

John "Jack" C. Penn

SPRING GREEN, WI - John "Jack" C. Penn, 81, of Spring Green, Wisconsin passed away January 19, 2021 in Naples, Florida of heart failure.

Jack was born December 18, 1939 in Des Moines, Iowa, the son of Hattie and Orlyn Penn. He was a 1957 graduate of North High School in Des Moines. Attending on an academic and sports scholarship, he graduated from Dartmouth College in 1962, earning Bachelor and Master degrees in Business and Economics. This education was very pivotal in his personal and professional development and he often reminisced about the importance and value of this part of his life.

He married Miriam Fjelland and they raised 3 children together. Miriam passed away in 2007. Jack married Nancy (Newell) Coogan, also a 1957 North High School graduate, on August 2, 2008.

During his long and distinguished professional career, Jack served for over five decades in various executive capacities at Arctic Cat, Plastech, Benson Optical, Centers for Diagnostic Imaging and Satellite Industries. Jack also faithfully served terms on over 30 Boards of Directors including Good Samaritan, Malt O' Meal and National AARP.

Jack enjoyed hunting, fishing, golfing, a glass of wine with great food and many many special friendships. He firmly believed in giving back his time and talents. Jack pursued all of his activities, duties and relationships with devotion, a sense of humor and an attentive willingness to listen. Always a gentleman, it will be difficult to picture Jack without his standard bow tie.

Jack was preceded in death by his parents, his sister JoAnn Hoover and his first wife Miriam. He is survived by his wife Nancy Penn, his children Timothy Penn (Erica) of Hilltown, PA, Anna Penn of Seattle, WA, David (Charlotte) Penn of Bloomington, MN, Nancy's children Elizabeth Weiland (Mike) of Crown Point, IN, Kimberly Coogan-Rogers (John) of Westmont, IL, Kathleen Walls (Ryan) of Palm Beach Gardens, FL, Nancy's 6 grandchildren and her 2 great grandchildren.

Jack will be long remembered as a man who embodied the principles of integrity, kindness and compassion. He will also be remembered as a leader with the ability to see the world with optimism. Above all, he will be remembered as a devoted husband, father and a good and trusted friend.

A Celebration of Life Memorial Service will be held at the Minnesota Horse and Hunt Club in Prior Lake, Minnesota at 3:00 PM on Saturday, May 15, 2021

An internment ceremony will take place at a future date at the Laurel Hill Cemetery in Des Moines, Iowa

Memorials may be made to: The Green Lake Festival of Music, PO Box 569, Green Lake, WI 54941.



Jack C. Penn

January 19, 2021



In “Paths We’ve Taken”, our 50th reunion book, Jack’s last sentence was, “As I now transition to the sunset of my career, I intend to help the welfare of seniors as much as I can as an elected Director on the national board for AARP.” So it was appropriate that our first recognition of his death should be an email forwarded from an official announcement from the national AARP office. Here is their announcement:

“We are saddened to report the sudden passing of John “Jack” Penn, alumnus of the AARP and ASI Boards (2010 to 2016), on January 19th. Jack will always be

remembered for his passionate commitment to the mission of AARP and ASI. Directors and staff will also remember what a fine gentleman he was and what a delightful couple he and Nancy were, as well as that signature green blazer.

Jack and Nancy visited with fellow Board alumnus and Wisconsinite Gretchen Dahlen and husband Greg Thelen earlier this fall. Gretchen sent us news of Jack’s passing and shared the lovely pictures below from that sunny fall afternoon.

Due to COVID, funeral and memorial arrangements have been curtailed. OCS will arrange for flowers and condolences to be sent to Nancy and the Penn family on behalf of the AARP and ASI Boards and Alumni.

Below is contact information for Nancy Penn.

Nancy Penn
214 Pier D
Naples, FL 34112

email: nancyp57@yahoo.com”

Jack and Nancy





Jack and Nancy near their Summer home in Spring Green, Wisconsin

Jack noted in Paths... that he and Nancy had known each other in Jr High and High School in Des Moines, reconnected at a 50th high school reunion after losing spouses, and married a year later. He said, "Dartmouth was a challenging and great experience for me. I will always be grateful for the education I received, the lifelong friends that I met, and the doors that the experience opened for me. My transition to a career of leading a variety of companies in several different industries was more fulfilling than I could have ever expected. I realized one day that I was transitioning companies through challenging times just as a harbor pilot guides a ship through uncertain waters....My purpose in life has been to help organizations and people be the most that they can be."

Jack was an economics major, graduated from Tuck in 1962 and was a member of Alpha Theta.