John Phillip Walker

March 28, 1948 ~ October 28, 2018

John Phillip (Phil) Walker passed away peacefully in his home, as the sun was rising, October 28, 2018. He left this life comfortably with his family by his side, singing his favorite songs, dancing, laughing and showered with love. His life concluded as it was lived - blissful with a smile, regardless of circumstance. He was 70 years old.

John was a visionary, scholar, author, historian, educator, publisher and hero to many. He spent his career building educational materials for the professional cleaning industry. One of his guiding principles was to make sure that the world treated cleaning workers as first class citizens. This concept was the foundation for every book, educational course and professional standard he contributed to or wrote. He founded Janitor University in 1993, a professional development course which touched the lives of thousands. "Cleaning is one of the things that are fundamentally human," he'd say. "The difference between a ruin and building in use is the janitor."

John was an avid researcher and bibliophile. Throughout his life, he curated a personal library of over 1000 books dedicated to his favorite subjects - Shakespeare, existentialism, James Joyce, US history and politics, early Mormon history, literature, cleaning and of course JFK conspiracy books, his guilty pleasure. His personal collection is packed with countless first editions.

John's intellectual curiosity led him to one of his proudest accomplishments in life. In the early-1980's, while doing research at University of California at Berkeley, he came across an unfinished manuscript by Dale Morgan. He painstakingly edited the work, following Dale's research footnotes and published the manuscript through Signature Books. The first 100 copies were printed with red leather, gold leaf and bound with whale bone.

In 1971, John met the love of his life, Renae Packer. They had their first date at Shakey's Pizza. They were inseparable. John and Renae married on Friday, April 13, 1973 in the Manti Temple. She was his soulmate, life partner and business partner. They spent 45 years together and had countless adventures to China, Hungary, Ireland, England, France, Portugal, Germany, Netherlands, Austria, Slovenia and Mexico. As a family, they settled in Holladay at the foot of Mt. Olympus and as business partners they restored the historic Butler-Wallin House in Salt Lake City.

John was called to serve in the Irish mission for the Mormon church from 1967-1969. He was tasked with teaching in the war-torn streets of Belfast and street meetings in Dublin. It was a formative life experience in terms of fortitude, absurdity, maturation and humility.

John was born on March 28, 1948 to Clarence Guy and Beverly Brooks Walker. He grew up in Sugar House and attended Forest Elementary, Irving Junior High School, graduated from South High in 1966 and was a history major at the University of Utah . He is survived by his wife Renae (Packer), son Ben (Nicole) , daughter Lisa Harris (Rod), three beautiful granddaughters Lauren, Madeline and Elise, brother Bobby (Lek), sister Marianne Hoffman (Kirk).

John is preceded in death by his mother and father, brothers Stephen and Guy, dear friends Kent Walgren and Jim Ginnaty.

It was John's wish, in lieu of a traditional funeral, to have a party. The celebration of John's life will take place in early December - details will be forthcoming. The Walker family would like to extend very special thanks to Jayne Walker, Dr. Joshua Romney, Dr Melvin Kuwahara, the staff of LDS hospital and Inspiration Hospice Care for making John's final days as comfortable as possible.