



John Swinburne

AUG 16, 1946 - APR 18, 2025



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John Swinburne, age 78, finished his lifelong race on Friday, April 18, 2025. Born on August 16, 1946, in Glasgow, Scotland, John was the son of Josef and Mary (Hosie) Swinburne. In 1956, the family immigrated to the United States, settling in Jersey City, New Jersey. John graduated from Dickinson High School in 1964 and went on to attend Central State University in Ohio on a full-ride track scholarship. While attending Community Baptist Church in Beavercreek, Ohio, he met the love of his life, Rosemary Huff. The two were married on November 11, 1967 and remained devoted to one another until Rosemary's passing in May 2024. In 1970, John moved to Muskegon, Michigan, where he began his lifelong career in education. For more than 30 years, he served Oakridge High School as a physical education teacher, driver education director, and athletic director-roles through which he made a lasting impact on students, athletes, and colleagues alike. After retiring from Oakridge, John continued to share his gifts by serving as athletic director at Western Michigan Christian High School. However, John's passion was coaching track and field. He coached at Oakridge, Mona Shores, Western Michigan Christian, and Fruitport High Schools, as well as Muskegon Community College. He mentored hundreds of athletes-including his own children and grandchildren-over a 54-year career that only ended when his health no longer allowed him to coach from the infield. Still, he continued offering advice and encouragement from the sidelines, right up until his final days. Throughout his career, John led his teams to countless track and field championships and guided many athletes to exceptional levels of success. The exact number of titles and honors may be recorded somewhere, but his family never kept count-because John never did. For him, the real victory was building relationships, shaping character, and enriching the lives of those he coached. Winning was simply a byproduct of doing what he loved.



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He loved good food, trips to Walt Disney World, and spending time with his family. Above all, John loved Jesus and was dedicated to sharing the gospel with everyone he could. John was a long-time member of Muskegon Berean Church, where he served as an elder, deacon, Sunday School teacher, as well as a frequent interim youth leader.

His faith remained strong even through decades of health challenges, which led him to new relationships and ministry opportunities-especially during his many visits to the Mayo Clinic in Rochester, Minnesota. For 23 years, his life consisted of medical treatments, surgeries, and hospital stays, always supported by Rosemary, his steadfast partner, whose strength and grace never wavered.

John and his family are deeply grateful to the many people and organizations who offered unwavering support, friendship, and encouragement throughout his health journey-especially in its later stages. They wish to extend heartfelt thanks to Mike and Ginny Henry, Kurt and Sue Mundt, and the dedicated teams at Mayo Clinic, DaVita Dialysis on Apple Avenue, Harbor Terrace Assisted Living Community and AdvisaCare Hospice. Their kindness and care made a lasting difference in John's life and in the lives of those who loved him.

John is preceded in death by his wife, Rosemary, and his parents, Josef and Mary. John is survived by his five children and their families: Heather, Jeff, Johnathan, Michael, and Natalie Hall; Shannon, Michael, Emily, and Nicole Faust; Carrie and Michael Lukasek; Scott, Alicia, Trey, Sloan, Tripp, and Baylee Swinburne; David Swinburne. He is also survived by his brothers and their families: Dennis, Christine, Justin, Andrew, and Katie Swinburne, James, Felociya, Thomas, Jakob, and Mary Hosie; as well as his sister-in-law and her family: Sharon and Jerry Draughn.

John's faith was deeply shaped by his summer camp experiences at Peniel Bible Conference in Lake Luzerne, New York. It was there, through the influence of a loving and faithful staff, that his faith truly became his own. He firmly believed that summer camp had the power to change lives-because it changed his. John's greatest desire was for young people to meet Jesus and come to know Him personally. In honor of that conviction, the family kindly requests that, in lieu of flowers, donations be made to the Grace Adventures summer camp scholarship fund



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(<https://graceadventures.org/donate-camper-scholarship/>). Please indicate when making a donation that it is a memorial gift in honor of John Swinburne.

Services will take place at Forest Park Covenant Church, 3815 Henry St., Norton Shores, MI 49441.

VISITATION will be held from 4-6 PM Friday, April 25, 2025.

A CELEBRATION OF LIFE with a luncheon to follow will be held at 10:30 am on Saturday, April 26, 2025.



Tribute Wall

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CR

Chris Roof posted:

Coach not only coached me so many years ago, he also coached my son. I have many great memories, but one conversation sticks out and taught me so much. My son was a 3 sport athlete with track being the 3 rd. As a mom who loved the sport of track and field I always wanted to push my children into it even if it wasn't their first choice. After a particular meet we had a conversation about my son not putting 100% into his events. I wanted to push him but Coach was much wiser than me and told me to let him just enjoy track in his way. He said that he knew that the other 2 sports were very demanding on him and that this sport was social and non stressful for him and I should let him enjoy his time with teammates and to take a step back and just let him do what he was doing. I appreciated so much that wonderful advice as it allowed me to understand that sports are about more than pressure and winning. I will always think of coach and smile up to heaven knowing what an impact he had on my family and so many others. His smile was always contagious. His dedication not only to his family but to so many families along the way shows what a wonderful human being god created. He will be missed so very much.

April 21 at 8:00 PM

DJ

Deanna Jablonski posted:

I had him for drivers training I loved it he made it fun to learn. I remember him not only having us drive to his house for his wife to make us lunch but we drove to one of his players houses to pick them up because they didn't have a ride to practice that was right after we got back to the school.

April 21 at 8:00 PM

KK

Keri Kass posted:

Swinny was my gym teacher and drivers training instructor. He would devote a whole semester in gym class to badminton and we all had to eat, sleep, and breathe badminton during that time lol! When he taught me in drivers training, he'd hop in the passenger seat, pop a Disney CD into the CD player, and recline his seat and relax (he'd be happy to know I've been an excellent driver with no tickets or accidents for 24 years). He even made sure we knew how to drive through a fast food drive through ;). He also had my two older sisters as students, so he always called me Little Weave. I remember when he sat us all down on the gym floor and was serious for the first time ever, and told us he had cancer. The next two years I had another gym teacher while he focused on his health and we missed him greatly. I'm very sorry to hear about his passing and my condolences go out to his family. Just know that he impacted my life and lots of others at Oakridge! He truly was a great teacher and person!

April 21 at 8:00 PM



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A Memorial Tree Was Planted For John Swinburne posted:

We are deeply sorry for your loss ~ Shoreline Memorial Services - Muskegon

April 21 at 8:00 PM



Memories only last if you share them

Join us in honoring John by contributing to a collection of shared memories.



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