

The Globe and Mail Sept. 2019

# John Crawford WILLIAMS

1936 - 2019



JOHN CRAWFORD WILLIAMS February 24, 1936 - September 21, 2019 Age 83.

John will be deeply missed by his wife, Maureen Atkinson; his four children Mark (Laura), Michael, Megan (Lorenzo) and Andrea; his grandchildren Maddalena, Lily, Ginevra, Olivia, Elliot, Emma, Sophie and Max; his brothers and sisters-in-law Paul and Coe Williams and Donald and Therese Williams; his nieces and nephews; the whole Atkinson clan; and many friends. John loved saying, 'I've never worked a day in my life', and pursued his career with passion until his last days. He loved his career as a retail consultant and the company he founded, J.C.

Williams Group, which was a second family to him and included longtime members Cathy Ramsamujh, John Torella and others. Before becoming a consultant, John climbed the ranks at Eaton's from summer salesperson in Vancouver to head buyer for women's fashion in Toronto, earning an MBA along the way at Northwestern University's Kellogg School of Management. His work took him across the country and around the world helping clients re-envision and reinvigorate their businesses using his customized 'WOW! Factor'. As the go-to expert on retail for over 40 years, John was inducted into the Canadian Retail Hall of Fame in 2013. John was a lifelong runner and a fixture at the Toronto Central Y for almost 50 years, working out and swapping jokes and stories with his many friends. He volunteered extensively for the Y, the Toronto Public Library, and the Art Gallery of Ontario among others; fundraised for his Alma Mater, the University of British Columbia; and organized reunions there and with classmates from Magee Secondary School in Vancouver, where he grew up. John had a loving, happy marriage to Maureen, who was also a business partner and with whom he enjoyed travelling and hosting countless dinners for family and friends at their beautiful Riverdale home. He was also deeply grateful to his first wife, Betty Williams, for their years together raising their four children. He loved his kids, was proud of each of them, and delighted in his eight grandchildren. John grew more joyful throughout his life: telling funny anecdotes; sending humorous greeting cards; playing light-hearted pranks; and making fun of himself. He was devoted to maintaining relationships with his kids and extended family and friends. At work, his voicemail message always concluded with, 'Make it a great one!' and his emails always ended with Carpe Diem! He was a passionate gardener, a talent he inherited from his parents, Don and Kathleen, and passed onto his children. He loved colour, had a bold sense of style, and a keen appreciation for everything from modern art and architecture to flowers and fashion. John's final days took him to Vancouver for a high school reunion where he joined brothers Donald and Paul for a road trip from B.C. to Washington State to visit nieces and cousins. On the last day of summer, as their trip neared its end, the brothers stopped for ice cream -- John's favourite food. Back on the road as they neared Vancouver, John died peacefully in the car with his brothers at his side. A celebration of John's life will occur the afternoon of Saturday, November 2 in downtown Toronto. For details on time and location please go to: [theimagista.com/john\\_williams\\_obituary/](http://theimagista.com/john_williams_obituary/) In lieu of flowers, please consider a donation to the The YMCA of Greater Toronto, The Children's Aid Society Foundation or The Toronto Public Library.

To Plant Memorial Trees in memory, please visit our [Sympathy Store](#).