



## John B. Jacobsen

November 14, 1958 - April 3, 2017

John Bradley Jacobsen, 58, died at home in Pittsburgh on April 4 after a quiet struggle with cancer. John was born November 14, 1958, in Honolulu, Hawaii, to Shirley Ann Garrett (White) and Leigh Jacobsen. Childhood residences included Indiana, Illinois, and Texas, but John moved to Carlsbad, New Mexico, at 15 and always considered it home. After graduating from Carlsbad Senior High School and briefly studying theatre at the University of New Mexico, he moved to New York City at 19 to pursue his dream of becoming an actor. There he was immediately cast in the touring production of *Jesus Christ Superstar*. In just one example of his willfulness, he refused to audition for the part requested and instead said he was there to play Caiaphas, which he did. John lived in New York City for several years and trained as an opera singer, eventually touring Italy in *Rigoletto*. Upon his return to the United States, he debated whether to further his opera career or take an offer to help build Florida Studio Theatre in Sarasota. He chose the latter. There his parts included the dentist in *Little Shop of Horrors* but his primary role was Associate Producer. During his tenure, Florida Studio Theatre grew exponentially, in part due to John's ability to convince community members of the importance of the arts. John was an active member of the Cultural Executives Committee, the Professional Alliance of the Performing Arts, and Big Brothers Big Sisters. Seeking a career and life change, John moved to Pittsburgh in 2003 at his sister's invitation. His financial acumen at FST prepared him for a job as Business Banker at PNC, but he remained involved

in the arts through the Greater Pittsburgh Arts Council. He also co-founded the Two Js Scholarship, which funds theatre arts education programs for children. An aggressively generous person who supported local artists, John was known for greeting strangers on Butler Street as friends and buying gifts for loved ones in North Carolina, Florida, and New York at neighborhood galleries. John is survived by his parents, brothers Chris Jacobsen of Albuquerque, Doug Gregory (Kara) of Houston, and sister Holly Middleton (Dawn Schmitz) of Charlotte. He is predeceased by beloved grandmother Faye Tucker of Carlsbad and brother James Tracy Jacobsen. A celebration of life will be scheduled for a later date, but memorial donations can be made to the Two J's Scholarship Fund by emailing [sturrisi@floridastudiotheatre.org](mailto:sturrisi@floridastudiotheatre.org) or sending a donation by mail to 1249 Palm St., Sarasota, FL 34236, attn Steve Turrisi. The family? wishes to thank David Leone, Bernadette Rice, and Dustin at D'Alessandro Funeral Home.

# Tribute Wall



“ *John B. Jacobsen*

January 13, 2023 at 04:43 PM



“ *I met John at Andress High School in El Paso, TX. We were in a math class together. I have fond memories of John and a friend hanging out and entertaining me when my husband was in basic training. We were in touch sporadically over the years. I appreciated a Facebook message that he sent to me a couple of years ago, especially. Thank you John. God keep you- Patt Ward*

**Patt Ward** - April 20, 2017 at 12:51 PM



“ *I loved my son, John, and an from the minute he was born until the day he died. I will always have great memories of him: his sense of humor, his great smile. He had lots of friends in New York, Florida and Pittsburgh and anywhere else he could meet people. He refused to let anyone be a stranger ! The first play I saw him in was "Guys and Dolls." , and, of course, I thought he was terrific. He was funny, intelligent and a very straight-forward kind of guy. And, probably, the very best gift-giver I have ever known. It is so sad that he is not in this world anymore but, at least, he is free from pain and in a better place.*

*I will always have beautiful memories of him; his beautiful smile, his sense of humor and simply put; his overall view of life.*

*Rest peacefully, John*

*Mom*

**Shirley A Garrett** - April 12, 2017 at 09:07 PM



“ I remember visiting Dawn and Holly in Pittsburgh and John came over to their house. It was the only time I met him, but I never forgot him. He was incredibly entertaining and fun to be around. I remember laughing a lot that week. His engaging character will surely be missed. I am so sorry for your loss. Kari

Kari Haug - April 12, 2017 at 12:12 AM



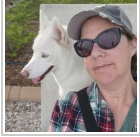
Kari, that was the time he was introducing you as "my sister's girlfriend's sister's girlfriend"!

Holly Middleton - April 12, 2017 at 07:10 PM



“ John was a wonderful part of the Sarasota Theatre Community. It was an honor to know him ..always fun and caring...a good man. he shall be missed. John's passing is a shock. Too soon. A reminder of the fragility of life. rest well, John!  
Much love to the family. Fondly, Carolyn Michel

Carolyn Michel - April 11, 2017 at 05:07 PM



“ John took me under his wing the summer before I took over the Cabaret. We were in the kitchen long hours, practicing and perfecting the menu. We laughed a lot. I burned his arm with a sheet pan, scarring him! He was dedicated to FST and made sure I stayed focused, and because of him I was able to handle anything that came my way that next season. (No cooks for the 6&9, no problem! No electricity throughout downtown, I got it!) When he left FST he left a big hole in the staff and my heart. I'll remember him always as we finished up one night he was reassuring me I could do it; Two fingers pointed at his eyes, and then mine. It gave me confidence and now it makes me smile. Thank you John! You are remembered with love.

---

**Kristin Hartnett** - April 10, 2017 at 10:11 PM

KE

“ John.....I have so many wonderful memories. We met at FST and became immediate friends! We worked in the kitchen when the Goldstein Cabaret first opened "BAM!" and also trained for the Disney Marathon because we wanted to raise money for leukemia. We walked all over Sarasota for months to train and we talked and talked for hours. Our friendship continued to grow as the years went on. This past year we talked constantly planning a reunion for the spring. We shared so many laughs..... I have a heart filled with memories.



---

**Kelli** - April 10, 2017 at 06:25 PM

LH

“ I didn't know him well, but I knew John to be a creative and talented man, with sharp wit and intelligence. His strong personality was memorable and made an impression with those who met him. He was very special to my close friend, his sister Holly. And I know he will be dearly missed by those who knew him well.

---

**Linda Hinton** - April 10, 2017 at 04:39 AM

KA

“ Here are the two parts of John :  
One: the generous soul : an excerpt from  
A message to me:



*Being as technically challenged as I am I'm not sure that this reaches you. Just wanted to say that I am glad that the scholarship fund has reached the initial goal. What I would really like to see is us reaching \$100K by the end of the year. You might want just to e-mail me because I always check that.*

*And then seconds later: An admonition of me!  
He saw a picture of me in the paper and thought I was "hiding."*

*In the two photos.....get from behind those society women and stand next to them. You look like you are standing behind them when you should really be standing in front of them...at least side by side.*

*This is what I loved about our friendship, we could work together and then he could turn around and read you the riot act!*

*That was a true blue champion.*

*My home is filled with tender gifts from him- an antique pin, a beautiful painting or a hand made shawl.*

*He was always teaching out with a unique knowledge of you,  
God speed, dear friend.*


---

**kate Alexander** - April 09, 2017 at 10:41 PM

LS

“ I met John many years ago while we were all visiting Dawn and Holly in Pittsburgh. He was so much fun to be around - we had a great visit and it felt like we'd been family for a long time already. A wonderful combination of artist and businessman, John had a way of making the conversation interesting and real. I always wished I could have seen more of John over the years and was happy for the support he was able to offer as a brother to Holly and Dawn. I'm so sorry to hear of his passing at such a young age. Rest In Peace, John, you will be missed.

-----  
**Lisa Schmitz** - April 09, 2017 at 10:24 AM

 Danny Schmitz

“ It was so good to know John, it was great to have a fellow thespian in the family! He was possibly the most unassuming actor I've ever met. John was a kind and generous man and I know he'll be missed by everyone who was lucky enough to have him in their life.

-----  
**Danny Schmitz** - April 08, 2017 at 06:34 PM

DS

“ I'll miss John so much. Incredibly warm and supportive of Holly and me, he was also a wonderful storyteller. I'll always remember the fun trip we all took together along the coast of North and South Carolina in 2015, when I snapped this photo of him and Holly. The lights of the world are a little dimmer now that he is gone. -Dawn



-----  
**Dawn Schmitz** - April 08, 2017 at 05:11 PM

HM

*I'll remember you and John singing a song from Jesus Christ Superstar at that packed restaurant!*

---

**Holly Middleton** - April 08, 2017 at 06:09 PM

BN

*I wrote this memory on Kelli Karen's Facebook page, but wanted to share it with others as well. FST has brought so many wonderful, talented, dedicated people together over the years. I am grateful for my time there.*

*" I had to read his name several times for my brain to process and accept this information. It seems like just yesterday Josh and I were saying goodbye to our FST family in order to test the theatrical waters of Atlanta. John Jacobsen offered to write letters of introduction for us and send to Artistic Directors here to make our transition easier. In our general shyness, Josh and I did not take John up on his very generous offer, but I remember it so clearly. John's willingness to attest for our professional abilities on behalf of FST was like a framed certificate of accomplishment, a gold star..."*

*I have met some of the very best people in the world at FST, John Jacobsen was one of them. I offer my condolences to his family. I am sincerely sorry for your loss.*

*- Brenda Norbeck-Ford*

---

**Brenda Norbeck** - April 10, 2017 at 10:15 PM

HO

*Thank you so much for taking the time to share this.*

---

**Holly** - April 12, 2017 at 07:08 PM

HM

“ *My heart is broken but I'm so grateful you were my brother. Every time I see a beach I will think of the joy it brought you during our last time together. Holly*



---

**Holly Middleton** - April 08, 2017 at 04:14 PM



Danny Schmitz

*I love this pic! Everyone looks like "This is where I'm supposed to be right now!"*

---

**Danny Schmitz** - April 08, 2017 at 06:42 PM

LO

*My strongest memory of John: "Stelllllllllaaaaaaaaaa!"*

---

**Lori** - April 10, 2017 at 07:17 PM