



John Cox

May 9, 1947 - February 15, 2019

John L. Cox, 71, of Marion passed away at 7:45 PM on Friday, February 15, 2019 at his home surrounded by his family.

He was born May 9, 1947 in Herrin to John L. and Lou Dean (Waugh) Cox.

John attended Herrin schools. Upon his graduation he enlisted in the U.S. Marine Corps. He served his country honorably, serving two tours in Vietnam. His bravery earned him a Purple Heart.

He was a member of the UMWA and worked at Inland Steel No. 1 Mine where he served as both vice-president and president of Local 1545. He left the mine in 1974 to work as an organizer and later held the position of Director of Organizing for the UMWA in Washington, D.C., as well as Director of Region III in Illinois. In 1995 he went to work as a campaign coordinator for the AFL-CIO. He remained in that position until his illness in 2005.

John is survived by his wife of 39 years, Diane; his father, John; four children, Erin (Jeff), David, John and Pam; brother, Phil (Sanita); sister, Kim (Bart); five grandchildren and two great-grandchildren; several nieces, nephews and cousins; long time caregiver, Darlene Cooper; and many close friends.

He was preceded in death by his mother.

Per John's request, he will be cremated. The family will host a celebration of life at a later date. Private inurnment will be in Egyptian Memorial Gardens Mausoleum also at a later date.

Memorials in John's name may be made to the UMWA Relief Fund, c/o Robert Scaramozzino, 18354 Quantico Gateway Drive, Ste. 200, Triangle, VA 22172, or to the Vietnam Veterans, 2nd Bn 1st Marines, c/o Mario Sagastume, Treasurer, 778 Silverado Estates Court, Chico, CA 95973-5317.

Crain Funeral Home Egyptian Chapel in Energy is in charge of arrangements.

Tribute Wall



“ *John Cox*

October 23, 2023 at 06:26 AM



“ *John Cox was defined what it means to be a great Union Man. He was looked up to by so many people. He was an inspiration. May he Rest In Peace. Bil Musgrave*

Bil Musgrave - February 22, 2019 at 01:00 PM



“ *A big man in all respects and someone who gave "union man" real meaning. Our lives at the UMWA didn't overlap for all that many years but they were unforgettable. As was John, bless him.*

Tom Bethell - February 20, 2019 at 10:22 PM



“ *I first met John in the spring of 1975 we became instant friends. As a coworker we shared a lot of struggles throughout the years he was a hero of the American labor movement. My prayers for my good friend and brother is that he Rest In Peace. Fredl Wright*

Fredie Wright - February 20, 2019 at 09:15 PM

SE

“ Bonita and I wish to extend our heartfelt condolences to Diane, John’s children and family. I met John over 40 years ago during the UMWA Sterns strike in Eastern Kentucky. John dedicated his life to standing up and fighting for working families. John loved his family, his country and his UMWA family. I will always cherish the good times we had together. RIP my dear friend.
Steve Earle, UMWA District 12 VP

Steve Earle - February 19, 2019 at 08:43 PM

DH

“ My deepest sympathy goes out to Diane and the rest of the family. They all have been through a lot. I remember the first time I met John. It was at Inland Steel #1. I took a load of rock dust into a section where was roof bolting. John shut the roof bolter off and helped me unload the rock dust. I thought to myself, there stands a mountain of a man, and he was. We became very good friends. I stood beside John on many picket lines because he always had your back. During the '93 selective strike I worked for John when he was region 3 director. Believe you me, he loved the UMWA and his coal miners. The UMWA has lost one of the great ones, and I have lost a great friend. I will think of him often. Rest in peace, John. You have earned it... Dick Hines.

Dick Hines - February 19, 2019 at 12:36 PM

JH

I think of John often he was a mountain of a man in every way. Always willing to help working families. I worked with John on a few campaigns the I really remember was Free the Charleston 5 man I learned a lot from that man. Rest in peace my brother.

Jimmy C Hyde - April 25, 2025 at 03:59 PM

CG

“ *Our thoughts and prayers are with you.*



Carol and Randy George - February 19, 2019 at 09:09 AM

GW

“ *RIP Marine - you did your duty well. I did not know John personally, although he looks familikar to me. We served together at the same time in Vietnam. I was in Golf Co. and he was in H&S but we probably passed in the mess hall or somewhere in the battalion area. maybe in the outdoor movie area (flik as we called it) or even in the enlisted mans club and shared a beer or two. Either way we we're brothers in arms and I mourn his passing. He apparenetly was an aplied man and a husband and father to be proud of. I was in Marion a few years ago visiting my son, who worked in the Federal Prison there and would have loved to meet John.*

Semper Fi John -

Gary Williams - Golf Co., 2/1 August '66 - June '67.

Gary Williams - February 19, 2019 at 09:04 AM

EC

“ *May he Rest in Peace Semper Fi H&S 2/1 1969*

Edward Campbell - February 19, 2019 at 08:00 AM

VB

“ John was one of 2 Marines and Corpsman who came to my aid the day I was wounded. He was a great Marine and I'm honored to have had him as a friend for the past 14 years. All who knew John will never forget him. Semper Fi John and we will meet again for our reunion when our time comes... Vinnie Burdziuk H&S Company. RVN 1966.

Vin Burdziuk - February 18, 2019 at 11:47 PM

RS

“ Sincere condolences to the family. John was such an inspiration to so many as led members of our union through some of their most difficult times. He could be tough, he could be gentle, he could win you over with smiles and win you over with things other than smiles. At the end of the day . . . John Cox was an American Hero. At home, at work, serving his country and being the type of American we all strive to be. RIP my friend.

*Russ Stilwell
Boonville, IN*

Russ Stilwell - February 18, 2019 at 07:34 PM

KS

“ Jimmy and I wish to extend our most sincere condolences to Diane and the entire Cox family. John was a wonderful co-worker. He was a supreme gentleman, a loyal friend and his work was so excellent. He was highly respected - not just with the UMWA, but throughout the entire labor movement. It was an honor to work with John and the bonus was, the deal came with Diane. :-) Diane, you are one amazing woman and we are in awe of you. Much love,
Kathy and Jimmy Smith

Kathleen Marie Smith - February 18, 2019 at 07:03 PM

BB

“ John was my friend, co-worker, and mentor. We worked hard together and enjoyed many good times together. John was a “union man” that I was proud to stand with many times. John loved his wife and children and family. We all will miss him.

Brad Burton - February 18, 2019 at 06:42 PM

DM

“ John was a man who loved life, his wife and family, carried very much for his fellow human beings hence his work as an UMWA and AFLCIO organizer. He respected others no matter their economic station and had a great joyful outlook on life. He knew how to laugh even at himself and make others laugh as well. He was my dear friend and I will miss him. Davitt McAteer

Davitt McAteer - February 18, 2019 at 06:03 PM

JH

“ Lots of memories about my friend John. Running strikes, fighting for the everyday man.
Working presidential campaigns in Florida in 2004. Talking about our time in Vietnam.
Fishing, turkey hunting(we killed doubles 3 times) and coming to Lake Malone in KY.
Years and years of him going to the SEC basketball tournament with a bunch of friends. He was always my roommate at those tournaments. I shall sorely miss my friend.
RIP my Brother.

Joseph Holland - February 18, 2019 at 05:45 PM

TK

“ So very many wonderful memories, so many good times, some struggles, but I enjoyed nearly a lifetime of friendship that I will cherish for the rest of my life. Good by old Friend. Tony Kujawa, UMWA International Executive Board Member District 12 (retired)

tony kujawa - February 18, 2019 at 04:44 PM

PD

I remember John being at my brother-n-law's house at Lake Malone....he was cleaning fish for frying to feed a gang of fellow UMWA people....RIP

Patsy Dukes - February 18, 2019 at 05:39 PM

JM

John was one of my heroes. He was a legend from Brookside to Pittston. As a young staffer in Washington DC I quickly heard of the UMWA soldier who lived on the picket line and saw his grit during the Pittston strike. That is the John I will always remember. Loved him. Joe Main

Joe Main - February 18, 2019 at 06:52 PM

DS

John was a man who took me under his wing when I was a young pup he has a wonderful family and he will always be in my memories Dan spinner local 2162

Dan spinnie - February 18, 2019 at 11:09 PM

DS

RIP Brother John. A true union man that fought many battles at home and on foreign land in Vietnam. I'll never forget my time spent with John and Goat during the 1993,strike. Love you Brother

donnie samms - February 19, 2019 at 05:22 AM

CS

R.I.P.Brother Hotel co.2/1 1969

clarence snow - February 19, 2019 at 10:03 AM

FW

I will never forget John he was a Great Union man. He loved his wife and family. He was a Great Leader he will be missed, RIP untill we meet again.

Fred Wagner - February 21, 2019 at 03:55 PM

JY

Diane:

My memories of John and the "shock troops" of the UMW from Illinois in the mid 1970's are vivid and everlasting. They were there at Brookside and Rosebud and never flinched despite the dangers and threats. I remain in awe of John and his cadre.

Chip Yablonski

Joseph A (Chip) Yablonski - February 24, 2019 at 08:57 PM