

OBITUARY

# John Joseph Korbel

January 15, 1947 – April 20, 2023



John Joseph Korbel passed away at home in Cleveland Park, Washington D.C. on April 20, 2023 at the age of 76. John was born on January 15, 1947 to Josef and Anna Korbel in Belgrade, Serbia where his father was the Czech Ambassador to the former Yugoslavia. Following the

Communist coup in Czechoslovakia in 1948, his family sought political asylum in the United States. John grew up in Denver, Colorado where he later met and married his wife of 55 years, Pamela Harmer.

John graduated from Williams College in 1969 majoring in Russian area studies and later completed a doctorate in Economics at the University of Colorado. Soon after, he taught as an Assistant Professor of Economics at Middlebury College. In 1975, John and Pam moved to Washington DC where John was an Economist and Policy Analyst at the U.S. Congressional Budget Office and then served as the Director of Economic Analysis at the U.S. Department of Energy. Following his years in public service, John joined PricewaterhouseCoopers and helped establish the firm's government practice. John later became Partner, responsible for development and implementation of risk management and compliance standards for PwC firms around the world. After his retirement, he continued to act as an independent consultant to private companies and government agencies, including the State Department.

Even as he pursued a demanding global career, John was a fiercely devoted husband to Pam and took an active role as a dedicated father to his sons, Josef and Peter. After long stints of travel abroad, John would arrive in D.C. to take on coaching responsibilities for his sons in various athletic pursuits with Stoddert Soccer and Northwest Little League. John served on the boards of the National Child Research Center preschool and the Juvenile Diabetes Foundation. He was a hands-on and loving father as well as a smitten grandfather to his beloved Isadora. He spoke with his children every day, celebrating milestones and accomplishments both small and large, and offering encouragement and guidance when needed. He was the foundation and proverbial rock of his family. He was also loyal and devoted to his two older sisters, Madeleine K. Albright and Kathy Silva, as well as his nieces and nephews and their children.

John was a uniquely engaged, humble, capable, loving, and welcoming individual. He enjoyed meeting new people and engaging with his community especially on his daily walks with his beloved dog Ella. He spent more time asking questions than talking about himself and made everyone feel heard and important. He loved hearing others' opinions, even more so if a good debate could be had. At a time of widening political division, John spearheaded a virtual debate group and brought together diverging viewpoints for vigorous discussions on world events. John was charming and a captivating storyteller and his ironic self-deprecating Czech humor never failed to bring a smile to a gathering. He was also an avid traveler, movie buff, voracious reader, and a hopelessly aspiring golfer.

John had lived in Cleveland Park since 1982 and had a great appreciation for his caring and socially-engaged neighbors. He served on the Board of the Cleveland Park Citizens Association for ten years as Treasurer and in an at-large capacity. John also served on the Board of the Social Science Foundation at the University of Denver, supporting the study and application of international relations at the Josef Korbel School of International Studies.

John was preceded in death by his parents, his eldest sister Madeleine K. Albright, the first woman to serve as United States Secretary of State, and many family members who perished

during the Holocaust and whom he and his sisters honored in 2015 with a commemorative plaque at Terezín, Czech Republic.

John is survived by his devoted wife and best friend of 55 years, Pamela Korbel, his sons Josef H. Korbel (Magdalena) and Peter A. Korbel (Kristina), granddaughter Isadora Korbel and sister Kathy Silva. He is also survived by nieces Anne K. Albright (Geoffrey Watson), Alice P. Albright (Gregory Bowes), Katie Albright (Jake Schatz), and many grandnephews and nieces. He is also survived by numerous loyal friends, and his beloved dog Ella.

Donations may be made in John's memory to the Graduate School of International Studies at the University of Denver or to The Capitol Chapter of the Juvenile Diabetes Foundation.

A celebration of John Korbel's life will be held at the Embassy of the Czech Republic on May 20.