

John Daniel Stahl



John Daniel (JD) Stahl, 58, of Blacksburg, Va., passed away July 15, 2010. He is preceded in death by his father, Omar B. Stahl and mother, Lois Kraybill Stahl. Survivors include his wife, Sarah J. Windes; sons, Daniel and Hans; sister, Rachel Kraybill Stahl and Dale Walton, of Lancaster, Pa.; nieces, Emily Windes, Amanda Windes, of Kingsport, Tenn. and Clare Tendian, of Chicago, Ill; nephews, Peter Windes and Andrew Windes, Kingsport, Tenn., Eric Tendian, of Chicago, Ill; brothers-in-law, Larry Windes, married to Lois Windes, of Kingsport, Tenn. and Sonny Tendian, of Chicago, Ill. JD spent most of his growing-up years in Luxembourg and Germany, the child of Mennonite missionary parents. This childhood identity gave him a perspective which bridged both European and American culture. At age 15, he came to the States and lived with the family of Simon and Mary Jean Kraybill who became, and remain, a second family to him. For the past 10 years, JD lived with Chronic Lymphocytic Leukemia, weathering many difficulties with grace, courage, resilience, and a sense of the preciousness of each moment.

A Rachel Carson quote he used as his e-mail signature for years reads, "Those who contemplate the beauty of the earth find reserves of strength that will endure as long as life lasts. There is something infinitely healing in the repeated refrains of nature-the assurance that dawn comes after night, and spring after winter."

JD had a large family of relatives and friends, to whom he was uncommonly loyal. He loved books, film, and keeping multi-cultural connections. He enjoyed singing in his deep bass voice, listening to music, and being deeply involved with the lives of his two sons. JD graduated from Goshen College with a BA in German/English in 1973. He earned a Master's degree from the University of Pittsburgh (1976), and a PhD from the University of Connecticut (1982), and studied for a year at the Universities of Marburg and Munich in Germany. His calling and passion was teaching and literature. In 1982, JD came to Virginia Tech as a Professor of English. He also served as Visiting Professor in the Hollins University summer Children's Literature MA Program since its founding in 1992. He won numerous teaching awards, including the 2008 Virginia Tech William E. Wine Award for excellence in teaching. He co-edited "Crosscurrents of Children's Literature: Texts and Criticism" (2006), and authored "Mark Twain, Culture and Gender: Envisioning America through Europe" (1994). He served as President of the Children's Literature Association from 1999 to 2000, founded the active children's literature faculty study group at Virginia Tech in the early 1980s, and served as Director of Undergraduate Studies in the VT Department of English for two years. He was an active member of Blacksburg Presbyterian Church and a Friend at Blacksburg Quaker Meeting, serving as its Clerk for several years.

A memorial service will be held 3 p.m. Monday, July 19, 2010 at Blacksburg Presbyterian Church with the Rev. Dr. Catherine Taylor officiating. At JD's request, his remains have been donated to science for research.

Our family wishes to express profound gratefulness, on JD's behalf, to Dr. Harry McCoy, whose medical expertise and deep compassion helped JD through many years of "health," despite his illness. A huge thank you also to the nurses at Blue Ridge Cancer Care who served JD with kindness and unpretentious skill, to the understanding and responsive nurses at Montgomery Regional Hospital, to his invaluable counselor, and to the members of Blacksburg Presbyterian Church and the VT English Department for their untiring and unfailing support. JD requested that, in lieu of flowers, any memorials be given to the English Department at Goshen College, 1700 South Main Street, Goshen, Indiana 46526.

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