



John Emanuel Coutlakis

July 16, 1960 - December 5, 2025

Former Asheville Citizen-Times photographer John Emanuel Coutlakis, 65, passed away on Friday, Dec. 5, at his home in Montford.

A lover of music, philosophy, literature, and art, John was preceded in death by his father, Emanuel James Coutlakis; his brother, James Emanuel Coutlakis; and his mother, Joyce Ann Russell Coutlakis.

John graduated from Asheville High School and earned a degree in literature from the University of North Carolina at Asheville, where he was the first recipient of the Wilma Dykeman Award in non-fiction. He began his career at the McDowell News in Marion, N.C., as a sports reporter before starting a decades-long tenure at the Asheville Citizen-Times.

Known affectionately as “Greek” to his friends, John was celebrated for his spot news and sports photography, earning several statewide awards. He was equally known in the newsroom for his gregarious personality and fun-loving spirit. A deeply generous and private person, he often helped friends and neighbors in need without seeking recognition. A self-taught pianist, he spent his later years playing in his family home, which he called “The Greek Stately Manor.”

John is survived by his sister, Angeline Dora Coutlakis Fulmer of Littleton, Colorado; his brother-in-law, Michael Fulmer; his nephew, Brandon Coutlakis

of Denver; and Michael Cardiness, also of Littleton.

He is also survived by his aunt Paula Russell of Rutledge, TN; his late brother James' wife, Gina, and nephews Manny, Harrison, and Kostas Coutlakis of Richmond, Va.; cousins Michael Russell and Leah of Asheville, Peggy and Mayne Mihacsi of Portland, OR, Mark Russell of Portland, OR, Debi Craven of Portland, OR, and Link Russell of Rutledge, TN; as well as long-time close friends Sam and Darlena Moore of Wilmington, N.C.

A celebration of his life will be held at 174 Pearson Drive, Asheville, on January 17, 2026, at 2 p.m.

In lieu of flowers, and in honor of John's generous spirit, please offer help to someone in need—just as he always did.

Previous Events

Celebration of Life

JAN 17. 2:00 PM (ET)

Coutlakis Residence
174 Pearson Drive
Asheville, NC 28801

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