



John Lee Howie

January 17, 1952 - June 3, 2026

Dr. John Lee Howie, Professor Emeritus of Psychology at the University of Pikeville, passed from this life surrounded by loved ones on June 3rd, 2026, after a courageous 8-year battle with cancer.

Born to Dr. Virgil Mitchell Howie & Evelyn Madge McCraw Howie on January 17th, 1952, in Nashville, Tennessee. John was raised in a large family of brothers and sisters, of which he was oldest, in Huntsville, Alabama. John's father was one of the first White physicians in the South to accept patients of color or those with financial needs. His parents were early and ardent supporters of the Civil Rights Movement and instilled these values in their children; John continued to fight for social justice and civil rights issues throughout his life.

John graduated from Swarthmore College and then earned his master's and doctoral degrees from the University of Dallas. Upon moving to Pikeville, he served and taught for 30 years as the Abnormal Psychology Professor at University of Pikeville (formerly Pikeville College) where he changed the lives of countless students and faculty.

An indefatigable traveler with a lust for learning and adventure, he traveled with the American Field Services to India at the age of sixteen. Some few years later, he found himself in Argentina and hitchhiked throughout South America.

He was just getting started. He loved this world and the people in it. Not a casual tourist, he prefaced each trip with extensive study of each region's

culture and language and, upon return, continued to add to his understanding with additional study, answering the questions provoked by the experience. Along the way, he developed one of the finest personal libraries in eastern Kentucky. When a student took an interest in a topic, he would not only suggest readings but also inscribe a personal note and press a copy into their hands, accompanied by an admonition that books and knowledge had little utility if hoarded. He was an inspiration and a role model for both students and colleagues. His passion for the world inspired so many of the folks with whom he came into contact that his impact on his beloved mountains will ripple through the generations to come.

Dr. Howie married his life partner, Emma Sue Jones, in 2005- they shared a deep bond, intellectual curiosity, a love of cultures, and they both had a wanderlust that took them on travels together to Mexico, Guatemala, Honduras, Peru, Galapagos, Ecuador, Cuba, Ireland, Scotland, England, and Spain. Together, they created a Village of friends and family. They created a home where folks felt welcome, accepted, and loved.

John was preceded in death by his parents and one brother, Don Houston Howie. He will be profoundly missed by his wife Emma Sue Jones (Dishman), sons Jackson Lee Howie, Noah Scout Howie, Sean Jones (Chelsey), and Miles Jones, grandchildren Jaz, Michaela, Zoey, his Village, sisters Helen Clark (Gary), Sarah Boxley (Grant), Tricia Kessler (Robert), Carol, sister-in-law Aletha, and brothers David (Niki), Mitch (Debra), and a wealth of nieces, nephews, friends.

Memorial and celebration of John's life will be held in UPIKE'S Chrisman Auditorium on July 25th. Visitation will begin at 5 with the memorial service starting at 6.

In lieu of flowers, please donate to the Volunteer Program with the Leonard Lawson Cancer Center in Dr. Howie's memory.

Upcoming Events

Visitation

JUL 25. 5:00 PM - 6:00 PM (ET)

Chrisman Auditorium @ UPike
College Street
Pikeville, KY 41501

Celebration of Life

JUL 25. 6:00 PM (ET)

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