



John L. Alvanitakis

July 27, 1948 - March 24, 2022

It was a redemption story.

A talented athlete with a keen mind, John Alvanitakis often said sports were all about angles and geometry. He was talented enough to play college soccer at West Chester University and help take his team to the championships.

In his last collegiate game, he had the misfortune of kicking a goal For the other team.

His post-collegiate soccer career ended with a devastating compound fracture that prompted his young wife to declare, "Thank God for Blue Cross/Blue Shield."

In later years, he was known to show some skill kicking around a hacky sack with bemused high school kids at random sporting events, much to the horror of one of his then-teenage daughters and the constant admiration of the other. He had attended Ohio University with the intention of becoming a sports writer, an ambition that was put on pause while he had a young family to provide for.

But he came back to sports writing later in life, when his now-older wife told him, well you know there is a newspaper in New Bloomfield, right?

And so the redemption story began. Hundreds of stories, thousands of interviews with coaches and players. He turned high school field hockey into poetry. He waxed nostalgic about great basketball players who now had kids of their own on a team. He voraciously tracked stats and compiled insightful wrap-ups at the end of each season, win or lose. He truly loved what he did,

and he was looking forward to baseball season and then football season and on and on. He redeemed the unfortunate end to his competitive sports career by telling the stories of young athletes, some who went on to college and great acclaim and others who hopefully can look back fondly on a nice mention or two in their hometown paper, a yellowed clipping in a scrapbook somewhere, written by somebody who cared deeply about the kids and community where they lived.

A Leo through and through, John was always affable, someone who brought people together, whether it was through horseshoes or golf. He loved his girls, attending countless track, gymnastics and cheerleading competitions and applauding loudly at his daughters' achievements. In a stroke of good fortune at one such competition, he came across Mike Krzyzewski (Coach K's daughter was a cheerleader, as well) and begged him to stay put, just long enough so he could retrieve his Duke-loving wife to say hello to her favorite coach.

Unbeknownst to one of his daughters, he drove down to watch her run the 4x400 relay in the prestigious Penn Relays. As she rounded the second turn, with her eyesight starting to blur and legs going numb, she heard him in the stands, cheering wildly for his little girl.

His family was his redemption, too.

John was fond of doling out sage advice to his daughters, even when they said they didn't want it but secretly did, answering the phone whenever there was a crisis, emotional or car-related. The car-related crises were many.

He cherished his grandson, named Jonathan in his honor, and he delighted in watching him zoom around his basement, as ESPN flickered on the TV. Sadly he will never get to write a story about his namesake's future athletic exploits. They will never get to play golf together or talk about the mysteries of the universe. Jonathan's mom will have to impart what wisdom she can recall and ask her sister to remember the rest, about how proud they were to have him as their dad.

John Louis Alvanitakis was born July 27, 1948 to Louis Alvanitakis and Tickie

(Pallos) Alvanitakis in Philadelphia, Pa. John grew up with his two younger brothers, Michael and James (Jimmy), and his older sister Evangelia (Lee). He graduated from Ridley High School in 1966.

In addition to his sports journalism career with Advance Publications, John also worked for decades with some of the most skilled craftsmen in Harrisburg, designing custom wood interiors for countless eateries, homes and businesses around the region. Woodlore Builders Studio was responsible for some of the most iconic bar settings in central Pennsylvania.

He is survived by his wife, Kathie Anne (Warner), daughters Kirstin Barbara and Callie Anne, and grandson Jonathan Leo; brother, Michael, and his wife, Patti, as well as their daughters, John's nieces, Jamie and Christie; and nephews John and Louis Reichenbach and niece Michelle Sturner, children of his late sister, Lee.

Thoughts from his co workers at the Perry County Times:

"What a joy and pleasure it was to work with John Alvanitakis. John was enthusiastic, passionate about Perry County sports, and always ready to go the extra mile in covering the athletes.

It would be a fool's errand to try to count the number of coaches, athletics directors, and administrators with whom John had a working relationship over his almost thirty years at the News-Sun, Duncannon Record, and Perry County Times. The number of Perry County athletes he wrote about would be even more staggering.

At these weekly newspapers, we already miss his laugh, his encyclopedic memory of Perry County athletics, his positive demeanor, and his joy for life. Go in peace, John. Your legacy in this part of the world is secure."

Services will be held at Boyer Family Funeral Home, 101 W. Main St., New Bloomfield, on Saturday, April 2. Visitation with the family will begin at 10 a.m., and services will be at 11 a.m.

Previous Events

Visitation

APR 2. 10:00 AM (ET)

Boyer Family Funeral Home
101 W. Main St
New Bloomfield, PA

Memorial Service

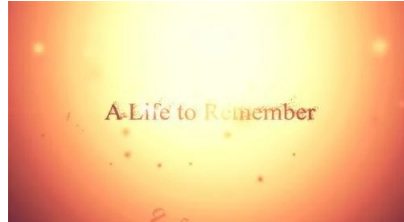
APR 2. 11:00 AM (ET)

Boyer Family Funeral Home
101 W. Main St
New Bloomfield, PA

Tribute Wall



“ Boyer Family Funeral Home created a Tribute Video in memory of John L. Alvanitakis



Boyer Family Funeral Home and Cremation Services, Inc - March 31, 2022 at 02:25 PM

DC

*I sad to hear of John's passing... and so late. I stayed at his house several times in college playing Sunday soccer after the collegiate season ended... He was always s called and known by the name "Greek"... great sense of humor- brilliant person -he could talk music- literature- not the stuff us PE Majors knew about generally... he gave nicknames to most of the players... kept us laughing... by his junior year, the coaches finally figured out that he was a great player with an amazing work rate...he brightened my day up a lot, since I didn't break into the starting lineup till my senior year...
On the long bus rides, we'd be talking sports trivia or singing obscure songs that weren't popular but were different...he was an original!
Love you Greek... Dr. Dan Ciccarelli*

Dr.Dan Ciccarelli - October 18, 2023 at 10:37 PM

JP

“ Back in the day, I was partners with one John Alvanitakis. This world is not a better one without him in it. My fondest memory was delivering a load of etched glass restaurant booth dividers to a Chinese restaurant in North Central Pennsylvania. John’s nickname among us was the Greek and he was proud of his family’s heritage. But he had a great sense of humor and could poke fun at himself with relish. Furthermore, John was the only businessman in our partnership. The rest of us were just artisans. Before we unloaded the truck he told the Chinese restaurant owner that this was a COD as had been agreed upon... we expected payment before we left. The owner said no no no no I pay you by check in mail. John told me to stop unloading. Cash on delivery... that was the agreement. No no no I send you a check.
Jim, don’t unload.
OK OK I give you check unload.
We unloaded while the owner of the restaurant wrote the check and muttered under his breath. I didn’t hear what he said but as we drove away, about a hundred yards down the road John suddenly pulled off the road. He looked at me, and he said did that guy just called me a Gleek Plick?. We laughed all the way home.

RIP, you Gleek Plick.

Jim Painter - April 02, 2022 at 06:50 PM

BA

“ Though we never spent much time together, since whenever we were at the same location, we were both working, it was always good to see you and spend a couple minutes catching up. For the last 24+ years, we were colleagues at the same company, doing the same job covering high school sports, and I always appreciated the tidbits of info or stories that overlapped our counties that you were more than willing to pass onto me. My condolences to your family and RIP my friend.



*Bill Alexander
Sports Editor, Juniata Sentinel*

Bill Alexander - April 01, 2022 at 04:32 PM



“ Florist Choice Bouquet was purchased for the family of John L. Alvanitakis.



April 01, 2022 at 01:14 PM

PB

“ Perry County & Blain Baseball purchased the Florist Choice Bouquet for the family of John L. Alvanitakis.



Perry County & Blain Baseball - March 31, 2022 at 03:10 PM



“ *Serene Retreat was purchased for the family of John L. Alvanitakis.* ”



March 31, 2022 at 02:46 PM



“ *53 files added to the album Life Tributes* ”



Boyer Family Funeral Home and Cremation Services, Inc - March 31, 2022 at 02:28 PM

DH

“ Johnny A., to a wonderful, always cheerful ,friend to all who will be remembered and missed by those who had an opportunity to know you. We have fond memories of ECGC, attending Phillie games, you and I as teammates of the Cowboy Oyster and the Magic Porky Chadwick Horseshoe team who swept Eiseman/Strasko in doubles back in the day and of course when we were working together on restaurants. All of our thoughts and prayers to your family in this trying time-- Laurie and David Hilsinger.

Called my brother Rich and he sends his love to all

DAVID HILSINGER - March 31, 2022 at 12:19 PM

GA

“ Greenwood Athletic Association purchased the Beautiful in Blue for the family of John L. Alvanitakis.



Greenwood Athletic Association - March 31, 2022 at 11:27 AM

SK

“ Johnny A. was a wonderful gift to all of the athletes/coaches in Perry County. His dedication, effort, time and his wonderful writing ability was much appreciated by the athletes and coaches in the area. Johnny A. CARED and I (along with many others) will always be thankful for that. My condolences to all the family. Stew Kirk and Family.

stew kirk - March 30, 2022 at 06:46 PM



“ *Beautiful Dreams was purchased for the family of John L. Alvanitakis.*



March 29, 2022 at 12:42 PM



“ *3 files added to the album Uncle John*



Loui - March 29, 2022 at 09:30 AM



“ *Love you! Louis, Aimee and our Boys purchased the Dreams From the Heart Bouquet for the family of John L. Alvanitakis.*



Love you! Louis, Aimee and our Boys - March 29, 2022 at 09:12 AM



“ *West Perry Wrestling purchased the Simply Elegant Spathiphyllum for the family of John L. Alvanitakis.*



West Perry Wrestling - March 29, 2022 at 07:09 AM

WC

“ *West Perry Athletic Booster Club purchased the Love Everlasting Bouquet for the family of John L. Alvanitakis.*



West Perry Athletic Booster Club - March 28, 2022 at 07:15 PM



“ *Divine Peace Bouquet was purchased for the family of John L. Alvanitakis.*



March 28, 2022 at 06:30 PM

JH

“ *Hard to pick one memory for I've known John "the Greek" for 55 years. Starting with soccer at West Chester State where he was a great teammate. So good, we became room mates at Golf Club Apartments in West Chester. After graduating, he, among others, started East Coast Gold Cup Horseshoe Club where he and I won our share of tournaments and the club is still going strong 49 years later. We also worked together at Woodlore Builders Studio where he was the best salesman and procured most of the great restaurant/bar projects we built for over 35 years. There are not many people who meet in college, become great friends and work and play together for the rest of their lives. I was lucky to know Greek. He will always be a great memory for me. Jeff Beano Hand*

Jeff Hand - March 28, 2022 at 10:08 AM

CA

Oh beano. This is so very sweet. Thank you. Some of my favorite memories as a child were at ECGC. Getting lost in the woods. (I always knew it was time to go home when I heard pops yelling down the creek path.) Lurking around the kitchen. Sitting in the hot bleachers watching everyone pitch. I also remember a father-child volleyball game that was especially fun. My dad was my hero. And I just adored his horseshoe family.

The smell of sawdust will forever be a warm and happy reminder of the hours I spent as a little girl in that shop at 7th and Seneca, wheeling and cruising around in Dennis's or Dad's chair.

We are so very fortunate and blessed by this crazy universe to have had that man in our lives. Glad you could be such a big part of it. Thanks, Beano.

-Callie Anne

Callie Alvanitakis - March 29, 2022 at 04:55 PM

TE

Big Greek you were a very special man. Straight shooter, dear friend, wise, compassionate, forward thinking ; you are the reason ECGC occupies that beautiful land.

Your wry smile, your quick wit, you were one of kind. I will treasure your memory.

Big Thomas

Thomas Eisemann - March 31, 2022 at 08:13 AM

BP

Brad Pasko sends his best regards to John's family. It seems hard to believe it has been over 50 years since WCU. We had some really great late nights. I still talk about our friends like it was yesterday. John saved me on a cliff one day in NY state Although we have been far away our memories seem like yesterday Thanks Greek for being a good MAN.

brad pasko - March 31, 2022 at 07:39 PM

SR

“ Johnny was fun to golf with. He was serious about recording three putts. When he didn't want to talk about my Yankees, I asked him if we could talk about the Phillies. When he said yes, I asked him if he thought the Phillies could beat my Yankees! Lots of good memories of Johnny. I will miss him, as will our golfing group. My condolences to the family. Steve Renno

steve renno - March 27, 2022 at 09:06 PM



“ Peaceful White Lilies Basket was purchased for the family of John L. Alvanitakis.



March 27, 2022 at 08:43 AM

RN

“ Johnny was a combination cousin and big brother when we were growing up (he in Secane and me in Collingdale). We shared a love of the same songs (I even traded him a 45 of Lou Christie he wanted for a 45 of Bobby Hebb that I wanted.) I pretty much followed him around like an adoring puppy and Aunt Tickie knew that if I was missing, odds were I was wherever Johnny was. Good-bye, Cuz. You were loved and will be missed.

Robin Nelson - March 27, 2022 at 08:35 AM

GA

“ I will never forget spending time with John in the Blackhawk press box at Susquenita football games, in the gym for wrestling & on the sidelines of all the county Field Hockey games.
Plus being invited to play at the Infamous JOHNNY A'S TURTLE BACK OPEN at the Newport Golf Course. RIP JOHNNY A. :(:(

George Achenbach - March 26, 2022 at 05:57 PM