ. Interment will be private.

Memorials can be made to an organization of choice in his honor.