



## John W. Brandenburg

July 5, 2016

Mr. John W. Brandenburg of Union City passed away July 5, 2016. He was preceded in death by his brother, Bill Brandenburg and is survived by his brother, Richard T. Brandenburg (Mary Ann) of Reston, VA; sister, Carol Ann Barnes (James) of Chesterfield, MO and many other extended family members. A memorial service to honor John's life will be held on Saturday, July 30, 2016 at 2 o'clock at Southwest Christian Church. In lieu of flowers those desiring may make donations to Southwest Christian Church, 4330 Washington Rd., Atlanta, GA 30344 or to Southwest Christian Care, 7225 Lester Rd., Union City, GA 30291. The family will receive friends from 1:00 until service time at the church. Parrott Funeral Home and Crematory, 770-964-4800.

Who was John Walter Brandenburg?

John was born in Cleveland, Ohio on May 18, 1940. He was born with Cerebral Palsy which is the result of a lack of oxygen supplied to the brain during the birth process.

His parents relocated to the Atlanta area in 1944. The family's earliest memories of John are of him crawling along the floor taking his meals on an oil cloth. John got braces at eight and his first wheelchair when he was ten.

His braces were similar to what was being used by polio victims at that time but not suitable for spastic CP victims as they had locking mechanisms which were very painful. John started attending The Cerebral Palsy Center in 1950. The school was located on Ponce de Leon Avenue, the other side of town, and his mother, along with Red Cross volunteers, drove John and others back and forth to school each day.

The school offered physical therapy, crafts for dexterity, provided socialization and later – reading, writing and math skills. The school offered these services to children affected with CP at all levels. John was always ready and willing to help those around him who were having a hard time and quickly became known as the one who could best interpret the needs of others. He had the equivalent of a fourth grade education.

A scouting program began at the school in 1953 and the next year John was off to the Bert Adams Boy Scout Camp. These special kids, with the help of volunteers, were able to enjoy the same experiences that all the other scouts were having. John achieved the rank of Life Scout.

During the time that John was at the CP Center, he had the opportunity to meet some supportive celebrities. They included Fess Parker, (one of the most popular actors in the 50s with Davy Crockett) Ed Sullivan, Buddy Ebsen, Yvonne De Carlo and Eddie Arnold.

The Frazer Center (formerly the Cerebral Palsy Center) acknowledged an important part of the early funding for the school was accomplished by “Old Newsboy Day”. A special edition newspaper, compliments of the Atlanta newspapers and the Coca Cola Company, were sold by volunteers wearing special aprons and top hats. His mom and dad organized a part of the Southwest Atlanta drive and John participated in it for several years.

A friend whose brother also had CP told the family that their Mother teaching him to read was the biggest gift John could have ever been given. John was always included and expected to participate in whatever was going on...and he never felt sorry for himself. His positive attitude and joy of life was always contagious.

In 1953, John had a big year. He had a series of well intentioned operations designed to improve his condition. The physical therapy involved a set of parallel bars where he would stand and try and walk through with the braces locked at the knees. He also had a standing table which he was required to use an hour each day. It was such a painful process that his family not only saw John crying in pain, but also his father. On one occasion, the windows were open and the neighbors called the police thinking the worst. This was the same year that the car was broadsided by a tractor trailer truck on an icy road, after a Thanksgiving dinner, in Iowa. Fortunately, the family was in a heavy Buick and was later advised that had it been a lighter car, more than likely neither John nor his mom would have survived.

For years all that have known him have been amazed by John’s memory.

When asked when he started going to Southwest Christian Church he

wrote back. "Richard and Carol started going in 1957. That was the same year my dog Baron ran into a car. Carol was crying. Preacher Jim was driving by and stopped to help. That's when I met him, it was his birthday. One year and three months later, I went to the church on Dedication Day, it was August the seventeenth. Then, on September twenty eighth, Jim Dyer baptized the Brandenburg"

John could remember all family birthdates, anniversaries, and special occasions. This covers generations going back as far as the mid 1800's. He knows that his brother occasionally slipped up and very helpfully reminded him of his wife's birthday and anniversary. Without realizing it he made many friends by remembering their special dates and events.

He loved reading his Bible and studying his Sunday school lessons. In the early years of the church, there was an annual project to read the Bible cover to cover. John did this for ten consecutive years.

John had an amazing knowledge about weather and geography and could answer any question you may want to know about the subject. He also did the newspaper Jumble puzzle in his head.

John had a green thumb and nurtured some of his plants for over 25 years. His orchids would explode with blooms and seem to last longer than they should. He even knew which two days each year he was going to water his cactus.

John was well traveled. His condition did not stop his family from taking him on vacations or visiting relatives. One memorable three-week trip involved visiting the National parks of the west. Another allowed him to go through the St. Lawrence Seaway. He has been on exciting rides in Disneyworld and has gone to the Grand Old Opry in Nashville.

When his parents passed away in the early 90's, the family was unsure what future lay ahead for John. The more they talked with him the more they concluded that he had the internal strength to move forward on his own. This would have not been possible without the help of his good friend and caregiver, Ron Ross. Ron helped John start and end most of his days since 1987. John's next door neighbors, Willard and Ila Wilson, caringly looked in on him for 18 years as well. John was also very grateful to the volunteers of the hospice who came by daily during the week with a hot meal and a warm smile. His last three years at Southwest Christian Care, granted by special Board approval due to his goodwill contributions, have been filled with joy as he visited old friends and made new ones. His disarming manner brought the best out of everyone. Yes, it may have taken a village to care for John, but all benefited from the association.

To this day, one of John's most honored moments was when he received the Servant Leadership Award from the Southwest Christian Care. The family witnessed the ceremony and was amazed as he took the podium to accept with a strong, clear voice giving a brief acceptance speech before a crowd of nearly 700.

So, who was John Brandenburg? He was a good practicing Christian, a person with a positive, determined attitude who left a beautiful imprint behind. One who took what was given him in life and made the best out of it with a cheerful caring heart. One who encouraged and inspired others to be the best they could be. He was one of God's children.

# Tribute Wall

MC

“ The the family of John I like to send my condolences. When a loved one dies we all need comfort. Such painful feelig are only natural. We have a wonderful promise for the future found in the Bible at Revelation 21 : 4 "God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes, and there shall be no more death, neither sorrow, crying or pain: the former things shall pass away". Would you not agree that it is here on earth where we experience these things. What a wonderful hope! If you would welcome more comfort and practical answers please visit [www.jw.org](http://www.jw.org)

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**mrs coes** - July 16, 2016 at 12:00 AM

BT

“ Our lives are all enriched by the "saints" who dwell among us; but seldom do we have one as long as John has moved among us. I never saw him that he didn't call me by name before I could reach out and take his hand. Blessings to all who had a part in helping John on his earthly journey; and to all who, prayerfully, after our earthly journey be greeted by him, by name, as with our Lord, he stands to greet us. - Bob Tyler

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**Bob Tyler** - July 09, 2016 at 12:00 AM

GD

“ John was a ray of hope and truth and sunshine in all of our lives! He was an encourager, a strong believer, a true man of God, and kind of a male version of "Pollyanna"! He saw the best in everything and everyone around him, and, in spite of his physical challenges, he was an example of godliness to all who knew and loved him! Heaven has gained a true saint in our eyes, and our loss here is truly heaven's gain! I cannot fathom how enormous his welcoming crowd was when he arrived, but he was able to stand up and walk tall and hug them and speak to them all and praise the Lord he so loved! We love you, John!

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**Gordy and Meg Delo** - July 07, 2016 at 12:00 AM

DM

“ I am so sorry to hear of your loss. Recently I lost my dear mother, and found great comfort in the Holy Bible, like at Isaiah 25 verse 8 - "The Sovereign Lord will swallow up death forever, and wipe away the tears from all faces" For more comfort, I turn to the website at: [www/jw.org](http://www/jw.org) (Search: Comfort)

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**Dennis Mathewson** - July 06, 2016 at 12:00 AM