



## John Bockius Whitney

March 1, 1945 - October 15, 2025

John Bockius Whitney, a creative and talented observer in life, died at home in Chestertown on October 15, 2025, succumbing to a latent but ultimately powerful aggressor, Large B-Cell Lymphoma. He was 80.

An intrinsic sense of rhythm and balance, his predominate identifying feature, genuinely shaped an authentic life. The only son of “Eli” and Violet Whitney, John’s formative years in a Main Line Philadelphia lifestyle were set in a circa 1816 white stone and frame house on Old Gulph Road in Wayne, Pennsylvania. His parents’ sensibilities in the home’s renovation revealed and preserved a harmonious relationship between the structure and its surroundings with strategic use of wood, stone, and brick to create a strong, grounded aesthetic and sense of order. The tranquility and enrichment of this setting coupled with primary and secondary schooling in Episcopal Academy and The Hill School, prestigious private Pennsylvania schools, set the tone and direction for John’s life choices and artistic preferences.

Conformity to the norms of a privileged lifestyle and the stringent expectations therein were counter intuitive for John. However, he graduated from The Hill School in 1963 first pursuing higher education while dutifully serving in the US Naval Reserves as seaman beginning in 1965. He was honorably discharged in 1968.

As an undergraduate biology major at Temple University, his desire to escape mainstream society and the social pressures therein compelled his counterculture, hipster engagement. A newfound freedom unleashed and

empowered a lifelong interest in science. Thriving in graduate studies at Temple with a commitment to research biology, he achieved a Ph.D. in Psychology in 1978. In his career, he developed a brand of talk therapy used in drug treatment programs, as well as school system and geriatric counseling professional practices.

Coupled with his personal commitment, John was an athlete. He excelled in squash, golf, and football with a rhythmic, balanced sequence of movement predominating.

He gloried in the feeling of flight with his love for classic motorcycles, and the advanced engineering of high-end bicycles and sports cars. He explored the sensory and life-changing joy in the adventure of sailing, where he met Barb, the love-of-his-life. Together they embraced the natural rhythm and balance of the sport using physics to create harmony with wind and water, exploring the Chesapeake and beyond on sailing yachts.

John captured his shared adventures with photography, artistically arranging elements in an image that felt stable and pleasing to the eye. Reveling in the marine landscape, he created a digital canvas with each photo featuring unmistakable movement and flow. He especially identified with the ebb and flow of rhythm and balance that exist at all levels of the natural world seen in everything from the tides and seasons to the circadian rhythms of all beings. In all of his pursuits, John had a keen eye for detail. His renovated Stick style Victorian house in Haddonfield, New Jersey, incorporated a harmonious balance of complex gabled architecture with decorative trusses and a wrap-around porch.

His masterpiece, The House That John Built, overlooking the 13th fairway of the Chester River Yacht and Country Club in Chestertown, Maryland, reflects the rhythm and balance of a Craftsman home. His sense of order shines through with familiar themes: built-in furniture, a central fireplace, exposed beams, a vaulted ceiling reflecting the belly of a boat, white oak hardwood floors—many handcrafted details—prioritizing functionality, simplicity, and an earthy connection to nature. John and his wife Barb Macbeth joyfully

witnessed the evolution of this project as they were living just next door in Barb's family's home. She and her son Erich along with a gregarious Labrador Retriever Ellamae are his survivors. A celebration of life party, by invitation only, will be held in The House That John Built in the New Year.

As a suggestion, donations to honor his life may support ShoreRivers 207 S. Front Street Chestertown, MD 21620, The Sultana Education Foundation 200 S Cross Street Chestertown, MD 21620, The Kent & Queen Anne's Rescue Squad 140 Morgnec Road Chestertown, MD 21620, or Compass Hospice in 160 Coursevall Drive Centreville, MD.

# Tribute Wall

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“ 56 files added to the album *Barb Macbeth and John Whitney*



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**Barbara K Macbeth** - October 20, 2025 at 09:04 AM