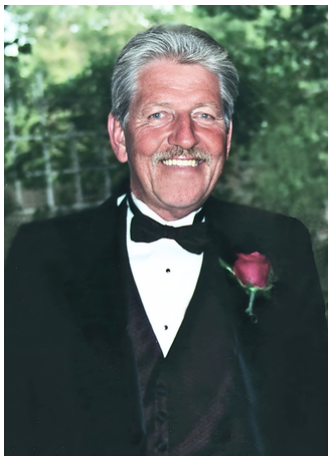

# John Jacob van der Meyden (Johannes Jacobus)

*December 18, 1941 ~ March 29, 2025*

John Jacob van der Meyden (Johannes Jacobus) was born December 18, 1941, in Giessendam, Holland to Bertus and Johanna van der Meyden. Sadly, he passed from this life, due to complications from a heart procedure on March 29, 2025, leaving many hearts broken.

John lived in Holland until he was 11 years old, where he ice skated to school, pole-vaulted across canals, wore wooden shoes, and lived through World War II. In 1952, Bertus, Johanna, older brother Nico, and John immigrated to the United States, in pursuit of a better life, leaving many family members behind, while also joining family in the Salt Lake Valley.

When John arrived in Utah, he did not speak any English, however, he had an insightful teacher who recognized his advanced math skills and taught John English during math time and their lunch hour by reading Dick and Jane books. During his formative years, he enjoyed time with the Boy Scouts introducing him to the American sport of baseball and his love for fishing and the outdoors.

John was known for his talent and passion for cooking. He could open an empty pantry and make the most delicious meals! Nobody left hungry from John’s kitchen. He started working in the restaurant industry in his later teenage years as a dishwasher in a Chinese restaurant. One evening, the cook line was short-staffed, and they pulled John up to make some simple starts for sauces. The head chef was so impressed, he put John on the cook line to learn and it took him no time to become one of the lead chefs in a Chinese restaurant, leaving his Chinese co-chefs, impressed, but very envious! He was also taught by the Head Chef of the prestigious Hotel Utah Restaurant how to master the cooking skill of American food . This would lead John to open his own restaurant, the South Seas Café, which was loved by so many for over 30 years. John worked tirelessly at the restaurant, to provide for his family; and South Seas became the hub for many family gatherings. Not only did John develop flavors and menus, but he also loved greeting guests, ultimately making life-long friends!

John met his sweetheart, Candie Morelli, 56 years ago at the Beach Boy Restaurant that he managed. They were married on March 26, 1970, and were later sealed in the Salt Lake LDS Temple. John and Candie celebrated their 55 th wedding anniversary on March 26. John often referred to Candie as his “sous chef” in their kitchen and in life. They complimented each other very well, golfing, watching movies, taking many family vacations, golf trips and of course, working in the restaurant together. Just last September, John and Candie were able to cruise the east coast with Candie’s sisters and spouses, being treated like royalty. This was such a highlight for both of them but especially for John, who said “this is the best thing I ever did in my whole life!”

One of John’s greatest passions in life was his love for golf! If John wasn’t on the golf course, he was watching golf, reading about golf, hitting chip shots in the backyard or in the basement (against Candie’s wishes) and putting

down the hallway. He was a lifetime member of the beautiful Alpine Country Club, where he met and played regularly with some of his very best friends. John had 11 holes in one, which is an incredible accomplishment in itself; but 2 of those happened during the same day, which landed him in the Golf Digest Magazine and monthly Alpine Country Club newsletter.

After John retired from South Seas, he worked at the Delta Center, supervising ushers for over 20 years. He loved working the events, especially the Utah Jazz basketball games. He became a household name and face in “the arena.” Many called him by name and searched for John’s section--and if you got lucky enough, he would move you to a much better seat! John also met close friends at the arena, who talked him into working part time with them at the Old Mill golf course, which he also did for 20 years, meeting many more new friends, while keeping greens clear, changing holes, and hitting balls too.

Johns’ greatest love and accomplishment in his life was his family! He was very proud of all three of his children, Jeff, Andrea and Melissa. In fact, they were his very favorite until his grandchildren came along! John has four grandsons, Matthew, Nick, Danniel, and Logan and three granddaughters, Jessica, Lilly, and Lydia. He has three great grandchildren, Morgan, Collin, and Sawyer. John made it a point to always have the family over for delicious meals, especially his Dutch meatballs. He loved having everybody around, staying as late as they wanted. Every New Years Day, he would make Dutch Ole Bolen, which is a treat like an American doughnut, but so much better!

John made sure his family and everyone else knew of his love for Holland. We all knew to celebrate Dutch Christmas on December 6 th and the family all looked forward to receiving their Dutch Chocolate Letter for Christmas that came from Holland . He would often tell his stories and adventures in Holland to all that knew him!

John had the amazing opportunity of volunteering for the 2002 winter Olympics here in Utah in the Security Department and loved this new adventure. He also made a special visit to the Holland Hosting Area and enjoyed speaking in his native tongue with many of the Dutch ice skaters.

As proud as John was of his Dutch heritage, he was equally as proud to have earned his U.S. Citizenship in the summer of 2024. The naturalization ceremony was a moment of great pride and joy as he was supported by his family.

John will be deeply missed, there is no doubt! His favorite chair will be empty. His favorite skillet will be left unstirred. His huge smile won’t be seen, but all these memories will live on forever. We love you and will miss you every day until we all meet again.

John is survived by his wife Candie, son Jeff van der Meyden, daughter Andrea van der Meyden, daughter Melissa Foust (Trevor). Grandchildren Nickolas van der Meyden (Nicole), Jessica Wavle (Chris), Danniel van der Meyden, Lilly Foust, Lydia Foust, and Logan Foust. Great-grandchildren, Morgan van der Meyden, Collin van der Meyden and Sawyer Wavle. Sisters-in-law, Debra Thornton (Mike), Sherri Smith (Rick), and Mary Sue Morelli. Special niece, Emmie Sue Morelli (Brady). Nephews, Aaron Smith (Ranelle), Michael Joe Morelli, Nicholas Morelli, Tommy Morelli (Paige), and numerous extended family and cherished friends.

Preceded in death by parents, Bertus and Johanna van der Meyden, Brother Nickolas Hofwegen, Grandson Matthew van der Meyden, Brother-in-law Kim Morelli, Nephews Adam, Devin, and Landon Smith.

Funeral services will be held Saturday, April 5, 2025 at 2:00pm at Larkin Sunset Gardens, 1950 East Dimple Dell Road, Sandy with viewing/visitation from 12:00-1:30pm. Burial will be at Larkin Sunset Gardens.