



John Miles Miller

August 13, 1955 - April 28, 2026

John M. Miller died unexpectedly last week.

Those who knew him — professionally, personally, or as family — know how deep a chasm his loss leaves. Life will never be the same. And, as awful as that is, perhaps that is how it should be when someone who meant so much to so many people is gone.

John was funny, brilliant, maddening, principled, stubborn, generous, and larger than life in ways many of us are only beginning to fully understand. He began life as one of five children and, over time, became both a brother and an uncle in ways that helped define him. Family memories of John include bedtime stories about the “honey cow,” long conversations and his steady, unmistakable presence.

John’s sense of justice, his belief in human rights and his willingness to fight for the things he believed in went back to childhood. Even then, he was already organizing in his own way — including putting his sister, less than a year younger than he was, to work making signs against the Vietnam War and in support of other causes.

Growing up, John was simply around in a way that mattered. At any given family event, you could often find him playing Risk or some other game with his youngest siblings, exposing them in small ways to his activism, or just

hanging out — always present. Check-ins and hours-long conversations — about music, concerts, TV, politics, the Yankees, family and whatever else was on his mind — were always welcome. Those calls will be missed more than words can say.

John loved music deeply, and conversations with him about bands, concerts, records and whatever obsessive music-related project he had going on could go on forever. He also loved to read and always seemed to have several newspapers, a magazine or two, and some other periodical close at hand. That was part of who he was: always reading, always following something, and always connecting one piece of information to another.

John set a high bar as an activist, journalist, writer and thinker. He cared about facts, memory, and people — especially those who were ignored, harmed, or forgotten. He did not just believe in justice in some abstract way. He worked for it year after year.

John's love for his nieces and nephews was something to behold. He followed their lives, took pride in who they were becoming and filled the role of Uncle Johnny with a kind of devotion that was entirely his own. His mother would “bug” John about having a family, and he would tell her that his role in life was to be an uncle. And he was. He was about as good an uncle as anyone could be — to his nieces and nephews, and, in a broader way, to many people who may never have known him personally but were touched by the work he did.

John was born at Long Island Jewish Hospital in Queens, N.Y., and grew up in Glen Cove, N.Y. He attended Antioch College in Ohio and SUNY Purchase. After college, he lived in Washington, D.C., before moving to Brooklyn in 1981, where he lived for the next 35 years before later moving to East Harlem in Manhattan.

John spent much of his adult life working for peace, justice, human rights, and self-determination. His activism went back decades. He was drawn into movement work in the 1970s through the War Resisters League (WRL) and its publications, and his work with WRL would span nearly 50 years. He joined the WRL Organizer Training Program in 1979, later worked on WIN magazine, helped launch *The Nonviolent Activist*, and served over the years in many roles in WRL's publications and organizing work.

John was a writer, editor, organizer, researcher, advocate and a keeper of the record. He helped publish movement newspapers and magazines. He edited, laid out and sustained publications that most people outside those movements may never have seen, but that helped people organize, learn, remember, and act. He served on WRL's National Committee for decades, worked through its International Task Force, served as a steward and treasurer, and represented WRL with War Resisters' International.

John's work reached across causes and countries: the nuclear freeze movement, opposition to nuclear power, campaigns against U.S. militarism abroad, opposition to military bases and militarization of the seas, solidarity with people in Vietnam, Cambodia and elsewhere in Southeast Asia, and support for democracy, justice and human rights in Timor-Leste, Indonesia and West Papua.

In 1991, after the Santa Cruz Massacre, John co-founded the East Timor and Indonesia Action Network, or ETAN. Through ETAN, he helped keep attention on Timor-Leste's struggle for independence, the abuses committed during Indonesia's occupation and the need for accountability after much of the world had moved on. He maintained news lists, wrote statements, worked with journalists and activists, preserved archives, organized campaigns, and kept showing up. His advocacy also carried into formal international spaces,

including speaking at the United Nations on behalf of the East Timorese people.

The people of Timor-Leste have remembered John's work. President José Ramos-Horta called him a dear friend, a lifelong human rights and solidarity activist, and one of Timor-Leste's most tireless advocates during its struggle for independence. He wrote that John placed the cause of Timor-Leste above personal recognition and worked with dedication to amplify its voice to the world.

The Government of Timor-Leste honored John as a longtime friend of the Timorese people, and War Resisters League remembered him as a foundational "worker bee" activist in peace and solidarity movements — someone who could be found bartending at a WRL event as likely as working with presidents of Timor-Leste.

That description feels right. Much of John's work was not glamorous. It was the patient, principled work movements depend on: the listservs, letters, fact sheets, press calls, edits, coalitions, archives, meetings, layouts, late nights and stubborn follow-through that keep causes alive when the world would rather look away.

John understood that facts matter. Memory matters. Justice matters. And people matter — especially people whom powerful governments and institutions prefer to forget.

That was John: stubborn, dryly funny, principled, brilliant, loving and completely himself.

He did not do this work for recognition. But it means a great deal to see him recognized — by Timor-Leste, by Democracy Now!, by the War Resisters

League, and by so many people whose lives and work intersected with his.

John was predeceased by his parents, Allen M. Miller and Diane Miller Ashe, and by his stepfather, Edwin Ashe. He is survived by his brother Douglas L. Miller and his wife Janet; his sister Carrie-Ann Miller-Engel and her husband David; his brother James Alan Miller and his wife Tegan; and his brother Edward Alan Miller and his wife Jessica Hoffman.

John is also survived by his beloved nieces and nephews — Alana, Colleen, Morgan, Danny, Allison, Michael, Mabel, Ella-Jane, Ari, Anabelle, Dina and Noa — as well as his grandniece Caylee and grandnephew Eddie, extended family, friends and colleagues around the world, and assorted dogs and cats over the years who were part of the wider family story.

We loved him. We looked up to him. We will miss him terribly.

John M. Miller, rest in power.

Contributions to ETAN in John's memory can be made here: <https://wespac.org/donate/>

Note: Put ETAN/John Miller in the memo section.

Previous Events

Burial

MAY 2 (ET)

Washington Memorial Park
855 Canal Road
Mt. Sinai, NY 11766
<http://www.washingtonmemorialpark.com>