



## John E. "Jack" Williams Jr

May 31, 1928 - March 4, 2015

John Elmer (Jack/Red) Williams, Jr., of Mt. Holly, NJ Departed Wednesday, March 4, 2015

Born in Trenton, NJ, in 1928, Jack lived in Jamesburg, NJ for years at the NJ State Home for Boys, where his father was the printing teacher. At Jamesburg High School, Williams earned varsity in basketball, soccer, track, and baseball, and was recipient of the initial Alvin B. Timberman Award as Gentleman-Athlete-Scholar. He was selected to both All-County and All-State Teams in basketball, baseball, and track. While still a student there, "Red" was offered a tryout with the Brooklyn Dodgers. Though he was instructed by, and later offered a place on the team as a pitcher by Branch Rickey, Sr., (the man who broke the "color barrier" in baseball by signing Jackie Robinson), Jack instead chose to finish high school.

Princeton University extended an acceptance letter to Jack, who, upon receiving this news, promptly enlisted in the Marine Corps! He was a veteran of WW2, serving as a Corporal on Guam, Marianas Islands, and elsewhere in the Pacific Theater.

Returning from the War, Jack entered Rutgers. A 4-year Varsity ('50-'54) letter winning pitcher with the Rutgers Baseball team, he played for the legendary George Case; he also played 150 lb. football, and ran track at RU. Williams's

baccalaureate degree was in English and Physical Education, a pairing usually considered mutually exclusive. Returning to Rutgers, he earned a Masters in Educational Administration.

Mr. Williams began his teaching career at Jamesburg High School, teaching English and Social Studies, and coaching three sports. In the 60's, Jack worked as a manager and director for RCA's Education Division, first in Cherry Hill, then in Sparta, WI, working with the RCA/University of Wisconsin Job Corps/U.S. Office of Education project centers there and in New York City.

He was a beloved Assistant Professor of English at Rider University and English Department Chair at Northern Burlington and Rancocas Valley Regional High Schools, where he taught from 1955-'61 and 1974-'90; he was also a freshman football, j.v. and varsity basketball, and golf coach at Rancocas Valley, leading the Burlington County League Champion 1981 golf team with a record of 18-1.

A formidable golf competitor until late in his last year, he won many league and club championships, and was teaching professional at Laurel Oak Golf Course in Voorhees and Springfield Golf Clubs, as well as the Rancocas Valley Regional Adult School, from 1968-1990.

As a husband and father, a highlight was taking his wife, Joan, for a tour of the British Isles, including the Wimbledon Championships, and to see the land of Williams family origin in Wales. These trips enhanced his appreciation for, and effectiveness teaching English literature.

Many of the students who survived his demanding but rewarding teaching have gone on to be leaders in the teaching, literary, athletic, and military fields. He counted Rhodes Scholars, an Army General, a Medal of Honor recipient, and scores of top flight golfers among his students. His recommendations

were earned, never given, and were instrumental in landing top students' appointments at West Point, Annapolis, Oxford, and other superlative institutions of learning.

Retiring from public school and university teaching in 1990, and when not at the golf course or in the evening, Jack was a passionate cook, calligrapher, woodworker, and continued his lifelong love of gardening. Of course, he was always a fountain of information and analysis on all matters sport, and was a proud contributor to the ulcers of Philadelphia television station General Managers with his letters defending the English language, protesting repeated bludgeoning of same by “amateurish” dabblers in the language (aka television news anchors).

John is survived by his loving and lovely wife of 60 years, Joan B. Williams, and by his handsome and articulate sons Timothy, a health & nutrition educator, of Ridge, NY, and Thomas, a software professional, of Delran, NJ. Many friends and associates will continue his remembrance.

A celebration of Jack's life will be held at a later date. Contact family directly for details. In lieu of flowery offerings, contributions may be made in his name to either the First Tee of Greater Trenton (for underprivileged youth golfers) at [www.thefirstteegreatertrenton.org](http://www.thefirstteegreatertrenton.org), or to the Wounded Warrior Project ([www.woundedwarriorproject.org/donate](http://www.woundedwarriorproject.org/donate)).

# Tribute Wall



“ *John E. "Jack" Williams Jr*

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October 29, 2022 at 11:57 AM



“ *John E. "Jack" Williams Jr*

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October 29, 2022 at 09:53 AM



“ *Mr. Williams is the only teacher or professor whom I really remember, and think about often. I attended RVRHS from 1956-1960 and JEWilliams taught me only two English courses, but I learned more from him in those two courses than I did in all of the rest of my 22 years of education. Mr. Williams truly has had the most lasting affect on my life of anyone, save my parents. That is true more than anyone else can understand. I hope and pray that Mr. Williams sons appreciate how extraordinary their Dad was, and how much impact he has had on countless people. I look forward to more of his teachings in the hereafter. Bill Ofgant-Brooke*

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**gary lloyd** - January 10, 2018 at 08:07 AM

BD

“Joan, Tim and Tom, my thoughts and prayers are with you as you mourn the loss of a very special man.

As you know, being a student in Jack's English class my Jr. and Sr. years at RV, changed my life. Not only was he intelligent, enthusiastic, dedicated, interesting and very witty, he truly enjoyed his work more than any other teacher I have ever met (before or since). It makes sense that a person who is having fun teaching will make learning more fun for the students. And that was certainly true in my case. After just two years in his class, I couldn't picture myself doing anything else with my life. After spending 34 years in a public school classroom, and loving "almost" every minute of it, I retired in 1998.

If angels go to school, we should be able predict what Jack is doing today, unless of course he's playing golf. Thank you Mr. Williams. I will forever be in your debt !!

*Bill Dyer - RV class of 1960*

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**Bill Dyer** - March 31, 2015 at 07:03 PM

GL

*Bill Dyer said it exactly as it was: he and I were in Mr. Williams classes together. I truly believe that every student of Mr. Williams has life long memories of an outstanding teacher, parent, husband, humanitarian and philosopher. We all learned about life as well as the English language, and my life has been so blessed to have gained so much from this amazing man.*

*Bill Ofgant-Brooke*

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**gary lloyd** - January 10, 2018 at 07:56 AM

JK

“ *Mr. Williams was such an effective teacher that I still use the lessons he taught, both scholarly and of life. I remember being fascinated with Shakespeare after having to write a paper on Hamlet's foils! Thank you for sharing him with us.*

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**Jennifer Jago Kelly** - March 22, 2015 at 07:25 AM

GL

“ *DEAR JOAN. I AM SO SORRY FOR YOUR LOSS. I KNOW YOU BOTH WERE DEDICATED TO EACH OTHER AND RAISED TWO WONDERFUL YOUNG MEN, MY CONDOLENCES GLENDA*

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**GLENDA** - March 21, 2015 at 12:55 AM

MF

“ *"You WILL learn in my class , it is not an option!" . Words that are stilll with me to this day, Mr. Williams was one of the best!! I was lucky enough to have passed through his classroom. Rest in peace....Michelle Fronczkiewicz , RVRHS Class of 1989*

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**Michelle Fronczkiewicz** - March 17, 2015 at 07:22 AM

TH

“ *... one of my important mentors has flown on...RVRHS in 1960 had a top-notch faculty, many of whom, like Jack, were of the "Greatest Generation." And I benefited, both as a teacher and a coach, from Jack's guidance. Guidance interspersed with lots of games of "horse," plotting strategy and joining in teaching strategies. Thanks to Jack, I began a long career understanding what's important in working with kids. My best regards to Joan, Tim and Tom....and, if there's any initial justice in Heaven, Jack will be met with a good helping of Welsh rarebit! Dr. Tyler Hess*

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**Tyler Hess** - March 16, 2015 at 07:42 PM



“ Jack was a memorable guy and a terrific member of the Perkins Memorial Golf League! I was a witness to his hole in one at the Pheasant many years ago. He was sad good of a golfer as he was a gentleman! He will be greatly missed!

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**Bob Baczenas** - March 15, 2015 at 04:52 PM

SS

“ Mr Williams was my favorite teacher, the one class I looked forward to. He was witty, entertaining and brought literature to life for us all. A remarkable man.

Stephen smith  
RVRHS class of '64

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**Stephen Smith** - March 15, 2015 at 11:36 AM



“ My condolences for your loss. I had Mr. Williams for English in HS. He introduced me to Shakespeare and started a life long love. I will NEVER forget him slapping the desk every time someone died in the last act of Hamlet. Or going to see the Scottish play in Philly on a field trip. He exemplified all that is wonderful in a teach. My life was changed for the better from knowing him. and I am obviously not the only one. He will be missed.

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**Leslie Kittelsen** - March 12, 2015 at 10:01 AM

BW

“ Mr Williams was my first basketball coach at RV. He was very intense and smart as a coach. He moved me up to the JV when I was a freshman. It was great to practice against some of RV's greats Jonhn Stroud, Al Lozier, Dave Perinchief. He was a very impressive person I remember him fondly.

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**Bill Worrell** - March 10, 2015 at 07:53 PM

SL

“ I had Mr. Williams for English in 1980 and learned so much from him. He was a tough teacher, but truly cared about creating a classroom environment where students could learn. He always challenged us and encouraged us to consider others. I'll never forget the first time I heard, "There but for the grace of God, go I." It was in his classroom and though I've heard it said many times since, I learned it in his classroom. Thank you Mr Williams for your years of dedicated service as a teacher.

Shanon Leigh  
Writer

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Shanon Leigh - March 10, 2015 at 07:07 PM

MS

Mr. Williams was my basketball & golf coach. He was tough, but fair & got the best out of all his players. I'm sure I speak for that 1980 championship golf team, we loved winning it for him as much as winning it for our selves. RIP Coach

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Michael Sadowski - March 12, 2015 at 08:01 PM

BS

“ Joan and Family,  
We send our heartfelt condolences. We are so grateful that Ryan and Kyle had the experience of working for Mr. Williams in keeping your yard lovely! They learned a lot from him. Kyle is very saddened, but is looking forward to planting the geraniums that Mr. Williams loved so much.

Love,  
Barbara, Tim, Ryan and Kyle Snope

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Barbara Snope - March 10, 2015 at 06:38 PM

LM

*Joan and family,*

*We are so sorry to hear of the passing of Jack. I have very fond memories of English class as he showed me that using a combination of print and cursive could prove to be a more effective writing style and to this day I still use that style in my handwriting. He made quite a positive impact on a young high school student such as myself. And Joan, mom and I have enjoyed sharing a friendship with you. You always spoke so highly of Jack when we would talk over lunch. Truly an inspiration and something to look up to in a marriage. Please call us anytime if you need anything, or when your feeling up to going to lunch. Love and prayers, Lynn Miller and Nancy Bareiszis*

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**lynn miller** - March 16, 2015 at 07:28 AM

MS

“ *He is one of the reasons why I am an English teacher!! I will cherish his readings of Hamlet and MacBeth with an ole English accent!! One of the very best.*

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**Maggie Nolder Schulze** - March 10, 2015 at 02:31 PM

NM

“ *I loved Mr Williams and was amazed the first year I had him as an English teacher. He boldly told me I better behave for he knew my mother very well. See he had taught her English in high school too. I admired his dedication to teaching. RIP Mr. Williams*

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**Noreen Woodbury McDowel** - March 10, 2015 at 02:23 PM

JG

“ I will remember Jack fondly from our years at Rancocas Valley. Whenever I needed to compose a written statement which would be read by colleagues and/or the public, I asked Jack to proof read it and make suggestions or corrections. He graciously agreed to help me more than once. Jack's standards were high and he certainly guided both students and staff in the quest for using and appreciating the English language. To Joan, Tim and Tom I send my condolences and hope that happy memories will help to ease your loss.

With love,  
Jane George

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**Jane George** - March 10, 2015 at 06:29 AM