



## Honorable John C. North

October 16, 1930 - September 19, 2025

The Honorable John C. North II, known to family, friends and colleagues as “The Judge”, was born on October 16, 1930, at Memorial Hospital, Easton, the only child of John C. North and Mary Elizabeth Lednum North. He attended local schools and graduated from Mercersburg Academy, the University of Virginia and Harvard Law School.

A strong swimmer and trained lifeguard, during summer vacations from college he taught swimming for the Talbot County Red Cross at several locations on the Miles and Tred Avon Rivers.

After graduating from law school in 1954, he married the former Ethel Louise Towers. They drove to Sea Island, Georgia on their honeymoon in the 1933 Duesenberg roadster that he received (at his suggestion) from his parents as a Harvard graduation gift.

After serving two years in the US Coast Guard, he returned to Easton to begin the practice of law with his father under the firm name of North and North. In 1962, following in the footsteps of his father, he became State’s Attorney for Talbot County and served in that position until 1971 when he was named Judge of the newly formed District Court of Maryland, where he served for twelve years. In 1983, he was appointed by Governor Harry Hughes as Judge of the Circuit Court for Talbot County. Five years later, he resigned from the

Court in order to receive an appointment from Governor William Schaefer as Chairman of the Chesapeake Bay Critical Area Commission, the State's principal environmental agency dealing with the Bay at the time. He served in that position until his retirement in 2000. Governor Schaefer named him "Admiral of the Chesapeake Bay" in "recognition of his lifelong personal and professional dedication to preserving both the health of the Bay and its historic traditions".

Active in community affairs, Judge North was instrumental in the establishment of the Talbot County YMCA and was one of its first presidents. He was also elected president of the Talbot County Bar Association and served two years as president of the Country School. Additionally, he was Chairman of the Board of Sailwinds Park in Cambridge and served on the board and executive committee of the Living Classrooms Foundation in Baltimore. He served on the advisory committee of the Maryland Historical Society and the Eastern Shore Land Conservancy and served on the Talbot County Planning and Zoning Commission. An early supporter of the Academy Art Museum (formerly known as the Academy of the Arts); he held membership number nine. He was a founder of the Chesapeake Bay Maritime Museum, negotiating for the acquisition of much of its real estate, and incorporating the Museum and serving as its first Vice President and later President.

Judge North served as the Commodore of the Chesapeake Bay Yacht Club and for many years as its perennial Fleet Captain. In 2010 the Club paid him a special honor in establishing a perpetual racing trophy in his name in recognition of his preservation of log canoes and his distinction of racing Island Bird as crew and skipper for over 70 years. To the surprise of many, the Judge proceeded to make his own trophy in the form of a hammered aluminum representation of Island Bird.

He started sailing small boats at an early age and graduated to log canoes in 1949 when his father acquired a canoe that he had long admired, the Island Bird, which had been built in 1882 by the Judge's great-grandfather William Sidney Covington at Tilghman's Island. In 1951 Island Bird's larger sister, Island Blossom (1982) was purchased and in 1970 Jay Dee (1931) joined the fleet and is captained by son, Daniel North. The Judge was a log canoe captain for over seventy years and won every major trophy several times over, including one remarkable win after losing a mast overboard. In 2020 he named grandson Dylan as captain of Island Bird.

The Judge was also very interested in vintage automobiles, especially rare and distinctive makes including Bugatti and Duesenberg. He was a skilled machinist and pattern maker and personally restored many of the mechanical components of his cars. He completely assembled a Duesenberg chassis from a larger collection of parts with the assistance of his son, David, and friend John Todd. The car was displayed at the Pebble Beach, California Concours d'Elegance in 1997 and won a major "Best in Class" trophy and mention for "Best in Show".

Judge North assisted in the establishment of the St. Michaels Concours d'Elegance, served as its first Chairman and over many years, personally sculpted all of its major trophies. His sculpting interest extended to working in wood, stone and a diversity of metals. He has been professionally represented by The Trippe Gallery in Easton, MD and his work may be found there and in collections and private homes.

While not a large man, he was remarkably strong and once stepped and erected Island Bird's twenty-six foot mast without any assistance. After a hurricane demolished his dock down to the bare pilings, he salvaged the timbers and planking that floated ashore and rebuilt the entire one-hundred-

and-twenty-foot structure with no outside help. He was in his mid-seventies at the time.

Judge North's wife of sixty-four years, Ethel Towers North, predeceased him in 2019. He is survived by his son David North and wife Joan Hoge-North, his son Daniel North and wife Margaret Enloe-North, his grandchildren Drew North, Dylan North, Campbell North, William Spencer North and Nathaniel Vivian, and his former daughters-in-law, Sallie North and Carrington North. He is also survived by his devoted companion of later years, Comber McHugh.

Services will be private. In lieu of flowers, the family asks that friends make contributions in his honor to TomCat Solutions ([tomcatsolutionsonline.org](http://tomcatsolutionsonline.org)), located in Easton, Maryland.

# Tribute Wall

RH

“ *Ret. Captain R. Hobbs lit a candle in memory of Honorable John C. North*



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**Ret. Captain R. Hobbs** - September 27, 2025 at 06:02 PM

DA

“ *2 files added to the tribute wall*



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**Duke Adams111** - September 27, 2025 at 12:52 PM

DA

“ I first met John about 1954-56 ? His father and my grandfather were good friends and we sailed our canoe *Oliversgift* out of Canoe Harbor when in St. Michaels. At the time he sailed on *Island Bird* with his father at the helm. My father would put me on the outrigger of *Gift* to keep an eye on me but would run the main sheet forward to his tiller to trim the sail.

For years on *Patricia*, and from 1980 on in *Oliversgift* I raced against the *Judge* as skipper and always thought of him as an honorable and fierce competitor. We used to do many races but lately for the last ten years only when my daughter Meredith's husband Zach is home to skipper with Meredith tending the main. That makes four generations of our family having sailed against the *Judge*. Meredith has also sailed on the outrigger of *Blossom* and on *Jay Dee* as part of an all womens crew. These boats are also part of the *North Fleet*.

It has been an honor to race against such a fine gentleman. From my wife Maureen, Meredith Krissoff, Zach Krissoff, my brother Guy Adams, Zach's father Mike Krissoff, and the entire crew of *Oliversgift* our sincere condolences. Duke Adams 111

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Duke Adams111 - September 27, 2025 at 12:28 PM

DA

“ 1 file added to the tribute wall



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Duke Adams111 - September 27, 2025 at 11:37 AM

DA

*John North on the stern and his father on the bow of Island Bird.*

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Duke Adams111 - September 27, 2025 at 12:35 PM

TJ

“ 2 files added to the album *Log Canoes*

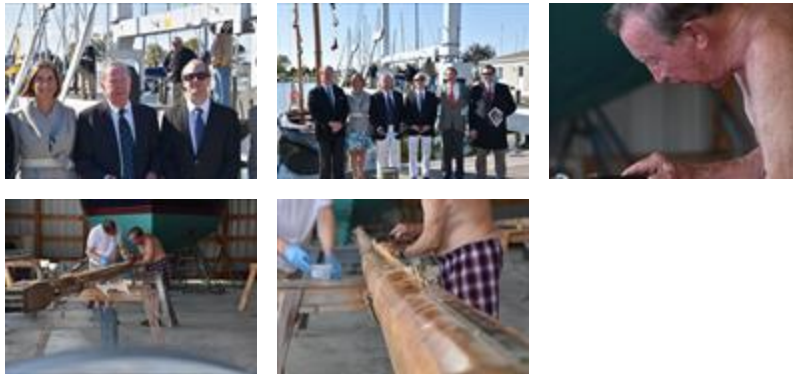


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Tracey Johns - September 26, 2025 at 10:19 AM

TJ

“ 5 files added to the album *Flying Cloud*



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Tracey Johns - September 26, 2025 at 10:10 AM

JH

“ *I'm so saddened by the passing of Judge North. He was an original, I don't think I'll ever meet another person like him. I am forever grateful for his friendship, kindness and humor. I know he gave Ned's life purpose and was an outstanding mentor to him. I'm sure Ned was there to greet him, may they both be in good health again and on the water somewhere laughing together.*

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Joan Hennighausen - September 25, 2025 at 05:45 PM

MW

“ Michael W. planted a grove of 5 [Memorial Trees](/store/Product.aspx?ProductId=4518) in honor of Honorable John C. North.

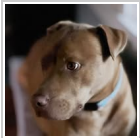
Michael W. - September 24, 2025 at 03:52 PM

SS

“ 1 file added to the tribute wall



Sabine M. Simonson - September 23, 2025 at 11:16 AM



“ I will always remember the warmth he exuded when talking to new people he met and the good humor he possessed which always brought a smile to me

Mark Malanoski - September 23, 2025 at 10:06 AM

AH

“ Oh my gosh I was so very sorry to hear learn of Judge North's passing. He was a great friend to my Dad, having made him Talbot County's first Asst. State's Attorney, and to our family in general, even hosting us aboard one of his boats to kick off my wedding weekend in 2000 and allowing us to use one of his cars (and David!) to get to the wedding reception. I know my Dad always valued and respected Judge North's views, work ethic, and everything else about him. Judge North was a true gentleman and one of the kindest people I've ever known. May he rest in peace. My thoughts and prayers are with all of you.

Amy Horne - September 23, 2025 at 09:56 AM

MP

“ Judge North was a nice person and always a gracious competitor when racing log canoes. He will be greatly missed for all his contributions. I know Island Bird will carry on his winning spirit!

Marshall Patterson - September 22, 2025 at 05:17 PM

DO

“ We will all miss a great man. Dean of the log canoes for generations, patron of Classic cars, and good friend to many. I will never forget his sense of humor as we worked on log canoes together... "It ain't a Stradivarius, Dennis !"  
He was a great community Leader as Chairman of Sailwinds Park in Cambridge and many years as a trustee of Living Classrooms Foundation in Baltimore.  
We will all miss him terribly...Dennis OBrien (Former neighbor, log canoe racer, and good friend)

Dennis OBrien - September 22, 2025 at 01:19 PM

SM

“ Susan LeCompte Marshall lit a candle in memory of Honorable John C. North



Susan LeCompte Marshall - September 22, 2025 at 12:38 PM

MC

“ Marty And Cynthia Chomiak lit a candle in memory of Honorable John C. North



Marty and Cynthia Chomiak - September 22, 2025 at 08:57 AM

PB

“ *Peter Barclay lit a candle in memory of Honorable John C. North*



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**Peter Barclay** - September 22, 2025 at 07:29 AM

PB

“ *Peter Barclay lit a candle in memory of Honorable John C. North*



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**Peter Barclay** - September 22, 2025 at 07:28 AM

DB

“ *Many years ago I worked with Judge's North's father. They were both wonderful men and treated me amazingly. When Judge North's father passed and I attended the funeral Judge North treated me as family and thanked me profusely for everything I did for his dad. He was such a wonderful son and loved his dad. I will never forget how Judge North's treated myself and his dad. I am sending my condolences to the family. Judge North will be missed by so many people. He was one in a million.*

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**Diane Barrow** - September 22, 2025 at 03:43 AM



“ *My deepest condolences to the Friends & Family members that knew and appreciated all the amazing work and dedication Judge North took in his community and his life with the people he has touch along the way. I will miss him dearly. What an inspiration to look back on all his accomplishments, absolutely stunning to have know such a great man. Benjamin T. Meintzer Jr. "Jr"*



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**Benjamin Meintzer** - September 21, 2025 at 12:01 PM

GD

*A moving testimony to the life and influence of a great man, by one of many who admired him. Rest in honor.*

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**Gerry Devlin** - September 21, 2025 at 04:05 PM

DL

“ *Dee Lyon lit a candle in memory of Honorable John C. North*



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**Dee Lyon** - September 21, 2025 at 11:19 AM

SH

“ *Sonja Hanssen-Carter lit a candle in memory of Honorable John C. North*



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**Sonja Hanssen-Carter** - September 21, 2025 at 11:15 AM

VS

“ Vicky And Ken Sroka lit a candle in memory of Honorable John C. North



Vicky and Ken Sroka - September 21, 2025 at 10:51 AM

DB

“ A true gentleman and a man of integrity. He will be missed by many. Rest in peace sir. Your work here is done. My most sincere condolences to the many family members and friends.



Don Van Bourgondien - September 21, 2025 at 06:59 AM

PF

“ Judge North was a patient and considerate mentor to me and to many other attorneys who had the privilege of practicing before him. He was a servant of the law, but of justice first. He had a keen sense of what would be the best solution for the problem at hand. The greenest lawyer, the most nervous witness, even the most unpleasant criminal, were all treated with decency and respect in his courtroom, although no one ever doubted who was in control. His career of public service took him from being the State's Attorney, to being a District Court Judge, Circuit Court Judge and Chair of the Critical Areas Commission - and he made all of it look so much easier than it actually was.



Philip Carey Foster - September 21, 2025 at 02:08 AM

JW

“ *May he rest in Peace. I remember him in the basement of his house, where my Dad, (Joe Wolfe) helped him restore some of his cars in the 1970's.*

*Joseph Wolfe*

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**Joseph Wolfe** - September 20, 2025 at 08:00 PM

GB

“ *Gary Ball lit a candle in memory of Honorable John C. North*



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**Gary Ball** - September 20, 2025 at 07:16 PM

JE

“ *Joy Eckman lit a candle in memory of Honorable John C. North*



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**Joy Eckman** - September 20, 2025 at 06:08 PM

JE

*My grandfather built the Island Lark originally ..a sister boat to the Island Bird. A great story with Judge North...respectfully...Joy Radcliffe Eckman. Vero Beach Florida*

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**Joy Eckman** - September 20, 2025 at 06:12 PM

RM

“ *Rodger & Terry McQuay lit a candle in  
memory of Honorable John C. North*



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**Rodger & Terry McQuay** - September 20, 2025 at 03:02 PM

PW

“ One of the great joys of my and Irmey's 35 years on the Eastern Shore was getting to know Judge North and experience his (and Ethel's) passions and kindness. As a come from Philadelphian, I first learned the history of the log canoes and their uniqueness beginning with one of John's after dinner presentations at the Corinthian Yacht Club in Philadelphia, and later by voyages on Midnight Lace to experience the races close up. Being invited to his occasional lawn exhibitions of his antique automobile collection was a lesson in the beauty of classic automobiles and encouraged me to keep my antique Mercedes sedan tuned up, shiny and operating for 30 years. John always encouraged me in my passion for the Schooner Sultana, CBMM, the National Maritime Historical Society and trying to save the Presidential Yacht USS Sequoia, and freely gave of his incredible knowledge and sound strategic sense. He shared with me his passion for his machine shop and donated one of his metal sculptures to one of my non-profit causes. And his love of the Chesapeake environment encouraged me to sign on as a volunteer at ShoreRiver and Eastern Shore Land Conservancy, raising funds for their important work which he embraced.

*Fair winds, John. You were one of a kind who will be sorely missed by thousands of your friends and admirers.*

*Phil and Irmey Webster, Easton*

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**Philip Webster** - September 20, 2025 at 01:41 PM

MW

“ *Sorry for your loss*



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**Mary Wyatt** - September 20, 2025 at 11:17 AM



“ *Tim & Laura Bishop lit a candle in memory of Honorable John C. North*



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**Tim & Laura Bishop** - September 20, 2025 at 10:41 AM

PW

“ *Patti Kaufman Willis lit a candle in memory of Honorable John C. North*



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**Patti Kaufman Willis** - September 20, 2025 at 09:20 AM

MS

“ I had the distinct privilege of working with Judge North for several years; when he was Talbot County States Attorney and District and Circuit Courts True friend and fair to all that appeared before him. Justice tempered with mercy. He will be missed by many.

Melvin E Marshall, Sr  
Sgt Retired  
Easton Police Department  
Presently, New Port Richey, Fl

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Melvin E Marshall, SR - September 20, 2025 at 08:36 AM

JS

“ Jeanne M Smith sent a virtual gift in memory of Honorable John C. North



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jeanne m smith - September 19, 2025 at 11:28 PM

KN

“ David and Dan I am so sorry to hear about your Dad. He was a force and will be so very missed. Sending prayers and hugs.  
Kim Newcomb

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Kim Newcomb - September 19, 2025 at 10:08 PM

MP

“ Mandy Parks lit a candle in memory of Honorable John C. North



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Mandy Parks - September 19, 2025 at 06:46 PM

TP

“ *My hat is off to the gentleman. A legend who will be missed*  
*Tom P.*

Tom Price - September 19, 2025 at 02:00 PM

JE

*My grandfather built the Island Bird also the Island lark originally. So wonderful to hear the great memory. My respects to the family. Yes...a legend for sure. Joy Radcliffe Eckman...Vero Beach Florida*

Joy Eckman - September 19, 2025 at 05:27 PM

DF

*One of the joys of living in Doncaster in the early 50s was 'helping' the 19 year-old Buddy and his Dad and my Dad get the Bird ready for the canoe racing season in early June. I hovered while they pushed melted tar and oakum into her open seams & then sank her at Ann & Earl Spencer's dock for her 80 year-old planks to swell shut. I can still smell the tar mixed with honey locust blossoms. It was a heady experience for an 11 year-old girl & Buddy with his characteristic kindness shared peeks and gave rides on the gorgeous cars that were already being stored in the Spencer's garage shop.*

*All during the years that my Dad, Rogers Sollers tended jib on the Bird, I and my college friends were welcome to share Buddy's passions and the occasional ride in a rumble seat or Delores Del Rio's red convertible where Buddy chauffeured us to our wedding reception. As a farm owners on the Western Shore, All of us benefited from the breadth of his sense of stewardship for the health of the whole Bay as first Chairman of the Critical Area Commission. He, his Dad and his uncle John Clarence North exemplify a shared legacy of vision, public service, and what citizenship means in a democracy that can point the way forward for us to follow.*

*Deborah Ridgely and John Fialka*

Deborah Fialka - September 29, 2025 at 03:27 PM