



## Johnny George Merrill

July 31, 1941 - October 16, 2023

Mr. John George Merrill, 82, of Newnan passed away peacefully in the early morning hours on Monday, October 16, 2023, after several years of declining health. He was born to the late James F. Merrill and Anna Porter Merrill, on a dairy farm near Galesburg, KS, on July 31, 1941. In addition to his parents, he was preceded in death by two brothers and a sister.

John graduated from Galesburg High School in 1958. He married Martha Bolander Merrill in Parsons, KS, on August 31, 1962. He went on to earn a B.S. degree from Kansas State College in Pittsburg, K in 1965. He worked as an accountant for several years, as well as in real estate and land development. He served in the Missouri National Guard for 6 years and was honorably discharged in 1971. In 1982, he pursued his life-long love for nature, hands-on work, and personal fulfillment with a second bachelor's degree in Forest Management at Auburn University, in Auburn, AL. After graduating in 1985, he was employed by the Georgia Forestry Commission in Athens. The family moved to Newnan in 1991, when he was promoted to District Forester. He was a member of the Society of American Foresters, and a longtime member of the Lovejoy Memorial United Methodist Church in Newnan, where he served on the Board of Trustees and sang in the choir. After 30 years with the Forestry Commission, he retired in 2013.

John was an intelligent, immensely capable man both in his professional and

personal life, always at work on a project-or three, from pouring concrete, hanging drywall, installing plumbing and/or electricity for a new addition to his home, planting (more) trees and shrubs in the yard, or building (more) shops for his equipment and tools, crafting benches and birdhouses. Embodying the idea of "the Handyman," he assisted less capable community members by building handicap ramps and working on Habitat for Humanity houses. He enjoyed gardening, woodburning, camping, hiking to waterfalls and whitewater rafting.

A Celebration of Life/ Memorial service will be held on Sunday, November 19, 2023 at 2:00 P.M. at Lovejoy Memorial United Methodist Church, 60 East Washington, Newnan, GA, with Pastor Sue Berg officiating. In lieu of flowers, the family requests memorial contributions to the Lovejoy MUM Church.

Condolences can be expressed online at [www.mckoon.com](http://www.mckoon.com) .

Survivors include a son, Wesley D. Merrill and wife Elaine of Commerce, GA; daughters Amy L. Merrill of Newnan and Christine D. Knuckey and husband Peter of New Zealand; grandchildren, Nathan T. Merrill of Commerce, Logan R. and TeHana M. Knuckey of New Zealand.

McKoon Funeral Home & Crematory 770-253-4580

# Cemetery Details

## McKoon Funeral Home & Crematory

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

# Previous Events

## Celebration of Life

NOV 19. 2:00 PM (ET)

Lovejoy Memorial United Methodist Church  
60 E. Washington St.  
Newnan, GA 30263-

# Tribute Wall

RC

“ I’m saddened to hear of John’s passing. It was a pleasure to have been previously his pastor. He often made me chuckle with some of his remarks! He was a fine Christian man. My condolences to Martha, Amy, and the rest of the family.



*He has finished his course and is now made whole in the presence of his Lord! He fought a good fight. The family is to be commended for the loving care they gave to him.*

*Grace and Peace to all.*

*Dr. Sid Chapman*

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**Rev. Dr. Sid Chapman** - November 17, 2023 at 07:32 PM

CO

“ My most heartfelt condolences to the Merrill family for such a loss. I have many memories of John but will try to keep it short. Although we both attended Auburn University Forestry School together, I think we actually first spoke to each other while walking across a parking lot to attend an awards ceremony at a conference center in Auburn. It was then that I also met his wife, Martha. After John and I graduated together, we were hired by the Georgia Forestry Commission together, he in Athens and I in Statesboro. Before taking our assigned posts, we had to spend a week or two in orientation, traveling to many GFC offices across Georgia. During our stays in various cities, along with about 5 other new foresters, we often got our exercise with morning runs around the hotel and what we called jungle volleyball when a net was available.

Two years after I had transferred to the Newnan District Office, John was hired as the new District Forester, as my boss. He lived in an RV in front of the Coweta County Unit while he looked for a new house here as Martha saw to the care of their children and prep for selling their house in Athens. Since I graduated with John, I was tapped to take an old GFC mobile office tractor trailer to Athens to help load the family belongings and bring them to their new home in Coweta County. It was while waiting for boxes to load into the trailer that I met John's children.

Over the next twenty years John and I worked together. I finally learned of 2-3 personal subjects on which to carry on conversations with John as he was fairly private. Although we had our good times and bad times, I could usually easily get him to talk about his family or one of his handyman projects. I will never forget a conversation we had once about how drivers here do not always completely stop at stop signs, as they did in Kansas. I called that a "rolling stop" and something he better get accustomed to here in the SE. I am not sure if he ever did.

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Clint Ozier - November 13, 2023 at 09:59 AM