



Dr. John O. Burtis

August 23, 1955 - December 7, 2015

Dr. John Orville Burtis, 60, Communication Studies professor at the University of Northern Iowa, passed away on December 7, 2015.

John was born August 23, 1955, in Kansas City, Missouri, to Orville Brown Burtis and Edith Ruth Robbins Burtis.

He graduated from Olathe High School in 1973, received his Bachelor of Science from Kansas State University, in Manhattan, Kansas, in 1977, his Master of Arts from KSU in 1979, and his Ph.D. from the University of Minnesota in 1987. His primary research focused on leadership and group discussion. Competitive debate and public speaking (Forensics) was a mainstay throughout much of his career.

John served as Head of the UNI Department of Communication Studies from 2000 to 2002. Before arriving at UNI, John was a professor and Director of Forensics at Kansas State University from 1991-2000. He taught at Concordia College in Moorhead, Minnesota from 1979 to 1991, where he served as Director of Forensics for most of those years, and also was Director of the Concordia Leadership Center from 1987 to 1990. Earlier in his career, John taught at University of Minnesota while he pursued his doctorate degree, Westminster College in Fulton, Missouri, and Kansas State University. He was a lifetime member of the American Forensics Association, the National Communication Association, the Central States Communication Association, and a charter member of the Association of Leadership Educators.

He is survived by his wife Kris Pond-Burtis, sons James Michael (Jessica),

and Walter John Orville Burtis, grandchildren Amanda and Rachel, as well as his siblings David Burtis (Rae Jean), Helen Burtis (Michael Collis), and Trudy Burtis (Claudia Strong).

John will be buried at the Ashland Community Cemetery near Manhattan, Kansas, in the company of his immediate family members. Those interested in making a memorial donation in John's name may consider giving to a scholarship fund attached to the Speech Communication Departments at UNI, KSU, and/or Concordia College, or the competitive Forensics and Debate programs at those schools.

A public memorial service will be held in Cedar Falls, Iowa, at the Cedar Falls Mennonite Church, 215 West 9th Street at 11:00 a.m. on SATURDAY, JANUARY 16, 2016.

Previous Events

Memorial Service

JAN 16. 11:00 AM (CT)

Cedar Falls Mennonite Church
215 W 9th Street
Cedar Falls, IA 50613
(319) 277-5611
<http://cedarfalls.ia.us.mennonite.net>

Tribute Wall

PM

“ I just found out today about John's passing, wanted to send my condolences. I went to school with John from 1st grade through 12th, participating in 4-H, Countryside grade school potluck dinners, and of course debate and forensics. Our families were very close due to our small community, supporting each other when necessary. I kind of lost touch with John once he left for K-State (heaven forbid a KU student like myself communicate with the enemy) but thought about him often. I offer my prayers to all of his family and hope that your great memories of John will help you through this difficult time. Fondly, Patti Bacon Meihls-Schaumburg, IL

Patti Bacon Meihls - January 13, 2016 at 05:15 PM