



DONORS:

Dave Noble, Donna Morris John Gilbert, Bob Collins, Lee Worrell, Amanda Morgan, Sheldon Nicolle, Deanna Curtis, Bill Huseeth, Crystal Noble, Robert Thomson, David Campbell, Ben Ohlander, Kurt Haase, Betty Haase, Eric Ratering, Bill Oakes, Jonathan Wilde, Alan and Venice Beske, North American Falconers' Association.



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› John won the falconry division in 1974 at the NAFA meet in Yankton, South Dakota flying a chamber raised prairie falcon named Mariah.

REMEMBERING JOHN L. NOBLE

by Dave Noble



John was my next oldest sibling and one of 11 Noble family children. Born on September 13 1952, he was 3rd oldest and the last of the 5th generation born on the original homestead farm in Racine county Wisconsin. Just before I was born we moved to the small nearby town of Waterford where we finished high school together in 1972.

Our falconry officially started there just before graduation when we received our first permits.

John was remarkable in many ways, not the least of which is that he practiced falconry of a high degree for 31 years while legally blind. 5 of the 11 siblings have what is known as Stargardt's disease. It is also known as juvenile macular degeneration because of its insidious nature of destroying the macula and therefore the central vision in children starting at about age 6. Imagine using only your peripheral vision to see the world and with no correction available. Just in case you are wondering, my eyesight is very good. I was about to say that I am one of the lucky ones but on reflection, perhaps some of John's best qualities were born of his so called handicap? He had what I can only describe as a photographic memory. He seemed to retain everything he took in. Reading was extremely difficult for him but in college he was fortunate enough to have volunteer readers who read his textbooks and assignments to him aloud. How would you do if you had to have someone read everything to you? John got nearly straight A's through college. He finished a bachelor of science with a major in psychology at the University of Wisconsin-Whitewater. Perhaps also, his warm and jovial personality developed from his codependency on others? It seemed to me that

John attracted friends like blossoms attract bees.

One bit of trivia that gained him early notoriety was his winning the falcon division in 1974 at the last competitive NAFA meet held in Yankton South Dakota. He was flying his first longwing, a captive bred, chamber raised prairie falcon named



Mariah. Mariah took 6 pheasants there, 4 of which were taken in a single flight with a caravan of witnesses in attendance. Upon being cleanly dispatched with a headshot, the pheasants disappeared in the snow, at which time Mariah would remount for another shot. Several witnesses claimed that many more were taken but just could not be located in the deep snow.

The falconry bug bit him hard and from his beginning he was never again without at least one falconry bird and pointing dog trained by his own hands. He was truly a natural with hawks, falcons and dogs. Falconry was a lifestyle for him and in 1983 he sought out a job in South Dakota, moving there with his beloved wife Christine. The wide open spaces and quarry needed to fly his favored longwings were found there. His last 20 years were spent there in a career as a Rehabilitation Counselor for the State of South Dakota, most while working at the school for the Blind and Visually Impaired in Aberdeen.

Many people probably don't know that my bell making was spawned by his encouragement and need for bells. With his visual deficit, bells were an invaluable aid and he was my primary teacher as I perfected my bell design.

As a brother, he was the best anyone could ever wish for. Besides me visiting him as often as possible, we spent many long hours on the phone sharing hawking stories and life lessons. Something that still



brings a tear to my eyes is that in all of our phone conversations I never once remember him initiating an end to a phone call. He always waited until I was finished talking. It was always me, 'the busy one' that had to end the call. His cancer came and went for several years. It finally took him on September 9, 2003. I never once heard him complain in any way. Right to the end, whenever I asked him how he was feeling, he would say "Great". If I had to put it into a single word, that is how I would describe John.

