



Jack O'Donnell

January 30, 1950 - March 15, 2023

John Joseph O'Donnell, better known as Jack or Tio Jack of Frankfort, Kentucky, died on March 15, 2023. Jack was a free spirit who lived his life to the fullest and on his own terms.

Jack surfed for more than 60 years, learning as a child at the beach in Seaside Park, New Jersey. He then spent his life traveling the world in search of waves only to realize that the world had a lot to offer beyond surf destinations. Jack shared his love of travel with so many others who came into his orbit. His favorite surfing destination was Puerto Escondido, Mexico where he first surfed when he was in his 20's. His most recent go to place to surf was Las Peñitas, Nicaragua, from where he had recently returned. Here in Kentucky, Jack kept in shape paddling in the pool at the Capital Plaza Hotel and in the Kentucky River.

Jack has been described by those who knew him as one of a kind, unique, generous, gracious, kind, cheeky, funny, vibrant, passionate, principled, loyal, dependable, well-read, smart, and ingenious. Jack could also be irascible, and even insufferable, when confronted with what to him seemed like unresolvable conflict, but he loved deeply and those who afforded him grace, despite his foibles, are the fortunate ones.

Jack was a humanitarian. He wrote letters protesting human rights violations

around the world. He promoted the use of solar energy to purify water in Mexico. Jack helped immigrants in Frankfort and loved being able to speak Spanish whenever the opportunity arose. When Liam was growing up, Jack volunteered with many activities, including coaching soccer and helping with the academic team.

He was a recycler, reuser and rethinker extraordinaire. Jack could find a repurpose for just about anything. His composting operation was beyond comparison. Jack was well known for making the rounds in his truck to pick up discarded leaves and grass clippings for his compost piles.

Jack worked in construction to support his travel and later his family and worked as an investigator for the law firm McNally & Robinson. Although he did not per se have a career, Jack worked every day of his life, keeping up with the world, from the local to the international, and focusing on his various projects, most recently at his Hanly Lane property where he was building a little home, and where he had gardened for years. Jack was an amazing cook, did all the shopping and cooking when Liam was growing up and could always be counted on to provide a tasty concoction at any gathering.

He was a step ahead of all of us in so many ways. He collected drift plastic and took a stand against plastic in the ocean long before it was a thing. He also maintained his stand against beach badges at the Jersey Shore, even to the point of being arrested.

Jack never met a stranger. To whomever would stop and listen, and there were many, he shared his stories, his advice, his fruits and vegetables, his leaf bags, his compost, his beads, earrings and bags, and his love of his dog, Ginger. He loved animals and they loved him.

He was not religious but was deeply spiritual. Jack was a conscientious

objector of the Vietnam War. Before he was drafted, he was arrested for blocking, in protest of the war, the West Side Highway in New York City.

Jack loved soccer and the New York Yankees, both from a young age. He was an all-state high school soccer player and started following the Yankees in 1955. His love of the Yankees was fostered by his father and grandfather. More recently Jack listened to the games and talked Yankees with his nieces and nephews on the front porch at 34 F Street in Seaside Park.

Jack was born in Newark, New Jersey on January 30, 1950, and grew up in Madison and Seaside Park, New Jersey. He is a graduate of Manhattan College, Riverdale, New York. He first came to Kentucky in the late 1970's to help build a community in Bald Knob with friends. Jack also lived in London, England, Dublin, Ireland, and San Diego, California.

Jack is survived by his fiancée' Trisha Perkins, his son, Liam (Mckenna), Liam's mother Margaret, sister-in-law, Barbara O'Donnell and her sons, Murphy (Erika) and Jake (Abby), sisters, Christine (Mike), and Maryann McCoy (John) and brother, Bobby (LeeAnn), as well as his other nephews, Connor, Keegan (Erin), Matt and Jack, nieces Shaye, Brielle and Bryce and great nieces, Anastasia and Sage as well as many lifelong friends.

Jack is preceded in death by his parents John (Jack) and Dorothy O'Donnell, sister, Maureen, brothers, Paul and Kevin and his beloved dog, Ginger.

A celebration of Jack's life will be held on Sunday, March 26th, 2023, starting at 5:00 p.m. at The Cooperage Bar, 325 W. Broadway Street, Frankfort.

Memorial donations may be made to the Surfrider Foundation (<https://www.surfrider.org/>), a non-profit environmental organization that works to protect and

preserve the world's oceans, waves and beaches, focusing on water quality, plastic pollution reduction, beach access, beach and surf spot preservation, and sustaining marine and coastal ecosystems.

They broke the mold when they made Jack O'Donnell. A special part of all who knew him has gone as well.

Arrangements are under the direction of Harrod Brothers Funeral Home & Crematory.

Previous Events

Celebration

MAR **26**. 5:00 PM (ET)

Cooperage Bar
325 W Broadway Street
Frankfort, KY 40601

Tribute Wall



“ *Jack O'Donnell*

October 06, 2023 at 03:15 PM



“ *I stumbled upon this obituary and am so sad to hear this and that Paul and Kevin have gone on as well. Fond memories of the boys in their "baggies" going over to the surfing beach from "f" street beach where we parked ourselves on towels and chairs a million years ago. Thoughts with you, Chrissie. Dee Dee*

Dorothy Olive - March 30, 2023 at 05:35 PM



“ *God speed, Jack. My memories of you and your kindness will always be with Betsy and me.*

judy kozak durkin - March 18, 2023 at 08:17 AM



“ *I worked beside Jack for Capital City Food Coop for years back when Liam was a tot, and he was so much fun whether we were unloading the truck or breaking down large bags of rice or raisins. Jack was a loving father and a generous friend, the last contact I had with him he told me that he had bought a cement mixer and would be happy to loan it if we needed it. At the beginning of the pandemic he picked up groceries for me several times. Jack took up a lot of space and he is so missed.*

Donna Goebeler - March 17, 2023 at 12:19 PM