



John Anthony Chandler, originally of Mesick, Michigan, passed away Tuesday, November 2, at the age of 57.

He was the youngest son of the late Henry “Hank” and Edna (Egan) Chandler. He was also preceded in death by his oldest brother, Don (Dorothy) Chandler, sister Elaine Metro, and brothers-in-law Kim (Jeanie) Couls and Denny (Ruth Anne) Nolf.

Surviving are his wife of more than 31 years, Beth (Eberle) Chandler, four daughters: Sarah, Grace, Anna and Olivia; three sons: Ben, Isaac and Eli; four sisters: Ruth Anne (John) Schaub, Irene (Jim) Oliver, Jeanie Couls, and Kathleen Chandler; four brothers: Richard (Sherri) Chandler, Philip Chandler, David Chandler (Jeff Holm), and Michael Chandler.

John’s life was full of remarkable accomplishments, beginning with his almost 40-year-old Class D State Record in the discus (1982). In college, he continued his athletic prowess at Hillsdale College where he became a three-time All-American in Track and Field (1985-1987). John was in his element when he was part of a team, whether a sports team, a work team or his family. His heart for children made coaching and teaching his natural path and throughout his career he made an indelible impact on school kids from the upper peninsula of Michigan to the state of Georgia to the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania.

A Michigan colleague noted “John was known as a progressive public school administrator – and was not afraid to blaze new trails. As superintendent of Manistee Area Public Schools he led the initiative to create the first public-school-district-authorized, statewide virtual charter school in Michigan. His innovative educational career led him to be recognized as one of the premier national experts in online public school operations and management, an industry which he strongly believed offered a valuable and important option for K-12 schoolchildren and their families. John was known as a team player and highly respected by his peers and colleagues. Despite the difficulty of any particular challenge, John always provided support and encouragement to his team, earning their loyalty and commitment to the cause.

John’s passing came while he was “at the top of his game”, leaving an army of devastated colleagues, business associates and friends and he will be deeply missed by all.”

John was larger than life and his family was larger than most. With 10 brothers and sisters, there are countless stories of his sense of humor, his confidence, his ingenuity, his infectious smile and laugh, his boundless generosity and his big heart. John’s siblings remember that he seldom took the easy route yet always made people feel at ease. The yearly family reunion was something John did not miss. Whether he was living and working nearby or 700 miles away, he made sure his calendar included this very special event. John was “big” enough to handle anything or anyone, but anyone who knew him well knew that he felt things very deeply and could be brought to tears or moved to passion through his intense love for others. And

John was humble. Many reading this will not be aware that John earned his Doctor of Education degree in 2016, but he never asked to be addressed as Dr. Chandler. His concern was not impressing people, but IMPACTING them for good.

In his own family of nine, John created so many memories for Beth and his children to cherish: Spring Break adventures - a priority of his for his family, favorite adages like "Goodness gracious, how outrageous," or, on a tenth birthday, "Happy Double-Digit Day Dude," or, when someone didn't feel well, "Did you try getting sleep, drinking water and eating fiber?" When his young family (only 3-4 kids at that time) created a mission board, he made sure "Be Silly and Have Fun" was a key element. While John could fulfill that objective at the drop of a hat, his family is so grateful that he could also be serious and committed enough to make sure his kids had the freedom to pursue a college education, travel the world, receive extra camps and instruction in their favorite sports and just feel secure.

Most importantly to his family, over the past few years, John had made it his intention to create positive, open communication with his children. In the week before he died, each of his seven kids were able to spend special time one-on-one with him, clearing any misunderstandings or injuries, and sharing grace and forgiveness. Far beyond all of his "worldly" success, John certainly counted this as his most meaningful blessing.

To honor John's commitment to opportunities for children and his love for his alma mater, the family requests that you consider a donation to "The John Chandler Memorial Scholarship" fund at Mesick Consolidated School at 581 S. Clark Street, Mesick, MI 49668. Alternatively, there is a GoFundMe set up to help the family with current medical and future college costs, making sure his kids continue to have the opportunities John worked so hard to give them. (<https://gofund.me/9272c3d0>)

Mass from the Order of Christian Funerals will be celebrated at 11:00 AM, Saturday, November 13, 2021, at St. Raphael Catholic Church in Copemish with Father Ruben Munoz celebrant. Visitation will be held from 6-8 PM, Friday, November 12, 2021, at the Terwilliger Funeral Home in Kaleva, and from 10:00 AM until time of Mass at the church on Saturday.

We know there are no guarantees as to how to best defend against another tragic loss to COVID. The family is requesting that friends and family who are feeling sick express love and condolences online and those who attend please wear masks.

The Terwilliger Funeral Home in Kaleva is in charge of arrangements.