

Remembrance of John Mulcare, by Ascension parishioner Jim Berger

John Mulcare was always very devoted to his family; they were always first in his thoughts.

He grew up in the St. Mel Roman Catholic parish on Chicago's West Side. Later his family moved to Bloomingdale, where they built a home. But he remained close to several of the nun's who taught him in grade school at St. Mel and in later years he would visit them at their motherhouse in Indiana. John also recounted how he loved being a page at St. Mel and was involved in carrying the Christ-child to the crib on Christmas eve. For several years, John told me he prayed the Rosary daily. And for a short time he entered Quigley Seminary to test his vocation, but found it was not a good fit for him. Later, when he moved downtown, and started coming to Ascension, he often served as an acolyte at the 7 a.m. Mass. He also volunteered as a Lector and specifically liked to read at Thanksgiving Day Mass.

John was a gentleman and always took good care of his mother Edith after his father passed and after his mother died he took good care of his Great-Aunt Lena, who lived with them. John took his undergraduate degree in chemistry from Loyola and went for his Masters at Colby College in Maine. Prior to entering his teaching career, John worked for several years in the chemical engineering department at Standard Oil in the Loop. But then John entered teaching and worked teaching chemistry at Lisle High School in the western suburbs, where he soon became Science Department chairman. He also took his doctorate at Northern Illinois University.



One of John's loves was theater, and he became involved in student productions at Lisle High. He had bit parts in several productions, and a highlight was a short run of the two-person play "Love Letters," in which he was the male lead. After retirement, he moved to Chicago's near north side so he could attend more theater, especially Chicago Shakespeare, as well as Lyric Opera and CSO performances.

John had a summer cottage at Slocum Lake, near Wauconda, and he owned a small sailboat which he loved. After moving to Chicago, David Reeves' many invitations to sail on Lake Michigan were coveted by John. He was also handy at woodworking, and crafted many bookcases and arbors for friends, and even a large deck at his cottage.