



John A. Graml

July 1, 1940 - January 29, 2023

John Alois Graml passed away on Sunday, January 29 at the age of 82, after a gracefully fought battle with Lewy body dementia. Husband, father, brother, uncle, cousin, and genuine friend to too many to count, John's passing leaves a gaping hole in our hearts.

The first of five siblings born to Marion and Joseph Graml in Shreveport, Louisiana, John grew up in a simpler time, listening to stories shared by family and neighbors on the front porch and roaming free with the neighborhood kids until the dinner bell rang. He was active in the Boy Scouts, and honed his one-of-a-kind dance moves in the clubs across the Red River bridge in Bossier City. Childhood summers included road trips out west (often with three adults and six kids crammed into an unairconditioned sedan) and carefree days on the water, skiing and sailing with siblings, cousins and friends. During the school year John ran his own paper route, earning money that his father invested and that would later provide a financial foothold when he married his soulmate, Dina(h).

John's parents instilled in him the values he lived by – sacrifice, a strong work ethic, loyalty, respect, compassion, generosity, and above all, integrity. A man of purpose, John rarely stood idle. He built a respected family law practice and

trained up many a young lawyer over the decades. He rolled up his sleeves and thought outside the box, took professional foes to lunch, and bantered with friends at the courthouse. Those who worked with, or had cases against, John Graml, always say the same thing: He was a tenacious advocate for his clients, always ethical, professional, and courteous. He was part of the very first class to earn state board certification in family law, served on various Bar committees, was active in promoting the Red Mass, and so much more. He loved being a lawyer.

John Graml was gregarious, unpretentious, authentically human. He could, and would, strike up a conversation with anyone. He talked to people in elevators. He complimented the ties of young men who looked like they were on the way to an interview. He discussed human rights and financial planning with friends of his children, and talked politics with folks he met standing in line. No matter your station in life, you were worthy of his interest, time and respect, of engaging in important discourse. John challenged everyone to think critically, and was always willing to explore another point of view. He reminded us all that the food we were about to receive was brought to us on the backs of folks laboring long and hard, and for very little pay.

He was a compassionate conservative who never voted straight party, and he possessed a deep and varied curiosity. During the last couple of years before winding down his law practice, John took an 8-month social justice course at St. Michael's Catholic Church, his and Dina's spiritual home of 50 years. That endeavor seemed to set him up for the next phase of life. He was busier than ever in retirement, serving on committees at St. Michaels and on the Board of Directors at Amazing Place. And nearly every Wednesday for nine years John headed off to jail, providing spiritual support to men behind bars through the Correctional Ministries Office of the Archdiocese of Galveston-Houston, then

under the leadership of Father Ron Cloutier. John's passion for this work came as no surprise to our family, who knew him as both a Goldwater Republican and a man whose greatest disappointment in Reagan was the failure to competently and compassionately address the AIDS crisis.

For John, relationships were everything, and he made the effort to nurture his friendships, from Byrd High buddies and Briarcroft neighbors, to sailing pals in Kemah and fellow volunteers. Most who knew John knew of his love for the Beta Theta Pi fraternity and the lifelong friendships he forged while SMU. As an alumnus, John founded the Delta Upsilon chapter at the University of Houston in 1977, and over the years organized many fundraisers and reunions, collaborating with Betas of all ages and school affiliations. John was briefly on active duty in the Coast Guard before heading to law school, later serving in the reserves where he developed lasting relationships with fellow reservists.

John and Dina met in Austin, where he was attending law school and she was wrapping up her bachelor's degree (both at UT). Sparked by a mutual admiration for the music of Mario Lanza, John was captivated by Dina's beauty, charm, and strength of character. They were married for 56 years, the loves of each others's lives. John and Dina raised three grateful children who provided them with five grandchildren. Sailing in Galveston Bay and family trips to Austin, San Antonio, New Braunfels, Port Aransas, New Orleans, and Colorado are etched into our minds. So are the many weddings and parties where John would cut a rug with any number of family members, friends and colleagues brave enough to get out on the floor with him. He was, to some, the White James Brown. In quieter times, John and Dina would often head to Kemah to spend the weekend on the boat, away from responsibilities. Time on

the water seemed to transform John, freeing his mind and providing relaxation.

John dearly loved and enjoyed spending time with his extended family. He was the rock at its core. He and Dina helped shepherd many through difficult periods, in some cases over the course of decades. John was the person to call. If he couldn't help you, he'd find someone who could. He faithfully visited ailing friends, lent a hand to neighbors, and provided counsel to those in need. John lived the teachings of Christ.

About 20 years ago, John had the opportunity to sail with a small group from Key West back to Kemah. He took the early morning shift, sailing across the open water, no land in sight. As darkness gave way to dawn, a pod of bottlenose dolphins joined him, playfully leaping out of the water alongside the boat. He described this experience as incredibly spiritual. We imagine him now, sailing with the dolphins, having joined those loved ones who have gone before him, finally at peace, watching over us.

John was preceded in death by his parents, Marion and Joseph Graml, and his infant brother Robert. He is survived by his wife, Dina Hallmark Graml; daughters, Kelly Graml and Kathryn Graml; son, Greg Graml and wife Adrienne Anderson; grandchildren, Francie, Heidi, John Joseph, Caroline, and Henry; siblings, Charles Graml and wife Nancy, Betty Fulton, and Barbara Lytle and husband Mark; and nephews and nieces, Trevor Nichols, Anna Smith, Robin Lambourn, Shannon Fulton, and Ramsey Fulton.

A recitation of the Holy Rosary will begin at 4:00 p.m., on Sunday, February 5,

2023 at All Saints Catholic Church, 215 East 10th Street in Houston, Texas. A visitation will follow until 7:00 p.m. to give everyone an opportunity to share memories and say a few words about John.

A Funeral Mass will be celebrated at 1:00 p.m., on Monday, February 6, 2023 also at All Saints Catholic Church.

In lieu of flowers, contributions can be made to Amazing Place Houston (www.amazingplacehouston.org/donate/) or the Lewy Body Dementia Association (www.lbda.org/donate/)

Tribute Wall

“ Hello Dina, Greg, Adrienne, Kelly, Kathryn, and all his family and friends, I apologize it's taken me so long to write something. I wrote something to Kelly right away; however it often takes me a while to put something in public. I don't like losing people, and it took me three years to put something in the State Bar Journal for my dad because...it took me three years to process his loss. Like John, he was a lawyer and my mentor.

There are a lot of good serious things to write about John but I'm going to focus more on a few humorous things. 1. When he first hired me, he said "well you're a little bald, so people will think you're more mature so you're hired."

2. Dina used to beg me to get him to button his top button, or at least straighten his tie when he went to court. Good luck with that!

3. One night we were working late and I had gotten tired of is taking his dress shoes off, and walking around in his socks. So I hid his shoes on top of the refrigerator, where he would probably never look. Three hours later I went home and forgot to tell him. He didn't call me, but when I got to work on Monday there was a cut-out from a magazine taped to the outside of my office door. It was a dinosaur about to eat a person with the following: "this is you" circled in red, with an arrow pointing to the next "meal" of the dinosaur(me).

The late Pat Green, our beloved paralegal, started laughing and then it hit me - John had to go home in his socks because I had hidden his shoes. He hadn't found them yet, so I showed him the hiding place. Fortunately he had another pair of shoes to get him to work that day! We had a good laugh for sure, although he acted like he was mad most of the day.

I don't want to analyze the humor above, but all three of these stories illustrate John's personality well: 1) he was wise but had a great sense of humor 2) he didn't care about personal appearances but who the person was on the inside; and 3) he may have been my boss, but he knew how to establish and maintain a healthy personal relationship.

Never mind that he grew up in a strong conservative household, and I in a liberal one, none of that mattered and we were able to communicate on just about any issue, political or otherwise. We

*have lost a wonderful man. May God rest your soul, John Graml.
PS When I first learned how to spell John's name, Pat Green said,
"he needs to buy a vowel". It may have been family law and divorce,
but we sure had fun.
Michael H.*

Michael Hiller - May 20, 2023 at 03:42 PM

MA

“ *We just heard of Mr Graml’s passing and would like to give our
deepest sympathy to all of his family...Many fond memories of a
wonderful man for the many years of our business and friendship
relationship..May he rest in peace*

*Sincerely
Marion & Mary Aquilina*

Marion & Mary Aquilina - March 16, 2023 at 12:05 AM

AM

“ *My mom and I were greatly saddened to belatedly learn of John's
passing. He honored my father and many other Briarcroft neighbors
by attending their services and we wish we had been there to honor
him. John was a brilliant, caring and kind individual. He was
constantly reaching out to help others and was always there when
anything was needed. I will always cherish my memories of our
walks around the block discussing religions and the law and I am
forever grateful for the support he provided my mother after my dad
died. Our thoughts are with his wonderful family in this sad time. -
Andrea N. Moore, Briarcroft*

Andrea Moore - February 13, 2023 at 09:07 AM

WG

“ All I remember about John's dance routine was that all of his extremities were going in different directions all at once. John was high energy for sure...an energetic, authentic person up for whatever challenge or circumstances in life. My fondest memories were the good times we shared at SMU with John as my 'Big Brother' in Beta...he always was a Saint, but more so, when he had the 'Dina Influence'. We have been gradually missing the old John for a few years, but the wonderful I will memories will linger on forever. I will always be appreciative of his friendship and support during my early days at SMU. John's life spirit was a blessing to all, and no doubt, his spirit will continue to flourish in God's everlasting arms. God Speed!

William Guynn - February 04, 2023 at 05:04 PM

RJ

“ I met John at St Michael's and at the YMCA several times. I felt a great friendship from the time I met him. He was engaging and friendly when few cared to extend their friendship. I thought was a unique person. I shall really miss his friendship. Raul Flores Jr.

Raul Flores Jr - February 04, 2023 at 04:09 PM

CA

“ John was a person who once you met him, he was hard to forget. It is difficult to talk about him without talking about Dina too. They were a true team. They reared three fine children and five very loved grandchildren. He was a kind and loving husband, father, grandfather, and friend.

Our relationship with John and Dina goes back more than 50 years where we spent time through the years together cooking, laughing, and talking about current events in our lives. He was a deep thinker and at the same time fun to be around and very funny. He had a zest for life that was contagious. He was a "Prince" of a man and shall always be remembered by those whose lives he touched.

Carolie and Jerry Allgood - February 04, 2023 at 11:45 AM

Jl

“ I did not know John Graml well but what struck me most can be summed up in one word: civility. He was always ready to listen to another side or angle of an argument or discussion and would add his own opinion in a measured and respectful response. And I will also never forget him taking over the dance floor at the wedding party for Kelly and my son, John Nova. John Graml, in his 70s then, worked up such a lather on the dance floor that he felt overheated and took off his white shirt while dancing and flung it against the back window where it was so sweat soaked that it stuck fast to the glass. He is fastened in my memory as solidly as that shirt to the glass. In addition to his kind civility and his dance floor moves, John Graml was a man of solid integrity and a quiet spirituality who showed us all how to live in harmony with one another. -- John Lomax III

John Lomax III - February 04, 2023 at 11:41 AM

LK

“ John was a close friend who we spent many happy times with at Byrd High School and Shreveport. I was really envious of him as he owned a motorcycle and my parents would not allow me to have one.

Lee and Winnie Kittrell

Lee and Winnie Kittrell - February 04, 2023 at 08:18 AM

KH

“ John was a cousin and great friend to my husband, John Alvin. John and Dina invited us to dinner right before our wedding to welcome me into the family. That meant so much to me.

John was extremely loving and caring. He lived his faith and touched many lives. He will be greatly missed by my family.

With love to his family, Kathy Hargis

Kathy Hargis - February 02, 2023 at 07:06 PM