



Dr. John Hugh Mather, MBBS, FACPE

1943-2020

Dr. John Hugh Mather, MBBS, FACPE, aged 77 of Franklin, TN passed away early on December 6, 2020 at Williamson Medical Center (after) having taken himself to the medical center earlier the previous afternoon. Dr. Mather was born in Harrow, England to the late John Robert Mather and Helen Theodora Penfold Mather. He is survived by a son, Stephen Robert Mather of Bowie, Maryland; daughter, Alexandra Mather (Thomas) Bourne and granddaughter, Margaret

Susan “Maggie Sue” Bourne of Rehoboth Beach, Delaware; brother, Dr. Martin (Linda) Mather of Ilfracombe, England; sisters, Helen (Scott) Cassel of Lindale, TX and Margaret (Peter) Lambert of Braunton, England. He is also survived by two former wives, Susan Howard Mather, M.D., M.P H., of Bowie, MD and Karen Rhea, M.D., of Franklin, TN, 5 nieces, 2 nephews, 9 great-nieces, 8 great-nephews and many friends all over the world.

It is planned that Memorial service will be conducted virtually early in the New Year - please no flowers. Should you wish to remember John through memorial contributions, the family asks that contributions in John’s memory should be sent to:

In the U.S. to a youth sports or Veterans organization of your choice (please let the family know the organization to which you donate);

and in the UK the The Lyonian Association’s “Hardship Fund.”

To be found at: <https://www.oldlyonians.org/fundraising/donation/12>

A memorial guest book is hosted at web site for WILLIAMSON MEMORIAL FUNERAL HOME, williamsonmemorial.com. The family is working on a site in his memory, which will be located at www.johnhmather.com

To say John Mather was a force of nature is an accurate description of the man, and almost an understatement. He was generous, kind and known for standing up for people he thought were wronged in some way, and to the causes he supported. He was always on the move and a bundle of energy throughout his life, although also known to take short naps almost anywhere. John would push the boundaries and limits in his life, be it his parent’s rules in his youth, or when standing up for something he believed in. He practically always had a smile on his face and was constantly there to lift up those around him to be the best they could be and accomplish their goals so that “they stood on mountains”.

John loved kids and was welcoming and generous to them. Starting, early in life as a big brother to one younger brother, whom he insisted on naming when he was born, but whom he called “Titch” and two sisters, all of whom he loved dearly. He would spoil nieces and nephews with sweets and goodies, whenever possible and regularly sent his granddaughter cards and packages of things he had found for her. John would contribute his time and resources to any youth sport organization. He was definitely that “cool” dad, uncle, and man kids loved. His genuine interest in hearing about what was going on in your life, regardless of whether he’d known you for his entire life, or you had just met him that day appealed to kids and adults alike.

John was a snappy dresser. He loved bowties, was an elected member of the International Bow Tie Society, and always had the right clothes for an event. At the end of his life, he became the Town Crier for Franklin TN, of which he was very proud and perfectly suited for, increasing his wide circle of friends. John also loved to read and was a writer of poetry. He was the first to see the new action film in the theater, especially a Bond film. He also loved music throughout his life, especially symphony, chamber music, bagpipe, 70s music especially Linda Ronstadt, and at the end of his life developed a love for country music, after moving to Tennessee.

John Mather was born during WWII in the suburbs of London, while his father served in the British Army in North Africa. For the first 3 years of his life, both he and his mother, called Dora, were without his father Jack. One of his earliest memories was doodlebug bombs falling from the air at the end of war and hiding under the kitchen table with his mother. Jack was then posted to Italy in the Royal Signals and then finally as a solicitor for the British Army in the Mediterranean Theatre by the end of the war.

John grew up in the towns of North Harrow and Pinner, in Middlesex, and was joined by a brother and two sisters once his father had returned from the war. The Mather family's favorite place for vacations was the south coast of England, in the town of Dawlish Devon. In the early years the family spent holidays staying with Aunty Peggy in her flat and later her bungalow, along with her daughter June. Dora and Jack then purchased a holiday home there. Dawlish is where, as a young child, John had to be tethered on the beach to keep him from wandering away from his mother.

John was educated at The John Lyon School, the "day" school of the famed Harrow school, located in Middle Road, Harrow-on-the-Hill, England from 1954-1962 as had his father and uncles before him. While at the school, he enjoyed many activities including the Combined Cadet Force. He was Regimental Sergeant Major, Soccer, and became Captain of Athletics and Cross Country and in 1962 was made Head Boy of the school. During his time at John Lyon, he became a Foundation Scholar, was honored with the Oliver Hanscombe Cup for the most outstanding cadet of the year 1962, his athletic colours in his 4th year, the Geography prize in his "O" level year, and was the school's first recipient of the Duke of Edinburgh Gold award, paving the way for others at the school to follow.

Outside of school John participated in Outward Bound both as participant and instructor and developed a love of trekking/camping (hiking), completing difficult treks in Corsica & Scotland, he ran a "Do it Yourself" camp in Cumbria England with Crusaders – a Bible Class organization for which he was a teacher locally in Harrow. Although he was raised a Christian, it was during these years, John accepted Jesus into his heart, thus began a lifetime of works to the glory of the Lord. In his youth he participated in Christian Youth Fellowship at his church in Headstone Harrow and youth camps in Scotland.

After leaving secondary school, he went on to study medicine at the Middlesex Hospital Medical School, London. In 1964 John met a medical student Susan from the University of Maryland, who was in the country as an exchange student, and they fell in love. In 1966, John participated in a student summer exchange at the University of Maryland, during which he and Susan became engaged. In the summer of 1967 they married in Salisbury, Maryland, and lived in England for the first year of their marriage. He graduated in 1968, with his MBBS (a double degree Bachelor of Medicine and Surgery), after which he undertook a six-month residency at the Middlesex Hospital.

John moved to the US in 1968 and lived in Baltimore, MD. Having signed up for the draft when he came to the US, he received one of the few military deferments for doctors, allowing John to complete his training in ENT surgery. In 1970 he became father of a son, Steve, and in 1973 the father of a daughter, Alex. In 1973, he and his family moved to Bowie, MD, outside Washington DC.

John served as a Major in the US Army, from 1972 to 1975 and was an Ear Nose & Throat surgeon at Walter Reed Army Medical Center from 1972 until 1974. He passed his ENT, board certification while in the Army. John was naturalized as a US citizen in 1975.

In Bowie, John was an Ordained Elder in Christian Community Presbyterian Church (CCPC) and served as Clerk of Session for three years. He became involved in the building of the new sanctuary at CCPC as Chairman of the Sanctuary Building Committee and was a driving force behind the completing the beautiful sanctuary. He was active in the Bowie Soccer Association, as a coach and referee. During his time in Bowie, he founded and was the longtime president of the Washington Society for Churchill.

John spent most of his career in service to his chosen country in some form or another. John served as a Commander, US Public Health Service, and was involved in health manpower policy development in the National Institutes of Health Bureau of Health Manpower. John then held various positions as a physician executive in the Veterans Administration Central Office (VACO), including Director, Affiliated Education Programs; Associate Chief Medical Officer, Geriatrics and Long-Term Care; Assistant Inspector General for Inspections, Veterans Administration and Chief Officer, Office of Research Compliance and Assurance and during his career, he also served as Chief Medical Director of the Social Security Administration. He graduated from the Federal Executive Institute and was in the first Veterans Administration Leadership Class. His Federal career as a physician executive was interrupted for two years, when John served as the Associate Executive Director of Medical and Research Programs for Paralyzed Veterans of America. In 2004 he retired after 30 years Federal Service.

John was not a man who knew how to retire. Following his "retirement" from federal service, John did not slow down. He spent a year at the University of Michigan as the

school's first Director of Human Subjects Research Compliance, before establishing his own medical consultancy firm, UNI-CORN LLC. In later years he was an Independent Medical Examiner and conducted medical evaluations of veterans applying for disability benefits at the Nashville VA Medical Center, as well as completing the review of applicants for Social Security disability benefits in Tennessee. He continued to serve veterans as a Mentor of the Veterans Treatment Court of Williamson County TN.

In 2007 John and his first wife separated and he moved to Washington DC, and then to Rehoboth Beach, DE. Divorced in 2010 he then moved to Franklin, Tennessee. Soon after he became a grandfather to Maggie Sue, his only grandchild.

John fell in love with Tennessee, Williamson County, Franklin and Karen Rhea MD, a physician who practices psychiatry in Tennessee. They were married in 2016, in Franklin, TN. John and Karen enjoyed traveling together and visited many of John's "bucket list" locations including Switzerland, Vienna Austria, Madrid & Valencia, Spain and Italy. That marriage ended earlier this year.

John Mather was a lover of all things Sir Winston Churchill. He was very proud of having met Churchill, prior to his death when John was in his last year at the school John Lyon. John was a pathographer, (medical biographer) specializing in Churchill's medical history. John was active in The International Churchill Society, where he served as its Secretary for a decade, from which he received its prestigious Blenheim Award for service to Churchill's legacy. He also worked with members of Churchill's family on preservation of his legacy, notably Churchill's daughter Mary Soames. He was the immediate past President of the Churchill Society of Tennessee, a Chapter the International Churchill Society, USA. He also in recent years, contributed his updated & revised conclusions regarding Churchill's father's cause of death for the Hillsdale College Churchill Project.

John always loved his cars. Although he didn't get his driver's license until coming to the US, he was driving before stepping foot in the US. He was known to have taken a friend's car for a spin during his time in medical school. John had a long line of cars he loved from his Mustang in early years to the Bentley he drove at the very end of his life. In the summer of 87' he achieved a childhood dream. With his daughter in tow, he drove into the Mather family's favorite holiday destination of Dawlish England in a Jaguar. He especially loved English cars, having owned several Jaguars through the years. He was also a notoriously bad driver, having accidents in cars throughout his life and terrifying people who rode with him.

John was designated Town Crier in Franklin TN for the Heritage Society of Williamson County, the Bard of Franklin and a toastmaster for special events. John was an active member of American Legion John E. Stephens Post 156, Brentwood TN and WA Post

1014; he was Chirurgeon for both. He was a Life Coach holding the Certificate of the Coaching Alliance and was a Certified Federal Mediator and Mentor and completed the Stephens Ministry training. John was elected to Fellowship in several medical organizations including the Academy of Otolaryngology and Head and Neck Surgery, the American Geriatrics Society, and the Gerontological Society of America. John was inducted as a Knight Commander of the Sovereign Military Order of the Temple of Jerusalem and was the Grand Chirurgeon for the Grand Priory of the USA. He was a member of the Rotary Club of Downtown Franklin, TN. John was Regent for the International Douglas Clan in Tennessee and at the end of his life worshiped at St. Paul's Episcopal Church in Franklin, TN.

The world is a poorer place since his departure. Given his education, experience and service to his country and others...his family and friends mourn his departure.

Photo credit: Williamson Herald