



John Friel III

January 21, 1960 - December 30, 2024

John Patrick Friel III, 64, of Waterloo, died on Monday, December 30, 2024, at UnityPoint Allen Hospital.

He was born on January 21, 1960, in Cedar Falls, Iowa, the son of John “Jack” Friel Jr. and Marion (Denner) Frohn. A 1978 graduate of Cedar Falls High School, John briefly attended the University of Northern Iowa before leaving to launch his programming career at John Deere. On June 22, 1985, he was united in marriage to Kathy Rhinehart at the United Methodist Church in Victor, Iowa; they later divorced.

A lifelong innovator, in 1984 John authored and freely distributed QModem, a telecommunications program that helped thousands of users access bulletin board systems and, ultimately, the burgeoning internet. With his entrepreneurial spirit, he also established the Cedar Valley’s first internet service provider, the Forbin Project, bringing affordable dial-up internet access to his hometown. John sold his company to VGM at the turn of the century, staying on to grow the business, leaving and then returning prior to retiring in July of 2024. In retirement, he continued as the sole proprietor of Frieltek Consulting, continuing to share his expertise and passion for computers and supporting friends and clients in Northeast Iowa.

Beyond his technological achievements, John was known as a gearhead,

always working on his cars—especially his beloved Mercury Marauders. He raced his blue “Prorauder” at the Cedar Falls Motorsports Park and John received accolades at car shows and drag racing events across the country.

John filled every space he entered with his jolly, friendly manner and a distinctive laugh that drew people to him. He was a father to one and a friend to all, generous with his time and always willing to offer support, advice, or simply a hearty chuckle.

John cherished his time at home with his three cats—Thurston, Mr. Fluffy, and Trouble—who will deeply miss his gentle care and attention. He is survived by his son, Aaron (Rebecca Fay) Friel of Oakland, California; his mother, Marion Frohn of Cedar Falls; his sister, Ann Fremont of Des Moines; and his brother, Don Friel of Cedar Falls. He was preceded in death by his father; his brother-in-law, Darrell Fremont; and his stepfather, Robert Frohn.

Inurnment and a Celebration of Life will be held at noon on May 3rd, 2025, at Greenwood Cemetery in Cedar Falls with a reception following at the Cedar Falls Women’s Club. John’s memory lives on through the technology he pioneered, the local internet community he fostered, the rumble of the cars he loved, and the countless friendships he formed along the way.

Memorials may be directed to the family with online condolences and information on his service at www.frieltek.com.

Cemetery Details

Greenwood Cemetery

the end of College St, north of First Street
Cedar Falls, IA 50613
(319) 273-8628

Previous Events

Burial

MAY 3. 12:00 PM (CT)

Greenwood Cemetery
the end of College St, north of First Street
Cedar Falls, IA 50613
(319) 273-8628

Reception

MAY 3. 12:30 PM (CT)

Cedar Falls Woman's Club
304 Clay Street
Cedar Falls, IA 50613

Tribute Wall



“ *Small Garden Dish was purchased for the family of John Friel III.*



April 30, 2025 at 10:27 AM



“ *Robert Grittmann. I knew John for many years, as he was my networking and IT expert through many office moves. There wasn't a problem that he couldn't quickly solve and I always had to remind him to send me a bill. He was a wonderful guy and I considered him a friend. He will be missed. I also had help from his son. Prayers to his family.*

Robert Grittmann - March 12, 2025 at 07:05 PM



“ *John had been my next door neighbor for many years! It's always nice when you know you have a great neighbor and friend as John was. He will definitely be missed! Sending Love, Prayers and Deepest Condolences to John's family and friends! R. I. P. John! Gone But Never Forgotten!*

Debra Daniels - January 12, 2025 at 10:05 PM



“ While I didn't personally know John, I had been following his Instagram page for years following every step of his Prorauder build. Condolences to his friends and family. He'll definitely be missed in the Ford Panther Platform community.
- Jordan (Ontario_Vics)

Ontario Vics - January 12, 2025 at 09:43 AM



“ Was taken aback a bit seeing this. We were new neighbors in Lexington Hts. John, being the first in the neighborhood (or state of Iowa!) I met. Stopped by when he was working on his Mercury & we chatted car stuff. I remember him as just a fun loving guy. RIP & comfort to his family.

Mark Hrodey - January 11, 2025 at 07:09 PM

AS

“ Our Dance.

John and I went to Holmes Jr. High together. In gym class, they had a dance class that year for the boys and girls together. The boys would line up on one side the girls on the other. You would dance with the person in front of you. The teacher would then shout out to move down 3 or 5 spaces to dance with the next person.

First of all, we all felt so awkward in junior high. I was shy and never wanted to perform or compete in front of anyone and I think John was too.

We got paired together, and I was giggling, because I was so nervous, John thought I was laughing at him....so he said to me "Do you know what's really funny?" I said, "What?" He said "Take a look in the mirror!" With no hesitation, I hauled off and slapped him across the face. Yes, he was very shocked, but we danced together anyway. This never hindered our friendship.

I apologized to him as an adult and we have laughed and laughed about it ever since.

I just saw John before we left for Arizona this last fall and had a great conversation with him. He talked about his son getting married and was so excited. And of course we laughed about the "Dance" once again.

John was a great person, kind and quick witted and so funny. He is dearly missed.

Rest in Peace Friend.

Andrea Marcussen Sanders

Andrea Marcussen Sanders - January 10, 2025 at 12:35 PM

SP

“ *John helped me out of many an IT pinch. He was always positive, reassuring, and pleasant. I'm very sorry to hear of his passing and send my deepest condolences to his loved ones.*

Shelli Panicucci - January 10, 2025 at 10:48 AM