



John Cushing Laundon

May 15, 1941 - February 18, 2024

John Cushing Laundon "Joe Row", 82 of Newnan, GA, formally of Essex, CT passed away suddenly Sunday, February 18, 2024, at Newnan Piedmont Hospital. He was born May 15, 1941 in Cleveland, OH to the late Mortimer Hamlin Laundon Jr. and Jean Kinney Laundon (also both from Ohio).

When only a toddler, Dad's family moved East to New York (Chappaqua) and Connecticut (Killingworth and Sachem Head). And it was in these latter rural towns that Dad's active life took shape: skating, biking, skiing, tennis, golf, sailing, plus raising rabbits, goats, a Labrador and even a rumored Labra-goat! Soon enough, Dad was off to boarding school (Proctor Academy in NH), where once again his athletic talents landed him captain roles on the school's baseball and football teams. Next came the draft, where he served three years in the army, primarily Heidelberg, Germany. Numerous attempts were made for Dad to explain what he actually did in the army, but instead all we ever heard were tales of skiing in the Alps with his brother Averill, fastpitch softball games and a lot of sketchy shenanigans at local beer halls. Then, with his military commitment fulfilled, Dad transitioned to college and proudly graduated with a BS Degree from Columbia University, NY in 1967.

After college, Dad finally married his long-time sweetheart, Louise Townsend Beebe "Dossy". The two settled down in her hometown of Loudonville, NY, and began building a family along with innumerable lifelong friendships, friends who we still refer to as "uncles" and "aunts". Then around 1973, the family returned to Dad's turf along the south shore of Connecticut. It was here that Dad threw in all his marbles on an entrepreneurial adventure—a dilapidated clam canning outfit in Noank, CT. Despite being useless in the kitchen, he nevertheless persevered and through sheer grit and stubborn determination, Abbotts of New England was born. Within a couple years, little Abbotts blossomed into a formidable gourmet soup business, locking horns in supermarket aisles with soup industry behemoths. Abbotts' soups were in markets across the continent. The big boys took notice, made some course corrections to smother the intruder and a frenetic roller coaster ride ensued. Dad hung in there, took some beatings - never complained - soldiered on for

decades to earn an everlasting fortune of pride and respect from his family.

It was during these intense years in the mid-80's that Dad, eager for an outlet, found his special purpose - an endurance sport that punishes every muscle, while insisting on finesse and the precise timing of a steam engine -- Rowing. BOOM! Another frenetic pursuit erupted and within two years this 40-year-old dad was dominating college kids. Based out of the Pettipaug Yacht Club, Dad became a heavy hitter in the rowing circuit taking on former Olympians and sometimes beating them, piling up medals. "Joe Row" was a five-time winner of Head of the Charles, medaled in twenty-five. He was a multiple winner of Head of the Schuylkill, Green Mountain Head, Head of the Housatonic, in single, double, and quad. Dad was a twenty-time Masters National Champion in single, double, and quad and a five-time winner of Worlds Masters Championships in a single. Most importantly to Dad, the comradery and friendships abounded. While a single scull was his most common event, he often found more enjoyment rowing in a double with his brother Averill, who teamed up with Dad in master events across the globe.

This trajectory continued for decades, but eventually Dad gracefully shifted his focus to helping others join and excel in the sport - especially kids. And once again, Dad was skyrocketing, coaching at local Connecticut high schools (Old Lyme HS, Glastonbury HS, and Valley Regional HS). The Old Lyme group eventually sent kids to elite rowing colleges and even the to the Olympics. These accomplishments later attracted a generous benefactor, who helped lift The Valley Regional program to a top-tier organization as well.

Recently, Mom and Dad moved to Newnan, Georgia, where Dad joined the Peach Tree Rowing Club and in three short years served as a coach, advisor, board member and mentor.

In lieu of flowers, please send donations to the George Pocock Rowing Foundation - a charity focused on building an inclusive rowing community that is accessible for all young people. Donation link: [Donate - George Pocock Rowing Foundation \(www.pocockfoundation.org\)](http://www.pocockfoundation.org)

Mom and dad's friend network is their most magnificent accomplishment. There are hundreds - all equally vital and all deep in our hearts. We are eternally grateful and fortunate. That said, immediate survivors include: wife, Louise Beebe Laundon; son, John Cushing (Karen) Laundon Jr of Pictou, Nova Scotia; son, Thomas Wickersham (Gretchen) Laundon of Atlanta, GA; brother, Averill (Joan) Laundon of Waterbury, VT; brother, Samuel (Mari) Laundon of Lake Chapala, Mexico; sister, Jan Laundon of Winchester, VA; grandchildren, Waylon Jack and Piper Jean Laundon of Pictou, Nova Scotia, and Whitney

Beebe and Ellie Paige Laundon of Atlanta, GA.

Condolences can be expressed online at www.mckoon.com

RIP, Dad. We love you and hopefully you're at a new starting line, ready to kick butt in another adventure! "Are you ready? Ready All. ROW!"

(All our Love -- Johnny, Tom, and The Doss.)

Cemetery Details

McKoon Funeral Home & Crematory

38 Jackson Street
Newnan, GA 30263
care@mckoon.com
<http://www.mckoon.com>

Tribute Wall

AW

“ So sad to hear this news - so very fond of John - back in the day - in Essex with our boys- Love to Dossy and Johnny - Annie Wilcox



Annie Wilcox - March 02, 2024 at 02:31 PM

GH

“ The Hack family is shocked and deeply saddened at John's sudden passing. While we met Dossy first through her musical leadership of our daughters at Essex Preschool, we met John soon thereafter and learned of his commitment to rowing excellence. I thoroughly enjoyed working with John while he coached the Lyme-Old Lyme HS and Blood Street Sculls juniors, including all three of our children. Many of the juniors of that era revered John and responded well to his leadership on the water, including all of his unique and endearing habits. They knew, as I did, that John loved them all and wanted to do all that he could to foster their success. John was instrumental in developing the skills and tenacity for our son Austin as he began his Olympic journey. I had the pleasure of racing with John a few times as I got into masters racing, and quickly learned from him what it meant to be a competitive racer....in other words it meant that I really needed to step it up! John's passion for rowing was infectious, and he spread that passion and joy to many of us in the Blood Street rowing community. His legacy will live on here for years to come.

With heartfelt condolences to the entire Laundon Family,
Greg Hack, along with Barbara, Austin, Amalia, and Olivia

Gregory Hack - February 25, 2024 at 01:08 PM

L"

“ Love, all your OLCC tennis "girls" planted a [Memorial Tree](/store/Product.aspx?ProductId=4518) in honor of John Cushing Laundon.

Love, all your OLCC tennis "girls" - February 24, 2024 at 04:22 PM



“ Peaceful White Lilies Basket was purchased for the family of John Cushing Laundon.



February 24, 2024 at 04:22 PM

BG

“ John stepped up with Tracy and met me for lunch to discuss the Valley program. His delightfully convincing personality and genuine devotion to our sport, overtook me immediately.

By the end of that lunch, I'd committed to buying Boats, oars, supplies and a shell trailer.

John took my committment and ran with it.

His love of our sport disarmed me immediately.

That lunch began a years long partnership that continued his mission to bring the values of rowing to an entirely new generation.

Even after he left, I sought his council often to fill the void he left, but that was futile.

John was one in a million, and replacing his skill, his knowledge, and his wisdom was an exercise in futility.

What's left for me now is to honor his legacy and make certain the Valley program flourishes.

Dossy, I can't imagine your loss. I can only offer as example, the respect and love I felt for him in the 3 short years I knew him.

Please know, John will live for generations as the stone he tossed into the pond of young lives, will ripple to others, as his qualities are passed along by those he touched.

With Great Respect,

Bart Gullong

Bart Gullong - February 24, 2024 at 01:13 PM

JL

Thankyou so much for sharing this! I'm John's Sister, Jan. I love hearing about John's escapades!

jan Laundon - February 24, 2024 at 02:44 PM



“ John was like a second grandfather to me. I actually got one of my beloved dogs, Otis, from his son and Otis was a key part of my childhood. Dossy worked with my Mom at the preschools and I still remember her singing. I grew up with my mom as a former rower and my grandpa as a rower as well. Years later, John was my coach as Old Lyme. He pushed me to be a D1 rower for UConn. I still heard his voice about technique during college practices. After graduating, I had the privilege to coach with him at Valley and see the amazing program that he built. This man stopped for nothing. I have countless memories of him both on water and land. He has given me countless memories and advice that I will cherish forever. It was truly a privilege knowing him.



Emily Powers - February 23, 2024 at 11:03 PM

JL

Thankyou for your thoughts for my brother John! We will all miss him!

jan Laundon - February 24, 2024 at 02:48 PM

JN

“ My friend John, I still can't believe you're gone. The world seems a bit emptier without your infectious laughter and your incredible kindness. I feel so blessed to have had the pleasure to get to know you, and I am forever grateful for the precious time we spent together. My sincere condolences to you Dossy and your family.

John and Crystal Norigenna

John Norigenna - February 23, 2024 at 06:56 PM

JL

Thankyou so much!

jan Laundon - February 24, 2024 at 03:04 PM

TL

“Coach” John Laundon will be considered one of my best friends of all time.

John and I, along with the gracious help of Bart Gullong put together everything that was needed for a successful Rowing team for VRHS. From cox boxes to boats the team was better equipped than some college teams.

I will always cherish all the time we spent together, the discussions, the arguments, the planning. He used to laugh at me swearing and I used to laugh at him being a crusty old man, but he was our crusty old man.

The impact that he has had on so many children is immeasurable. My child included. When she was a Freshman he told me if she carries on rowing as she is she will go D1. And she did. He was the start of her amazing rowing career from Lettering as a HS freshman to watching her break a Division I A10 Conference Course record on ESPN. He was so proud of her. ❤️

From practices to taking the team to Saratoga we did it all together. I told him you make them fast, the booster club will take care of everything else.

I know he loved our family because he told us. A few months ago I called him on the way home from work in NY and him Dossy and I laughed and joked and reminisced for over an hour. I'm so glad I made that last call.

He will be very very missed. I'm so glad I took this picture of Tess and John.

John I'll see you again at the great regatta in the sky and just to annoy you I'll be bringing mac n cheese (one of our jokes).

Dossy, Ken Tess and I are sending you all the hugs we can xoxoxo



Tracy LeMay - February 23, 2024 at 06:52 PM

SF

“ I only started to get to know John in recent years, but wow...what an inspiration! He embraced life so enthusiastically. I shared a few fabulous adventures with him rowing on the Connecticut River and in in winter, cross-country skiing along its banks. He would just go, go, go. Nothing stopped him. I consider myself very lucky to have shared some moments with him. My condolences to the whole family. Susan Farewell

Susan Farewell - February 23, 2024 at 06:06 PM

SP

“ I coached freshman boys crew at Glastonbury High School with John Laundon for several seasons. I miss his instruction, his expertise, the easy way he had with the student athletes and his sense of humor. He was a true colleague and in many ways a mentor. Whenever I had a technical issue, I would consult with John and we discussed solutions. We had many laughs together and I will surely miss him. He is a legend in the rowing community.

*By sincere condolences to his wife and family. Sean Michael Peoples,
Glastonbury H.S. Crew*

Sean Peoples - February 23, 2024 at 05:39 PM

BM

“ So very sorry for your loss John, Karen and all the family

Beth MacDonald-Barnes - February 23, 2024 at 05:32 PM

SH

“ Be at at eternal peace John. See you on the courts!

Steve H - February 23, 2024 at 02:57 PM

GS

“ A great guy, and a great neighbor. It won't be the same around SummerGrove without seeing John on his bicycle, hustling up the hill, on SummerGrove Parkway. Always had a throw up hand to wave, and always had a smile and spoke. I admired his endurance and working in his yard, rowing, lifting weights and playing pickle ball with the rest of us who were bad at it. We miss your neighbor.

Gillespie Susan - February 23, 2024 at 02:40 PM

DJ

“ For over 20 years John was a fixture at dawn during the 'rowing season' at Pettipaug. For many of those years, he stretched the season beyond sensible fringe times, wanting to get out on the water as long as possible.. He lead by example and pushed limits endlessly. The Laundon Loop was named in is honor (much to his dismay) to bring together the rowing community in a beautiful loop through our beloved Seldon Creek. Always fun and never with a tangle in the narrows. Off season, we would X-country ski with John tirelessly leading the way. The pride he took in coaching his 'girls' was beyond compare and the feeling was mutual. He lived life to the fullest and and left those he played with happier and better for knowing him. His smile and spirit will remain with us. Doreen Joslow
PYC Essex

Doreen Joslow - February 23, 2024 at 02:00 PM

FL

“ I met John at the Newnan pickleball complex (the House of Pickleball) this past year. John was a very good player and we all enjoyed his intensity for the game and for his kindness and humor. We will miss John on the courts.

Fred Lovins - February 23, 2024 at 10:40 AM

JR

“ Dear family - it was my privilege for many years to Start announce and Send-Off John from the HOOCR Start Line on his annual quest to conquer the Charles. I've a soft-spot in my heart for these many favorite competitors - it's been my honor see them race for many October autumns. Whether John was racing for Motley, Pettipaug, Essex or other, it's a reassurance and reminder for me of how to celebrate. God Speed John. J.F.Romain

John F Romain - February 23, 2024 at 10:22 AM

WA

“ John and Dossy joined our Pickleball group when they moved to Newnan Georgia. We all had so much fun playing PB with them and watching them get better by the week. John was an amazing player, considering his age, eyesight, knees, etc. ha. I can only imagine how his Pickleball game would've been at half his age. We had many great competitive games together and I will so miss him. Wally Allington

Wally Allington - February 23, 2024 at 09:11 AM

JF

“ Doss , John and Tommy ,
We will miss your Dad , all the visits to Nova Scotia .We were happy to have him and Doss be a part of of N S family .We'll cherish those happy , fun times
Last summer we all went for a lobster boat tour , sun and salt water , laughter and the love of being together .
We'll cherish those times .God Bless .
Jean and Norm

Jean and Norm Ferguson - February 22, 2024 at 07:10 PM

NF

“ I am so sorry for your loss. It was a pleasure to get to meet John over the years. My sincerest condolences.

Norm Ferguson - February 22, 2024 at 06:33 PM

VM

“ Sending our deepest condolences to all the family❤️

Vanessa Macleod - February 22, 2024 at 04:58 PM

SK

“ Such great memories of spending time at the Laundon house in Essex watching sports and trading jokes and funny stories with a man whose wit and humor was second to none.

-Sam Keator

Samuel Keator - February 22, 2024 at 04:41 PM