



Bickley, John Aubrey: D.Sc (Honoris Causa), P.Eng., FICE, FCSCE, Husband, Father, Grandfather, Great-Grandfather, Uncle, Poet, Civil Engineer, in his 90th year. John will be remembered as an engineer of international renown, as a mentor, a world traveller, the beloved husband of two exceptional women and as a Dad who entertained his squealing children on winter Sundays by putting them in the back of a VW Beetle and doing donuts in a snowy mall parking lot.

John's life was eventful and shaped by history.

In 1940 at the age of 12, John and little sister Susan were among WWII's "Blitzkrieg Kids" – English children evacuated to keep them safe from enemy bombing. John's belief in Canada as the best country on earth was born in those four years in Windsor with foster parents Frederick and Charlotte Johnson who treated John and Sue as their own children. A quick study at ice skating, John spent hours on a rink he built beside the house. His other hobby was designing, building and flying model planes. During summers at the Johnson family cottage on a ruggedly beautiful island near Port Loring, he discovered his lifelong joys of outdoor adventure, double dip cones and blueberry pies a la mode. In 1944, he returned to England aboard the British aircraft carrier HMS Indomitable, trailed by German submarines.

At South East Essex Technical College in Dagenham, he majored in extracurriculars: founding a magazine, broadcasting on student radio, running dances, demonstrating student grievances by locking himself in the clock tower until demands were met – and missing fully 50% of his classes.

He went on to become an Engineering Cadet with the British Army, graduating from Royal Engineers Officer Training in 1949. Captain Bickley served in Kenya and Egypt. When he ascended Mt. Kilimanjaro in February 1952, England had a king. When he descended, she had a queen.

Living back in England in 1955, John heard about a young traveller staying with family friends nearby. Jean was a young woman from Canada – Windsor of all coincidences. At midnight on New Year's Eve they were engaged, they married seven months later and spent the next decade raising their first four children in England while John built his engineering career. Jean and John returned to Canada after 10 years, first settling in Don Mills next door to another recent British arrival, cartoonist Ben Wicks, then moved on to raise their family in Etobicoke.

John became a partner and manager of the consulting engineering company Trow Inc. in Toronto and was head of its Concrete Technology Services for 21 years.

John worked on projects in 16 countries and had lead roles in the building of some of the world's most iconic structures, from Scotland's Forth Road Bridge to Pakistan's Mangla Dam to Toronto's CN Tower. He was a sought-after expert witness in cases of structural collapse, a role of which he was proud because of his belief that he was helping make the world a safer place.

In 2016, the American Concrete Institute (ACI) awarded him Honorary Membership, the Institute's highest honour. In 2009, Ryerson University awarded him an honorary Doctorate of Science in recognition of extraordinary contribution to his field.

However, John would tell you the best job he ever had was as a volunteer serving the kids at the St. Paul's Basilica Breakfast Club.

Life is a path paved with surprises, both happy and sad. After the premature death of his beloved Jean, John was bereft. When more than 40 years of friendship with Marilyn turned to love, it began eight years of laughter and new adventures. He often said how proud and grateful he was to walk hand in hand with Marilyn down the last roads of his life.

In John's final days, his family travelled from near and far to be with him and he was surrounded by love to the end.

He will be missed. He will not be forgotten.

John is survived by his wife Marilyn, by his daughters Catherine (Jim Gardner) and Claire, his sons Michael (Rosann) and James and his son-in-law Shant Ohannessian. He was predeceased by Jean, his wife of 52 years, in 2008 and by his youngest child, daughter Shirley-Anne, in 1996. Grandpa to Quinton, Michael, Jonathan, Krista, Lindsey, Sarah, Elizabeth, Tara and Grant. Great Grandpa to Abigail, Emily, Austin, Liam and Olivia. Son of the late Reginald Bickley and Beatrice Bickley of Chandler's Ford, Hampshire, England. Only brother of Susan Grace (Nick) of Farnham, Surrey, England. Brother-in-law of Edward O'Neil (Donna), Maureen Gervais (Paul), James O'Neil (Gayle), Patrick O'Neil (Barbara). Pre deceased by his sister-in-law Shirley Gee (Sterling) and his brother-in-law Gary (Marilyn).

Loving step-dad to Jim O'Neil, Colleen (Bill Brisbin), Sharon (Gord Martin) and David O'Neil (Tanya). Step-grampa to Katie, Matthew, Cassidy, Kaleigh, Jeffery, Michael, Krista and Sydney. Fond uncle of many.

John's family will always be thankful for the skill and kindness of the exceptional staff of Windsor Regional Hospital's Cardiac Care Unit.

Cremation has taken place.

A Celebration of John's life will be held Saturday October 28, 2017 at noon at Mount Pleasant Funeral Centre, 375 Mount Pleasant Road, Toronto. Luncheon reception follows.

In lieu of flowers, donations are requested to St. Paul's Basilica Breakfast Club, 83 Power Street, Toronto, ON M5A 3A8.