



John Waite Bowers

November 28, 1935 - October 18, 2021

John Waite Bowers, 85, died October 18, 2021 in Bend, Oregon, after an impressive academic career in the field of Communication Studies and thirty years of active retirement. He is survived by three children, John Steven and his wife Laura Bowers of East Amherst, NY, Jeanne Terese and her husband Jud Landis of Eugene, OR, and Julie Michelle of Bend, OR; a grandson, Miles David Bowers of Salt Lake City, UT; and a sister, Susan Willer of Cave Creek, AZ.

Bowers was born November 28, 1935, Thanksgiving Day, to George and Clara Wathier Bowers of Alton, Iowa, the sixth of seven children. Employed as a teenager on the family's weekly newspaper, he attended the South Dakota State College School of Printing and Rural Journalism in the summer of 1953 to become a typesetter.

After a year of Linotype and Intertype experience at the Alton (IA) Democrat and the Britton (SD) Journal, Bowers in fall 1954 matriculated at the University of Kansas, where he earned his B.S. in 1958 and his M.A. in 1959.

Throughout these years, he also worked as a typesetter at the University of Kansas Press.

On June 2, 1956, he married Eleanore Fyock, who would become the mother of his three children. They were divorced in 1975.

From Kansas, Bowers moved in 1959 to Iowa City, IA, where he earned his Ph.D. in communication research from the University of Iowa in 1962. UI immediately recruited him for the faculty, initially as co-director of the Rhetoric (freshman speech and composition) Program.

Except for semesters spent as a visitor at the University of Wisconsin at Madison, Temple University, and the University of Georgia, he remained a faculty member at Iowa for 25 years in what was the Department of Speech and Dramatic Art, then the Department of Communication and Theatre Arts and finally, after a separation from theatre, the Department of Communication Studies. Bowers was the last chair of the combined department and the first chair of the separate department. He presided over the department's move to its new building, the Samuel L. Becker Communication Studies Building, in 1984.

Bowers chaired Iowa's controversial Committee on Student Life in the turbulent early 1970s and was a member of its newly-formed Human Rights Committee. He was a faculty leader in efforts to eliminate discriminatory recruitment practices among fraternities and sororities and to liberalize university regulations governing students, especially women, in university residence halls.

In 1987, as the result of a dispute with University of Iowa administration, he moved to the University of Colorado, Boulder, as chair of its Department of Communication. His main task at Colorado was to foster the revival of the graduate program in Communication, which had been suspended by the UCB central administration in 1982.

With the UCB graduate program in Communication restored to full operation, Bowers retired on May 31, 1991. Dean Charles Middleton of the UCB College

of Arts and Sciences declared November 3, 1990, John Waite Bowers Day in the college.

A notable scholar in communication research and theory, Bowers edited Communication Monographs 1978-1980 and authored, co-authored or edited at least fifty articles, many chapters, and four books. These included seminal work on language intensity in persuasion, on research methods, on deceptive communication, on communication and conflict and on the rhetoric of agitation and control.

As a volunteer for the Boulder Public Library after his retirement, Bowers wrote articles and compiled manuals, including a tour guide manual when the downtown library facility was new and an index to ephemeral investment resources in public and academic libraries along Colorado's Northern Front Range.

He moved to Bend, OR in 1999 so as to be involved in his grandson's formative years. He volunteered for many years with the Deschutes Public Library, where he generously shared his expertise as a teacher, writer and editor. He also enjoyed hiking in the beautiful wilderness around Central Oregon, with the "Rainbow Seekers" group.

Bowers served as president of the National Communication Association in 1984. His other honors include the Young Teacher Award of the Central States Communication Association; the Golden Anniversary Fund Monograph Award, the Robert J. Kibler Memorial Award, and the Samuel L. Becker Distinguished Service Award of the National Communication Association; an award for Outstanding Service to Teaching from the Iowa Communication Association; and an award for Outstanding Volunteer Service from the Boulder Public Library.

A donation to your local public library would make an appropriate and meaningful commemorative gift.

Tribute Wall

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“ I got to know John through hiking in Bend. He was the "co-pilot" when my husband first, and then I, drove the Park and Recreation vans for hikers. He was often the "sherpa" for weaker and slower hikers. Some even called him "cuddles" for the good hugs he gave. As he aged he then hiked with the Tuesday hiking group that walked fewer miles. And finally, we just went out to lunch on occassion. I have known John for twenty years and will miss him greatly. Carol Smalley

Carol Smalley - October 24, 2021 at 12:00 AM

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“ We are deeply sorry for your loss ~ Niswonger-Reynolds Funeral Home

A Memorial Tree was planted for John Waite Bower - October 21, 2021 at 12:00 AM