



## John L. Garrett

July 16, 1959 - August 31, 2019

John was born in Washington, D.C. on July 16, 1959 to his loving parents Wilbur and Bertha Garrett. He joined a family of five older siblings, three brothers and two sisters, who loved him then, just as much as we do now. He passed away August 31, 2019. He was a resident of Orlando, Florida for nearly 30 years.

As a child, John, with the nickname of Johnny, was fascinated by his environment and all the things in which his large family were involved. He grew up on the idyllic family farm called 'Wickford' in Potomac, Maryland. The farm was twenty four acres surrounded by hundreds of acres of the beautiful, wide open Montgomery County countryside; to include Great Falls National Park along the majestic Potomac River and the C & O Canal. Here, he had fun with family and friends; there was never a shortage of things to do, fun to be had or chores to be done. Simply getting lost in the woods, valleys, pastures or creeks, all of which differed in appearance and activity from one season to the next was a fantastic environment in which to grow in body and spirit. The farm's numerous hunting dogs, cats, horses, chickens, and pigeons, rounded out the farm's family. By the time John was born, Lynn was 15, Michael 13, Peter 10, Mark 8 and Mary 5. From time to time kids attended horse shows, hunted birds, built forts, swam in creeks, ice skated, spread manure, raked leaves, sled the driveway, mowed grass, climbed trees, painted fences, hiked the countryside or just played ball with one another. These were

halcyon days and served as the backdrop for so much family bonding and happiness. As John would often say of our family time in Potomac, “we had the best of it, pure country.” All of the children were blessed to have such wonderful, loving and supportive parents, whose lives enriched all of ours. Being the youngest child, John had a very special relationship with Wilbur and Bertha over many years, especially as the older children were leaving the nest, one by one.

John attended Our Lady of Mercy Elementary School, and like his three older brothers before him, he would serve as either an altar boy, or choir boy. John chose the former. As luck would have it, John would regularly pull 7am weekday altar assignments. On numerous occasions, when an assigned altar boy was missing, there was a gentleman seated in the front pew every morning who would serve with John. This man, Vince Lombardi, impressed John and they were friends. John loved meeting people; he loved their stories, always wanting to know more. From Mercy, John went on to attend and graduate from Bullis Prep High School in 1978 with a strong academic orientation. Throughout his time at Bullis, he loved sports, loved to compete and lettered in golf, track and soccer. He was bright, good looking, engaging, and loved making new friends. Writing and storytelling became two of his favorite pastimes, and he will always be remembered for his many stories.

John’s other siblings were moving on while he was still quite young. His personality matured by being closer to his parents and their myriad of wonderful friends both in Potomac and the decades old family home located overlooking the Chesapeake Bay on the eastern shore of Maryland, across from Annapolis. John thrived at the bay during his teenage years. He loved the Bay, and could be considered to have become a ‘waterman’ in the truest sense of the word. Again, he would note, “we had the best of it all”. This background helped him to be quite confident and independent in his thinking

and action. After high school, John moved to Florida, attended community college, and later enlisted in the Navy serving as a medical corpsman in San Diego, California. Afterwards, he moved back to Florida to complete a liberal arts degree at the University of Central Florida. He enjoyed all he was doing largely because he was free to do whatever he chose.

After graduation, John determined his interest, direction, skills and career path that would become his passion going forward. He became aware that the motion picture film and television industry was using Florida as a film venue, and decided he wanted to be associated with the industry's efforts. Once he gained the necessary expertise, John became a very knowledgeable, independent contractor specializing in finding desirable filming locations, contracting with owners, location management, with issues such as security, ingress and egress, site enhancement and refurbishment, and a myriad of other production issues. It was classic project management activity similar to constructing a building with heavy emphasis on cost, schedule and performance. A colleague recently noted that "John was a well-respected Location Manager in the film and television industry. Over his two decades in the business, he brought joy, laughter and love to his film family and was a mentor to many in the Locations Department on countless feature films, television commercials and tv series." Collateral benefits also included seeing or meeting stars, observing the filming and acting, and the freedom associated with finding the next best venue in his favorite place - Florida. John established wonderful friendships wherever he went and with whomever he might meet; it was in his DNA from the day he was born. He took tremendous satisfaction in knowing that the part he played in the various productions on which he worked, was one part of the greater whole; he loved being a team player, all with the common goal of creating the best production possible.

John had many interests, activities and qualities which can't all be listed here;

however, one item in particular deserves special recognition. John always recognized the true importance and value of family, especially when it came to the care of our parents. As John would say, “they did everything for us”, and he made it clear to all that they came first, and that he would adjust or change whatever he had going on in Florida to assist in their care. With the onset of the Great Recession in 2008 and the eventual slowing down of movie production in Florida, John would shift and balance his work schedule so as to work for eight years as a primary caregiver along side of his brother Mark, when and as needed. When Mark needed help or a break John would unhesitatingly heed the call. He was a natural, in the sense that, he had a medical background, was a fabulous cook, and could entertain his parents with stories of past times and adventures from the family’s time in Potomac and at the Bay. John absolutely loved all of the older classic movies, as did his parents, and that further opened up a great opportunity to share more time together. As the youngest child, John brought a special presence and warmth to their lives and care. John helped our parents to be interested in living and feel relevant with each passing day. Wilbur would live to be 102, and Bertha 94; these were huge lives, and we thank you John for the great joy you brought to them and our entire family in your 60 years. We will always be in your debt.

For all of us who knew John, or Johnny as he was known to many, he will be greatly missed. He will be remembered for the spirits he raised with his smile, stories and humor; as well as for his huge heart, and his love of family and friends. Our mother Bertha was a consummate storyteller; she would draw a crowd, and basically hold court. John had so much of her personality in him. It’s fair to say Johnny, “you’re right up with the best”. Keep on telling your stories; we will always be listening out for them, and remembering the way you brought so much joy to all of us in your life. At this point and upon reading the above, John would likely say, “Hey, did I tell you the story of ....”.

John is survived by his siblings Lynn, Michael, Peter, Mark and Mary; his niece Molly, and nephews Stephen, Brian, Michael, Sean and Jeff. Additionally, his sisters-in law Linda, Teresa and P.B., as well as his brother-in-law Jim.

The family plans to have a Celebration of Life gathering in Florida for his many friends, and that date will be communicated in the future through this funeral home's website. Please check in periodically for any updates. There will be a link to an additional website for the further gathering of contact information and comments from friends as we plan for the Celebration of Life. If you would like to contact a family member, please feel free to reach out to Mark Garrett, whose email address is [bo.garrett@gmail.com](mailto:bo.garrett@gmail.com), or whose cell is 410-924-0571.

The family also plans to have a Celebration of Life gathering in Maryland prior to John being laid to rest along side of our parents.

# Tribute Wall

SG

“ Another picture from the archives of my dad (aka: "Scribe") and I on one of our Florida visits meeting up with Uncle John at Crabby Bill's on the Florida Gulf Coast in Tampa/St. Pete for dinner and a "picturesque" sunset. Unforgettable night! Love you Big Johnny!



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Sean Reyburn Garrett - July 23, 2020 at 03:07 PM

SG

“ Did a little more recent "digging" through the ole' archives and found some extra photos of Uncle Johnny and I at Lisa's house for a party. Just one of many, numerous good times and fond memories of Big Johnny. Love you, Big Unc. - miss you!



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Sean Reyburn Garrett - July 23, 2020 at 02:52 PM

“ Pt 2

*Recently, while hiking by a small English village, I was curiously led off the trail to an ancient church tucked nearly out of sight. Once in the gate, I saw the name: The Church of St. Mary and St. John. I collapsed in grief and in awe of the perfection of the unexpected.*

*Now, given some distance, I can so easily imagine Big Johnny's take on seeing the same church. "What?!! Are you kidding me," he'd exclaim. "We were saints all along and didn't know it?!! Hell, you mean we never really needed to go to confession all those years?!! Mooooommm, you could have left two behind and just dragged the other four sinners in to confess and hopefully be absolved!!" From here, I'm sure he'd erupt in a great belly laugh and carry on, spontaneously enlarging this saintly tale making it hard to not be swept up in a good therapeutic dose of the ridiculous! What a knack he had for spontaneous humor! Big Johnny will always be remembered for his Johnny-on-the-spot hilarious story telling which captured the hearts and bellies of all who were fortunate enough to know and love him.*

*Gifts I take forward from my loved little brother, Big Johnny, is to be curious about the complexities of human nature – to find the light-side, the relief, in the heavy and serious side of life – and to see the richness, the subtle textures, of life in the ordinary.*

*I will forever hear his voice as we would part on the phone. I would say, "Love you, Big Johnny." And he would reply, "Love you too, Honey."*

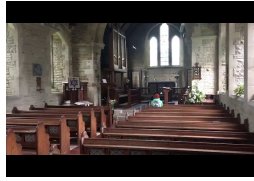
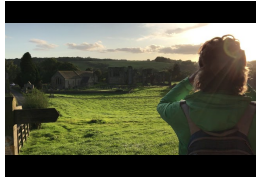
*LOVE YOU Big Johnny – FOREVER and EVER and EVER,*

*Your younger Big Sister,*

*Mary Feather*

*"May you know that absence is alive with hidden presence, that*

*nothing is ever lost or forgotten.” Irish Poet – John O’Donahue*



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**Mary Wilson** - November 14, 2019 at 12:03 PM

“ ODE TO BIG JOHNNY – MY LITTLE BROTHER

Pt 1 or 2

*At some point in adulthood, I started calling John, Big Johnny. This pet name surely fit because Johnny was a fellow with Big Ideas, Big Stories, and a Big Heart! Even the sound of Big Johnny rang with the enthusiastic energy he brought to the small and big things of life. As a foreshadowing to this cheery name, I'll never forget watching him in his first high school acting role. He had no lines and his character was relegated to the back recesses of the stage. However, hands down, Johnny stole the show! He filled his character with such vibrancy and humor that the other actors simply faded into the background.*

*Being the youngest of six kids, Johnny had a unique place from which to observe a lot of life! I had no idea how much the daily “doings” of our dynamic family had shaped and stretched his imagination until he starting writing short stories in high school. His stories were really impressive – very well crafted and frequently subjected the reader to an “edge of your seat” element whereby a semi-helpless protagonist was faced with limited escape options from some bogeyman roaming hallways and stairwells. Johnny’s story detailing was uncomfortably visceral! I remember praising him for these works, encouraging him to keep writing, and telling him he had the Cooney (Mom’s family) writing talent. Of course, his talent didn’t make it easy on me to share a dark hallway across from his bedroom at the top of that narrow and creaky stairwell in the much too quiet and remote west end of the old house.*

*Not many years later, Johnny’s writings evolved into the beginnings of movie scripts. I was so excited for him! Yes, he had longer and broader stories to tell with dialogue and contexts often lifted from the rich context in which we grew up. I remember inquiring into copyright information at the DC Patent Office and telling him, “You’ve got something great going here, Johnny. You must protect it!” I also told him he had to promise to write my intriguing character into one of his leading roles and he would laugh as he assured me*

*he would.*

*Years later, I knew Johnny felt I had achieved an admired leading role as the mother of his beloved niece and nephew, Molly and Jeff. He absolutely fell in love with them on our 2003 epic journey up the Atlantic coast from Emerald Isle, NC to Kent Island. Our boxy green van whisked us from one extra-ordinary grand adventure to the next that Johnny swore had all the makings for a great movie!*

*Two things became clear on our legendary journey. One, Big Johnny was branded with another treasured name – Uncle Johnny Tire-Air (long story on the Tire-Air). And two, Johnny's exceptional gift was revealed in full color – and that was - he saw the world through a Big receptive Heart. Hearing Johnny recount each day's adventures, shaping our story with enthusiasm and detail, was like being alongside a film director. He saw movie sets, film frames, and contextual features. He loved noting facial gestures and dialogue and what made interactions unique. He wondered about emotions and motivations. He sensed subtle textures in the ordinary. His gift was his openness to receive the day's input – all filtered through his inquisitive, compassionate, empathic, tender Big Heart. For years afterwards, Big Johnny – Uncle Johnny Tire-Air spoke lovingly of the 2003 epic journey and his Big Heart frame of reference is forever etched in the hearts of his loyal traveling companions – me, Molly and Jeff.*

*Please see next post for pt 2*

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**Mary Wilson** - November 14, 2019 at 11:38 AM

SG

“ When I reflect back on the life of Uncle Johnny and what he meant to me as an uncle, friend and mentor, it's hard to pinpoint one time or memory I have of him because I was fond of all of them and the times we shared together were endless and everlasting! Everything from the laughs and smiles he would stir up at dinner tables during Thanksgiving or Christmas at the bay house in Queen Anne County to the times I went on family trips during my early childhood to visit him in Orlando as well as his two cats, Bob the Cat and "Girl Cat." His smile was infectious along with his charisma and lively/animated humor - traits that made him such a true joy to socialize and interact with on countless occasions.

...And then, I think about the times we spent when I moved to Orlando and chose to spend the next 4-5 years of my collegiate academic career at UCF: it seemed like a difficult decision at first (turning down an offer from PSU to accept one from UCF - a decision that I got a lot of "flack" for from family and friends for a while.. lol), but Big Johnny made it feel so easy and right with the way he guided me and took me under his wing - "showing me the ropes" as well as all the great "hotspots" and restaurants in town. I know I never would have met some of the great friends that I made at Brickhouse (r.i.p. BH) or had the internship opportunity at Telesis Productions working with a tremendous filming and locations crew had it not been for him! He really made the adjustment to a new town and new friends so easy for me and made so many things possible!

And of course I can't forget about the Superbowl, Christmas - "Secret Santa" and pool party shenanigans: going up to Sanford to visit some of my closest friends and former roommates at UCF, playing Apples to Apples and Card Against Humanity. That George Bush card was always a winner for Uncle Johnny! Lol. He was embraced, ingratiated and accepted in my circle of friends just as I was in his and as a #UCFamily, we all held him dear to our hearts!

Sadly he is gone from this world, but his spirit will live on - as will the

*beautiful and meaningful impact he had on the numerous lives he touched, including mine. Love you Big Johnny, now and always! Miss you unc.!*

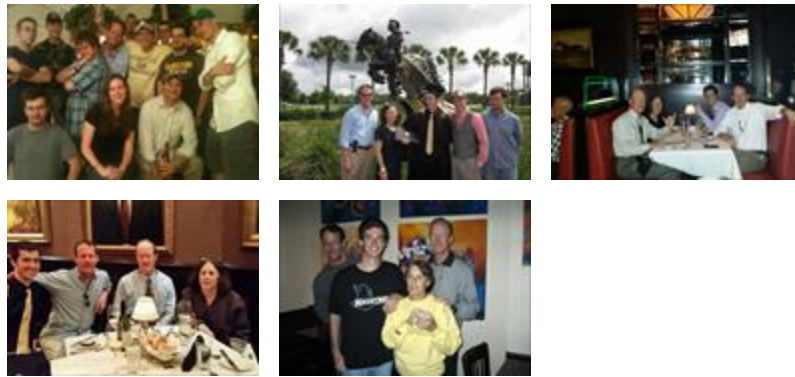
*Your "favorite" nephew,  
Sean R. Garrett*

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**Sean Garrett** - October 29, 2019 at 01:29 PM

SG

“ 5 files added to the album *Uncle Johnny - from the UCF days and beyond*



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**Sean Garrett** - October 28, 2019 at 10:32 PM

GD

“ 1 file added to the album *Memories Album*



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**Gina Dougherty** - October 06, 2019 at 04:47 PM

GD

“ 1 file added to the album *Memories Album*



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**Gina Dougherty** - October 06, 2019 at 04:40 PM

GD

“ 1 file added to the album *Memories Album*



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**Gina Dougherty** - October 06, 2019 at 04:39 PM

GD

“ 1 file added to the album *Memories Album*



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**Gina Dougherty** - October 06, 2019 at 04:39 PM

GD

“ 1 file added to the album *Memories Album*



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**Gina Dougherty** - October 06, 2019 at 04:38 PM

GD

“ It is difficult to sum up a 30 year friendship in just a few paragraphs. John and I really got to know each other on Superboy in 1988. And from there, the friendship grew.

We enjoyed many fun celebrations together including birthdays, 4th of July, weddings, Thanksgiving, Halloween or just the annual grapefruit party. John had a beautiful backyard with grapefruit trees and two gigantic gardenia bushes that filled the air with the most beautiful scent. We would walk through the yard trying to inhale each and every flower because we knew the blooms wouldn't last forever.

*I miss you Johnny.*

John had such a big heart. For example, on Johns 40th birthday we picked him up on the party bus we rented, preparing to take him on a local gambling boat trip. When John got on the bus that night he had a bag full of presents that he passed out to each and everyone of us. He was such a caring friend.

He was the kind of person who always had a big joke, a funny story and a warm hug for you. He was definitely one of a kind. He was the Shaggy to our Scooby Doo Gang and one of the nicest, good hearted people you could ever meet.

*To his family, I am so sorry for your loss. He will be missed deeply.*

*Love Always,*

*Gina Williams Dougherty*

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**Gina Dougherty** - October 06, 2019 at 04:35 PM

YG

“ Dear Uncle Johnny,

*You will be in my heart for the rest of my life! I love you and miss you so much. You cared about people and helped others, and loved the natural world and all of God's creatures with all of your heart. Your style, personality and spirit had a massive impact on my life, as well as the entire Garrett family. You always talked about "the cool stuff in life," like movies, music, comedy, love and history and were able to weave an elaborate mesh of context into each story you told. You kept the stories alive and shared them with the touch of a true craftsman. I was always so excited when you'd come to Maryland to hang out with the family, and the times I got to hang out with you in Florida were so much fun, too! In high school on Kent Island I always bragged to my friends how cool you were, and how you worked on so many amazing movies across your career in the film industry. You loved the Chesapeake Bay and the times with Grandma and Grandpa and the whole family so much. You always had all of us laughing at those Christmas parties, or really any time Johnny, "The Man From Florida," would arrive. The love that you had for Grandma and Grandpa was so real. I saw first hand how much they enjoyed their time with you. The times that you would queue up a specialty curated film for them, transporting them directly back into their own "time" was so beautiful. One time you took my brother Stephen and I along with cousin Sean to hang out on set of a show that was being filmed at Universal Studios. It was one of the coolest experiences of my life. Being there after a great day at the park with family, and getting to see behind the scenes the work that you did in the television and film industry, was so awesome. You took the time and the care to make things fun and I will always remember you and I will pass along your stories and memories. You wrote the best cards, left the funniest voicemails, laughed the hardest, and lived so fully that anyone that spent time with you felt how freaking huge your heart was to everyone in the room. You have inspired me to always have fun in life while pursuing the things that interest me, and to always take care of family, friends, and animals. You always brought such a unique spirit and energy to our family gatherings, and you truly were*

*through and through yourself at all times! I will never forget your voice, your laugh and how you made the room come alive when you'd come in. Hanging with you, riding in your Ford Mustang on Kent Island will always be such a cool memory for me like the time you took me out on the Sunfish for my first time sailing. You seemed right at home that day on a really windy afternoon on the Chesapeake Bay. I know your soul lives on in Heaven with God and the rest of our family and friends who have gone before us. I know you will always be there with us and we will always remember and think of you.*

*Love you Uncle Johnny!!!*

*A few songs that Johnny and I loved:*

*"Shine on You Crazy Diamond" & "Any Colour You Like" - Pink Floyd*



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**Younger Michael Garrett** - October 05, 2019 at 03:10 PM

LL

“ John was a blessing to our family. John was the young, handsome neighbor that moved into the house directly across the street from my fathers home. He befriended my widower father, Abe, in his twilight years and added quality to his life. John would check in on Sergeant Abe frequently both interested in assorted home improvement projects. Since I lived 60 miles away, it was good to know that someone was in earshot in case of an emergency. JOHN stepped up when transportation to Abe's dialysis failed to come and even alerted me when my father at 89 decided to mow his own lawn! He always took note of my father's birthdays procuring the funniest card available enhanced by his handwritten notes. John was a neighbor, son, and young recruit to my dad.....may John rest in peace.

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**Laura Ketben Laboda** - September 29, 2019 at 01:06 PM

CA

“ I was so very honored to have known Johnny on this life's journey. During the early years of Orlando's film industry we shared many interesting experiences. His stories and unique sense of humor often brought tears from laughter. Our adventure in and around New York will always remain with me. Rest well, Sport, you are missed.  
Cathy Savino, Connecticut



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**Cathy** - September 29, 2019 at 07:22 AM

CM

“ Cheryl Monaghan lit a candle in memory of  
John L. Garrett



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**Cheryl Monaghan** - September 28, 2019 at 08:39 AM

MG

“ As John's next older brother, I would like to share a story about how I first came to know that he had arrived !!! As our mother Bertha was getting closer to her due date, I was shipped off and up to Rhode Island, as I was to stay with Bertha's sister Ann and her family. So off to Rhode Island I went. Bertha's father, whom we called Dad Cooney, picked me up early in the morning of July 16th, 1959 and he drove us to Boston where he surprised me with tickets to Fenway Park to watch the Boston Red Sox versus the New York Yankees. He was an avid Red Sox fan, and I, an avid Yankees fan. While I can't remember who won the game, I know we had a great day to include dinner at Durgan Park. On the way back to Aunt Ann's, we pulled into the driveway, got out of the car, walked up the front steps wherein Aunt Ann threw the screen door open with such excitement and force, that she nearly swept Dad Cooney and me off the stoop !! She grabbed me up in her arms, hugged me, kissed her father and said, " Bobo, you are an older brother yet again; you have a baby brother whose name is John". Dad Cooney was so happy to have another grandchild, and I was so happy to have a baby brother. I loved Aunt Ann and her family, but I could not wait to get back to Maryland to be with John, and for the next 60 years we were very close. Just as John had many stories to tell in his lifetime about his and our many family adventures growing up in the country and on the Chesapeake Bay, I feel that when it came to telling stories, we were quite the team!!! Love you Johnny, and I will keep posting our stories as you keep directing my heart from above. As for how I got the nickname Bobo out of Mark, I will leave that story for another day.

Bobo



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Mark Garrett - September 27, 2019 at 11:09 AM