

# CROSSED THE BAR

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## John Ballard Syer

John Ballard Syer died on January 1, 2019 at his home in Charlottesville, after a four-year battle with amyotrophic lateral sclerosis (ALS), also known as Lou Gehrig's disease. Jack was born on February 22, 1939 in Portsmouth, Virginia, the younger son of Virginia and Charles Syer Jr., and grew up at Virginia Beach. He was predeceased by his parents and brother Charles. He is survived by his wife of 56 years, Virginia McCallum Syer, as well as his son John B. Syer Jr. and his wife Beth, his daughter Virginia and her husband Mike Genereux, and four granddaughters, Vaughan and Virginia Syer and Josephine and Grace Genereux.

Jack attended Norfolk Academy and graduated from Episcopal High School in 1957. He graduated from the University of Virginia in 1961 and served two years in the US Army. While at UVA, Jack played varsity baseball and first year football. He joined St. Anthony Hall fraternity, the Raven Society, IMP, TILKA and was President of the Class of 1961. His time at UVA instilled a lifelong devotion to sports, civic engagement, and his friends across Virginia and elsewhere.

Jack spent his business career in his hometowns of Virginia Beach and Norfolk. He was owner and Chief Executive Officer of S&N Transportation Companies in Norfolk; President and Chief Operating Officer of the venture subsidiary for Essex Financial Group in Norfolk; and a Partner of Tidewater Home Health. While living in Tidewater, Jack served as President of the Norfolk Academy Board of Trustees, President of the Virginia Student Aid Foundation (now the Virginia Athletic Foundation) and President of the Princess Anne Country Club. He also served on the Boards of Sovran Bank in Norfolk, the UVA Alumni Association and Virginia Beach General Hospital. He was Junior Warden of Galilee Episcopal Church.

In 1993 Jack and Virginia moved to Charlottesville, where Jack took on a new role as President of the Alumni Association of the University of Virginia, a position he held until his retirement in early 2006. One of Jack's proudest accomplishments at the Alumni Association was the creation of the Jefferson Trust, a source of discretionary funding for trustee-selected projects which has grown to over \$30 million in assets and \$700,000 in annual grant funding.

Jack was enjoying his retirement years tremendously. He became an accomplished amateur painter. He was a keen student of American history, and just as he had driven his family to many Civil War battlefields across Virginia, he now enjoyed visiting World War II sites in Europe. He loved watching all variety of UVA sports teams practice and compete, and continued to engage in a variety of civic and social roles. He was on the Board of Guaranty Bank in Charlottesville, a Council member of the Focused Ultrasound Foundation in Charlottesville, a member of the US Seniors Golf Association, President of Belvedere Golf Club in Charlevoix, Michigan, and Treasurer of Gulf Stream Golf Club in Delray Beach, Florida. He built special relationships with each of his four granddaughters, whom he loved dearly.

Jack and his family deeply appreciate the care and counsel of Dr. Andrew Wolf and Dr. Neal Kassell over the past several years. The family wishes to thank Hospice of the Piedmont and nurse Kelly Ottman, as well as Home Instead and nurse Betsy Lamb for their help in Jack's final months.

Memorial contributions may be sent to the Jefferson Trust at the Alumni Association. Checks should be made payable to "UVA Fund" with "Jefferson Trust" on the memo line, and mailed to The Jefferson Trust, University of Virginia Fund, P.O. Box 400314, Charlottesville, VA 22904-4314. Inurnment will be private. A Celebration of Life will be held at 12 Noon at Farmington Country Club on January 12, 2019