



Dr. John James Iskra

June 28, 1964 - February 14, 2022

Dr. John James Iskra, 57, of Bristol, VA, USA, died suddenly February 14, 2022 at Bristol Regional Medical Center of a suspected blood clot which traveled to his lungs. He will be remembered for his keen intellect, his quick wit, his generosity of spirit, kind heart and his courage to fight for what he thought was right. He was beloved husband to Elisabeth (ne' Betty Jo) for nearly thirty years and a devoted father to Nathaniel Moss (College of Wm & Mary '21) and Theodore Brennen (University of Mary Washington, and both VHS, '19 & '15 respectively.) His education career began with his own, earning a Ph.D. in mathematics from University of Tennessee, Knoxville, K-12 teaching certification in math from the University of Oregon, Eugene, and a B.S. in mathematics major/philosophy minor from the University of Michigan, Ann Arbor. His teaching career spanned over three decades, beginning at a United Way preschool in Ann Arbor, progressing to Eugene's 4-J School System, then Portland State University and finally, UT Knoxville, where he was awarded honors for being the best teaching graduate student at the school. Upon graduation from UT, he began at Oxford College of Emory University, Atlanta, GA but, missing the mountains and wanting to make the most impact, moved his family to Emory, VA where he spent 17 years in the math department of Emory & Henry College including 6 years as Department Chair. His two sabbaticals were spent productively, first in 2011 at Macquarie University, Sydney Australia, working on problems in Algebraic Geometry and more recently in 2019, just before the COVID-19 Pandemic began, at the Massachusetts General Hospital Research Labs of Harvard University in Boston, MA developing mathematical algorithms for application to cancer diagnosis.

Besides family and career, his passions were distance running, politics and astronomy. During his running career, he completed over ten marathons, including, Portland, Boston and San Francisco (which he completed with a P.R. of 2 hours, 26 minutes.) In 2004, he was honored to represent Eugene, OR in her sister city, Kakegawa, Japan, where he was asked to serve ceremonially as the first runner at the start of the Kakegawa Marathon. His political savvy and genuine desire to make the world a better place were apparent when he ran political campaigns-two in Ann Arbor, MI, one in Knoxville, TN and one in Washington County, VA. His love of space and all things NASA expressed itself in the

many star shows he wrote and produced at the Eugene Science Center Planetarium and through lifelong star gazing. His coaching career was composed of two stints, both of which he enjoyed deeply: 2 years with the Emory & Henry Wasps Men's & Women's Cross Country teams and 3 years working with the Virginia High School Bearcats X-C/spring track distance programs, two serving as head coach. His community involvement included being an active band parent for eight years, routinely volunteering during local elections, running for BPS School Board in 2010, and helping as a trail groomer for the Mendota Trail Conservancy.

He is survived by his wife and sons, his father-Deacon Joseph J. Iskra of Lake Wales, FL, sisters Maria Appleton of Mount Prospect, IL and Christine Clifford of Troy, MI, brother Matthew Iskra of Halifax, Nova Scotia, Canada, three nieces and four nephews. He is predeceased by his mother, Judy Galloway Iskra. His family is shocked and saddened by his untimely death but vows to live life to its fullest as a testament to John's time with them. "The ultimate measure of a man is not where he stands in moments of comfort and convenience, but where he stands at times of challenge and controversy." Martin Luther King, Strength to Love, 1963

A memorial service will be held on Saturday, February 26, 2022 at Blevins Funeral Home (417 Lee Street, Bristol, VA 24201). Visitation will begin at 11:00AM. The memorial will begin at noon.

In lieu of flowers, please consider making a donation to the Mendota Trail Conservancy, PO Box 1322, Bristol, VA 24203. Further info can be found at www.MendotaTrail.org or info@MendotaTrail.org

Online condolences may be made to the Iskra family at www.blevinscares.com. Blevins Funeral Home has the honor of serving the Iskra family.

Events

FEB **Celebration of Life Gathering** 11:00AM - 12:00PM

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Blevins Funeral & Cremation Services
417 Lee Street, Bristol, VA, US, 24201

FEB **Celebration of Life** 12:00PM - 01:00PM

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Comments



“ A tribute video has been added.



Blevins Funeral & Cremation Services - February 24 at 10:05 AM



“ Moving video, with some wonderful photos. What a sad loss.

Vikki Fielden - February 24 at 08:38 PM



“ Sending heartfelt condolence's to the family of such a fine young man/doctor. Ann McIver Staples

Ann M Staples - February 27 at 12:51 PM



“ Dear Betty Jo, my dear wife Eileen passed away almost 30 years ago but we enjoyed a visit to Eugene before you met John. I am truly sorry that we never met John but I know you both enjoyed a happy and successful family life through your entries in Facebook. 30 years on I miss my beloved Eileen but I feel her presence still. Remember the happy times and you will hear him saying how much he loves you. Your forever friend, Dan xxxx

Dan McLean - March 09 at 02:46 PM



“ We met John as he and his beloved Elisabeth were courting. Our memories from Portland and then later in Oxford are full of laughter and deep conversation. We were young parents together and recall his gentle loving relationship with his boys. We learned that his surname Iskra means “spark,” which fits perfectly. Though we have not seen John & Elisabeth for many years, his brilliant spark of life still shines in our hearts, now and always.

Our heartfelt love to John's family
David Goldberg & Elaine Parnell

Elaine Parnell - February 25 at 01:09 PM



“ David and Filippa (Genovese) Mammel purchased the Small Garden Dish for the family of Dr. John James Iskra.



David and Filippa (Genovese) Mammel - February 24 at 04:00 PM



“ From the small island of Cyprus, I say goodbye, my beloved friend John. You depart this unjust and vain world and you start the long journey through immortality. Yes, definitely you won the immortality. You are immortal for us, that we had the honor to meet you and have you in one way or another in our lives. You are immortal for the whole world because not only you loved this world and the life on this world, but because you were a passionate true fighter for this world. A fighter for social justice, a fighter for nature and its creatures, a fighter for freedom and truth, a fighter for peace and love.

I am very proud that I met you my dear friend and classmate. It was a great honor for me that I shared the office with you during the 6 years I was in the University of Tennessee. As long as I breathe, I will remember your incomparable humor and our long discussions in all sorts of matters. From Math to nature and to our favorite series, the X-files! However, most and above all I will remember your unconditional help in all my difficulties during my studies toward my PhD. You were always by my side, great man. You were a rare character and a truly unique person. This world needs more persons like you.

I am very proud for your friendship John. Your beautiful blue eyes will emit forever love and peace in my life.

Farewell my friend

George Chailos - February 24 at 12:57 PM



“ 58 files added to the album LifeTributes



Blevins Funeral & Cremation Services - February 24 at 09:56 AM



“ John was the first grandchild of John and Eleanore Iskra as well as the first child of Joe and Judy(Galloway) Iskra . He was always an excellent student so it is not a surprise that he earned a Doctorate. In mathematics . He loved math and I am sure his students recognized his dedication .
We saw him grow up into a wonderful man -husband , father, teacher.
We will keep him in our prayers
Love Uncle Don and Aunt Miriam

Donald Iskra - February 23 at 10:18 PM



“ Sheriff Blake Andis and the Members of the Washington County Sheriff's Office would like to express their sympathy in the death of Dr. John Iskra. If our Sheriff's Office can be of assistance to you during your time of sadness, please do not hesitate to contact us.

Sheriff Andis and Members of the Washington County Sheriff's Office

Sheriff Blake Andis - February 23 at 09:38 AM



“ My heart breaks that my friend John has passed away so young. We were next door neighbors growing up. I have many wonderful memories. Rest in peace my friend.

Connie Kur Patterson - February 24 at 06:52 AM