

## Mr. John Browning Alter

January 10, 1948 - August 8, 2022

John Alter, advocate for Arkansas rice farmers, father, coach, and avid hunter, passed away peacefully on August 8th, 2022.

Born January 10, 1948 in Little Rock, Arkansas to Gwen Browning Alter and Charles Rufus Alter. He grew up hunting, fishing, and tagging along behind his father on their family rice farm, founded in 1886. His early lessons in rice farming included laying down in the levee opening to stop the flow of water just long enough for his Dad to get the water level adjusted. He truly learned from the ground up.

His love of the outdoors matured through his participation in deer, duck, dove, and turkey hunting and Boy Scouts, attending numerous high adventure campouts, and the National Scout Jamboree at Valley Forge in 1964. In high school he cultivated his lifelong love of music, playing trumpet in the DeWitt H.S. band, leading to his recruitment by the American Legion to play taps at military funerals. He was active in organizations and elected to attend Boys State in 1965.

After a full childhood, he attended the University of Arkansas, graduating with a degree in Business Administration, and joining the Kappa Sigma Fraternity where he made friendships that have remained strong throughout his life.

He served six years in the National Guard as a field medic and began his career after college as a leading salesman in heavy truck sales for Ford Motor Company in Kansas City.

John returned to Alter Farm in 1974 to lead as a fifth-generation farmer. He innovated and improved operations, bringing back Alter Farm's long heritage in seed rice production, was one of the first to put corn into rotation in 1980, experimented with rice drilling rates while maintaining yields, focused on quality management, founded Alter Seed Rice Co which was awarded top priority status in acquiring new foundation varieties from state rice research centers in 1987 and prioritized the growing importance of surface water. He and his father, Charles Alter, spent 40 years building reservoirs and tailwater recovery, finally creating a system to recapture 80-90% of the water used in a field, reducing dependence on ground/aquifer water by about 60%. His work to elevate farming practices went beyond the U.S. and led to his participation in entrepreneurial initiatives in Mexico and Malaysia.

His pioneering work was recognized in 2000 when named Rice Farmer of the Year by Rice Farming Magazine.

John went on to champion the work of Arkansas and U.S. rice farmers nationally. Appointed to the Arkansas Rice Research and Promotion Board by Gov. Huckabee and reappointed by Gov. Beebe, serving as President of the Arkansas Rice Growers Association, and working for the interests of farmers on the board of the U.S. Rice Producers Association. His advocacy work brought him to the floor of the Arkansas Senate to testify on behalf of rice farmers, to the

courts, and to the offices of legislators nationally to defend rice farmers for fair funding and legislation. His success was due in part to his gift for oratory, always ready with a turn a phrase that would help you see things a little more

clearly, once remarking, they were surprised to learn we don't think as slow as we talk.

He also served his local community on the city council, as a member of civic organizations, hunting and conservation clubs, member of the McCollum Hunting Club, and as a member of the First United Methodist Church of DeWitt. He was named to the Arkansas Protective Insurance Board, the fifth generation of Alters continuously serving on the board.

He was a fierce competitor in work and life. He enjoyed a challenging game of strategy, often playing gin, even entering, and winning the local tournament and teaching his children to play. He was an outdoorsman who enjoyed shooting sports and hunting equally, to the many hours spent in quiet contemplation on Big Island, located on the White River, appreciating the unexpected beauty of nature; along with many Sundays spent skiing and relaxing with friends on the Arkansas and Mississippi River sand bars.

Not one to sit around long, once he retired from farming full time, he founded a successful irrigation business and continued his work advocating for rice farmers throughout this life.

But when asked what he was most proud of, he always said coaching and his children - who after five decades, he was gratified to have finally gotten them all through higher education and into good jobs.

John coached youth baseball, guiding several teams to league championships. His commitment to coaching led him to found the DeWitt High School Trap Club, working with the school board to make it a lettering sport and becoming a certified trap instructor. However, his focus and greatest joy was teaching the students perseverance, responsibility, leadership, and honor.

He loved nothing better than seeing a student go from interest to excellence, through practice and dedication, to find achievement and learn good character.

He was a beloved by his family, friends, students, and colleagues, and will be greatly missed.

John Alter was preceded in death by his parents Charles Alter and Gwen Alter, and his brother Jim Alter. He is survived by his wife Dixie Alter, daughters Johnette Alter (Scott Meeker), Brie Alter (Matt Duvall), Amelia Farmer (Ross Farmer), son Spencer Alter, step-daughters Brittany Briggs (Cole Briggs) and Kristen Amick (Adam Amick), sister Dena Spears (Ronnie Spears), grandchildren Micah Alter-Meeker, Graham Alter-Meeker, Charlie Duvall and Cameron Duvall.

Please join us to celebrate his life at the First United Methodist Church in DeWitt, Arkansas, on Friday August 12 at 1 pm for a Visitation and 2 pm for Services.

The family requests in lieu of flowers that memorials may be made to CARTI, First United Methodist Church, 608 S. Grandview Dr., DeWitt, AR 72042, or DeWitt Trap Club, P.O. Box 101, DeWitt, AR 72042.

# Cemetery Details

## DeWitt Cemetery

DeWitt, AR 72042

# Previous Events

## Visitation

AUG 12. 1:00 PM - 2:00 PM (CT)

First United Methodist Church of DeWitt  
608 S. Grandview Dr.  
DeWitt, AR 72042

## Service

AUG 12. 2:00 PM (CT)

First United Methodist Church of DeWitt  
608 S. Grandview Dr.  
DeWitt, AR 72042

# Tribute Wall

LD

“ Dear John’s Family and The Rest of His Friends: Please know that I am asking The Holy Spirit to pour His peace and contentment, comfort and joy, down over you all, like warm honey. We have been friends for most of my life. He was a good man. A great friend. And, he represented our industry (agriculture), so well. Thank you all for sharing him with me. Blessings! Libbie Dougan. AKA. Libbie Terry from St. Charles!

Libbie Dougan - August 13, 2022 at 11:55 PM

DB

“ Debbie Byers lit a candle in memory of Mr. John Browning Alter



Debbie Byers - August 12, 2022 at 10:14 AM

SW

“ Sherry Westcott lit a candle in memory of Mr. John Browning Alter



Sherry Westcott - August 11, 2022 at 07:59 PM



“ *Emerald Garden Basket was purchased for the family of Mr. John Browning Alter.*



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August 11, 2022 at 07:22 PM



“ *Sherry Purvis lit a candle in memory of Mr. John Browning Alter*



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**Sherry Purvis** - August 11, 2022 at 02:10 PM



“ *Shelley Mitchell Carrigan lit a candle in memory of Mr. John Browning Alter*



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**Shelley Mitchell Carrigan** - August 11, 2022 at 12:21 PM



*Praying and asking God to surround you all in His comfort and peace as only He can do. John was a wonderful man and did so much to help others. My prayers are with all of you and may all of your memories bring you comfort. Shelley Mitchell Carrigan*

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**Shelley Mitchell Carrigan** - August 11, 2022 at 12:24 PM



“ *Vivid Recollections was purchased for the family of Mr. John Browning Alter.*



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August 10, 2022 at 11:44 PM



“ *Mr. John was always kind to me. I will be praying for comfort for the family. May God wrap his arms around you in this difficult time.*

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**Amy** - August 10, 2022 at 11:42 PM



“ *Prayers for the family!!!!*



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**Ester Hageman, LPN** - August 10, 2022 at 09:32 PM



“ *Vicki Holzauer lit a candle in memory of Mr. John Browning Alter*



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**Vicki Holzauer** - August 10, 2022 at 07:56 PM

BK

“ Barbara Keaton lit a candle in memory of Mr. John Browning Alter



Barbara Keaton - August 10, 2022 at 07:31 PM



“ Crystal Cross Bouquet was purchased for the family of Mr. John Browning Alter.



August 10, 2022 at 04:08 PM

UA

“ US Rice Producers Association purchased the Serenity Wreath for the family of Mr. John Browning Alter.



US Rice Producers Association - August 10, 2022 at 10:48 AM

SC

“ Sandra & Larry Childers lit a candle in memory of Mr. John Browning Alter



Sandra & Larry Childers - August 10, 2022 at 09:44 AM

SC

*Praying for the Alter family! We love you 🙏💙*

**Sandra & Larry Childers** - August 10, 2022 at 09:47 AM

PD

“ *Prentice And Sue Davis lit a candle in memory of Mr. John Browning Alter*



**Prentice and Sue Davis** - August 10, 2022 at 08:21 AM

PD

*We were so sorry to hear of Johns passing. He was a good man and had a wonderful family. We are praying for y'all.*

**Prentice and Sue Davis** - August 10, 2022 at 08:23 AM



“ *Days of Sunshine Bouquet was purchased for the family of Mr. John Browning Alter.*



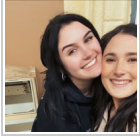
August 09, 2022 at 10:56 PM



“ *Magnificent Life Spray was purchased for the family of Mr. John Browning Alter.*



August 09, 2022 at 07:56 PM



“ *Leah Rhea lit a candle in memory of Mr. John Browning Alter*



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**Leah Rhea** - August 09, 2022 at 01:15 PM