



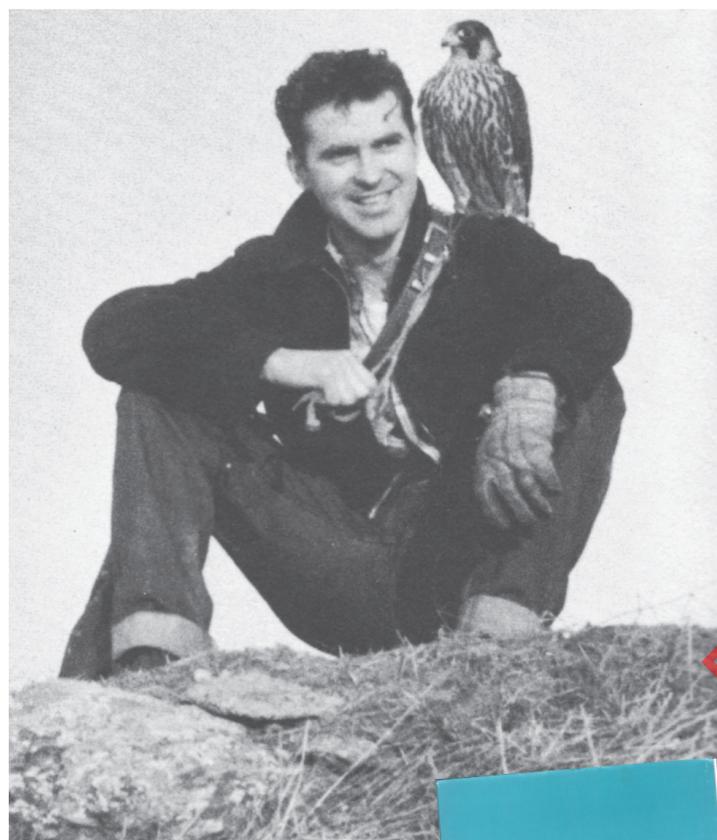
DONORS:

Mike and Karen Yates, Richard “Rocky” Montgomery, Peter Devers, Brian McDonald, Bill Barbour, Virginia Falconers Association, Bob Collins, and Alaskan Admirers of Johnny McCabe



Hawking with friends at Seneca Bottoms, Virginia in 1951.

The Life of John Henry Pierre McCabe



John with a peregrine falcon, commonly called the duck hawk. This bird was captured on Assateague Island, Maryland, in October, 1954.



Johnny always searched for something big according to his mother, Mrs. Andree McCabe. Johnny was a big thinker with a spirit of adventure. He dreamed of flying falcons for a living. His father was a journalist at Catholic University and had met Andree in France during WWI. After the war, Johnny’s parents settled in the Washington, D.C. and soon had three children, two girls and Johnny. Johnny had a biology degree from Catholic University but worked at the Library of Congress so that his work schedule would allow time for his falcons. He was an Army veteran, serving in Europe in the late 1940s. He loved to paint, draw, and listen to good music.

Johnny’s main love was falcons – and he trained them well. He loved being outdoors with his birds. He started falconry early in life with his first kestrel in 1943. His initial falconry mentor was John Hamlet who went on to author several well known books on birds of prey and the wilderness. Through Hamlet, Johnny met future lifelong falconer friends Al Nye, Jim Fox, Halter Cunningham, Brian McDonald, Sig Sigwald, and best friend Steve Gatti. With their help, he discovered larger falcons. He caught small birds on the east coast with his peregrines, mostly passage birds. He recorded his flights in a handwritten

journal “The Mighty McCabe”, illustrated by his good friend Steve Gatti’s brother, David, who was only 14 years old at the time! His friends were among an eventual “who’s who” of east coast falconry. They trapped and flew eyess anatums and passage tundra peregrines. They lived falconry. Johnny was a gamehawker during a time when success was a challenge. His tiercel peregrines excelled at snipe and other small birds.



Johnny excelled with his hands, not only with his painting, but also making his own equipment. He proudly bought a WWII combat-tested surplus Jeep – and put the vehicle to his own test. Johnny, Brian McDonald, and Steve Gatti took the jeep on a memorable trip to Cape Hatteras in the mid-1950s to trap wintering peregrines. They traveled over 70 miles along the coast, in the sand, in a whiteout blizzard at 10mph. They were hard-core trappers looking for peregrines!

Johnny is perhaps best known for his solo trip to Alaska for gyrfalcons in the mid-1950s. Despite a harsh, lonely environment, he achieved success with a white gyrfalcon. He published a small book detailing his experiences in “Luring the King of Winter.”

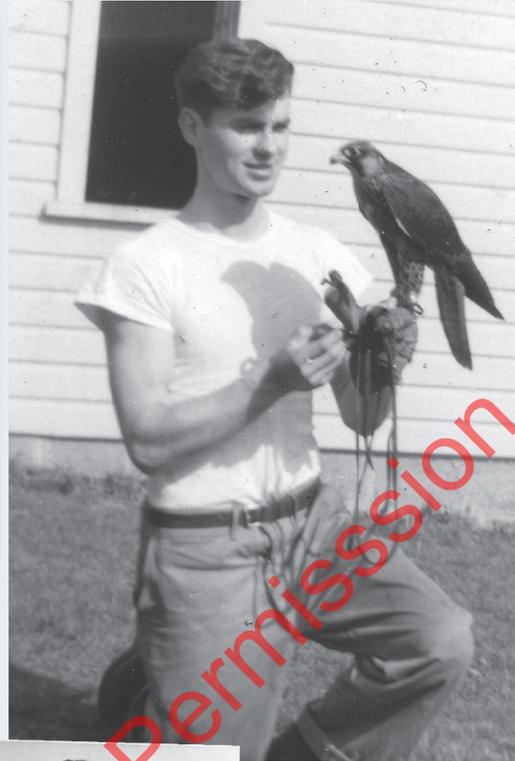
John Henry McCabe died at a young age and was greatly missed by his many loyal friends all their lives.



Drawing by David Gatti featured in Johnny’s handwritten journal recording bird flights.



Drawing, left, by Johnny. He loved to paint and draw.



Johnny accomplished pursuing his love of falconry and art during his short life.



John with his gyrfalcon. The coat is an Alaskan parka, made by Eskimos.

