

# Jon Hawker Obituary

## **Hawker, Jon Lawrence**

passed away on December 3, 2023, in Clarkdale, AZ, a day short of his 79th birthday. Born in Laredo, TX, December 4, 1944 to William D. and Norma T. Hawker, who preceded him in death, he was the beloved husband of Patricia Hawker, brother of Charles Hawker, Bill Hawker, Jr., and Susan (Luther) Clauss; uncle of Michael Hawker, Jennifer Hawker, Erin (Jon) Furay, and Kate Hawker. Jon also leaves behind his constant companion, Bandit, a yellow lab.

Jon grew up in St. Louis, MO, graduated from Cleveland HS (1962) and earned a BS in Biology at Ripon College (1966). He spent a semester in Costa Rica studying reptiles and returned to St. Louis with 35 species of snakes he donated to the St. Louis Zoo, all new to the Zoo's collection at that time. Upon graduating from Ripon, he worked at the Zoo for a year, then completed a master's degree in Botany at Washington University - St. Louis. A competitive runner in track and cross country in high school and college, for several years he held the state record for the half mile.

Interested in all aspects of nature, Jon taught biology, botany, zoology, horticulture, ecology, and animal behavior at St. Louis Community College - Meramec for 36 years, rising to the rank of professor. His ecology courses were popular because they culminated in week-long field trips to mountains, deserts, or swamps. He wrote two books -- *Agaves, Yuccas, and Their Kin: Seven Genera of the Southwest* and *Missouri Landscapes: A Tour through Time*. He helped found the Missouri Native Plant Society (MONPS) and was its first president beginning in 1979. Jon and Pat traveled to Alaska, Greenland, Newfoundland, the Galapagos, Antarctica, Australia, and New Zealand to expand their knowledge and enhance his teaching. After retiring to Arizona, Jon had a small landscaping business using native plants he propagated.

Jon will be remembered for his caring, loving concern for others and his playful sense of humor. To his nieces and nephew, Jon was very centered, could be trusted with secrets, and offered wise advice that was invaluable for that moment. As an uncle, he was more like a big brother.

In lieu of flowers, memorials may be sent to Missouri Native Plant Society, St. Louis Community College, or The Nature Conservancy.

Published by St. Louis Post-Dispatch on Jan. 21, 2024.