



Johnny "John" Joseph Vanecek

January 15, 1942 - January 20, 2025

Johnny (John) Joseph Vanecek, passed away Monday, January 20, 2025, five days past his 83rd birthday after a long hospitalization in Conroe, Texas. John was the youngest of six children born January 15, 1942, to Mary E. (Drozd) and George J. Vanecek in Mathis, Texas. He leaves behind his only child, Melanie (Vanecek) Beaman and husband Richard, grandson Samuel Beaman, his sister Sybil Mokry, nieces, nephews, and friends both old and new. He was preceded in death by his beloved wife of 55 years, Melinda (Rhodes) Vanecek, whom he doted on abidingly and cared for her as her health deteriorated. John grew up on his family's cotton farm in Granger, Texas. He joined the Air Force soon after high school graduation, driving his trusty 1959 VW Bug all the way to Cape Cod, Massachusetts where he was trained in electronics and as a radar tech, worked in a cranberry bog to earn extra money during harvest season, spent time with his buddies at the beach during his time off, and ran competitive track. Four years later, he drove his VW back to Austin, Texas where he met Melinda. They were united in marriage in 1965. In 1966, he enrolled at the University of Texas and earned a bachelor's degree in Fine Arts in 1970, and a Master of Fine Arts in 1972. He shared a class with fellow student Farah Fawcett and took a photography class taught by Russell Lee. He was an accomplished artist and his colored pencil drawings were included in many local exhibitions including the Young Texas Artists Series in 1978. After college, John worked for Texas Parks & Wildlife in the arts department where he honed his woodworking skills and

created dioramas and other art installations for museums all around Texas. He and a colleague built the massive, wooden altar in the Mission Espirito Santo chapel at the Goliad State Park & Historical site. John went on to have a long career designing and building trade show exhibits for various companies in the Houston area. In 1998, he and Melinda moved to Huntsville, Texas, to be closer to her aging parents. He finished his career with the state at the TDCJ as a maintenance supervisor and retired at the age of 72. John was proud of his Czech heritage and made regular pilgrimages to his favorite kolach bakeries around central Texas. He was a hardworking man who would often say, "If you aren't going to take the time to do something right, then don't do it at all." He was an avid vegetable gardener and nature lover with many hobbies. He had planned to plant wildflower meadows all over his five-acre property to help feed pollinating birds and butterflies. He loved to read, with a fondness for sci-fi, biographies, and history. He was a mechanic and could build or fix just about anything. He knew so much about so many things and would readily lend a hand or advice to anyone. He loved beauty and had a generous heart, often leaving big tips at his regular eateries. He had recently purchased a 1959 VW Bug, just like his first car, that he was lovingly restoring. He was one of the good old guys – smart, funny, reliable, a man of his word, the best dad in the whole world. He was truly loved by many and will be deeply missed.

Tribute Wall

MV

“ 3 files added to the tribute wall



Michelle Vanecek - February 09, 2025 at 02:25 PM

RB

“ 3 files added to the album John Vanecek



Richard Beaman - February 07, 2025 at 09:44 PM

RB

“ I am saddened by the loss of my Father-in-law, a truly larger than life Texan.

He accepted me as his family and was always a true gentleman toward me and grandfather to Samuel. So I grieve my loss. What follows doesn't scratch the surface of the time I knew him, during my 24 years with Melanie.

John was a first rate artist in many media forms, I like his pencil self portrait in Art, Texas the best, although he was an accomplished photographer. Generous to a fault. Knew more about cars and fixing things than I could ever know. He insisted on Lone Star until we settled on Shiner bock or Pearl. All the holiday meals we shared, and I never developed a taste for egg custard pie like he did.

We would reminisce about Austin back in the mid 70's, and recite old Zappa song lyrics like poetry. He was an avid reader of all books he could find of interest, His knowledge of the world seemed encyclopedic during a predominant age of the internet / social media.

Both my nephews share pride in their Czech heritage like John/Melanie do.

I recall giving John/Melinda their first computer(windows) before long they progressed to internet/mac overnite.

Many memories of beer conversations and looking for hickory to grill hamburgers for cookouts.

John wasn't just family, He was a great friend and a true tall Texan.

Son in law, Richard Beaman

Richard Beaman - February 07, 2025 at 09:37 PM

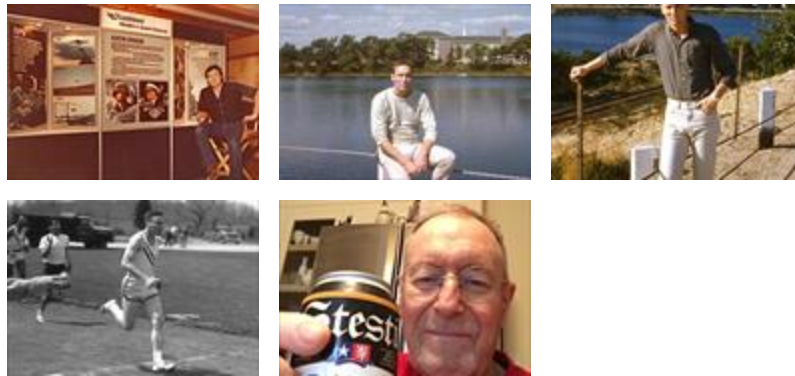
MV

“ I hadn't seen Uncle Johnny since my dad's funeral in 2017 but we had reconnected recently via Facebook and were texting each other old photos, memes and gripes about the state of the world regularly. I wish we could have seen each other before he left, but I'm sure he knew I loved him. I will miss him, he was a wonderful, talented and funny guy. Rest easy. ❤️

Michelle Vanecek - January 31, 2025 at 10:07 AM



“ 10 files added to the album John Vanecek



January 28, 2025 at 05:23 PM

SF

“ I was John's boss at the Wynne unit.... Everyone I walked into his office I would laugh. He had this chalk board with his daily "Words of Wisdom". They always health with something in our Maintenance Dept. For example: "Rust never sleeps", or if an inmate was acting up he'd write on the board "if you want to act like a turd, go lay in the yard". Never knew what he would say, but always made you laugh. I will miss him... probably the best carpenter I've ever met. The world will be less without him.

Stephen Fredricks - January 27, 2025 at 07:20 PM

RV

“ ...So saddened to hear of Uncle Johnny's passing. Hadn't seen or spoken to him for much longer than I would have liked to. At least he is now reunited with his loving wife Melinda. My prayers go out to his daughter and her family.

Richard Vanecek - January 27, 2025 at 08:56 AM

FM

“ From Sybil, Pam, and Vince Mokry purchased the Beautiful Heart Bouquet for the family of Johnny "John" Joseph Vanecek.



From Sybil, Pam, and Vince Mokry - January 25, 2025 at 06:21 PM

FM

“ From Sybil, Pam, and Vince Mokry planted a [Memorial Tree](/store/Product.aspx?ProductId=4518) in honor of Johnny "John" Joseph Vanecek.

From Sybil, Pam, and Vince Mokry - January 25, 2025 at 06:21 PM

DS

“ I never met Melanie's father but from reading this memory I absolutely see where Melanie gets her love of nature and a good old VW Volkswagen, they are so much alike. Good hearted, down to earth and just kind is what comes to mind for me. Take care Mel, sounds like your dad was a special man who dearly loved his wife and if course his daughter. May you only remember the sweet memories, rest in peace.

Donna Stehling - January 24, 2025 at 08:16 PM