

*Celebrating the Life*  
of



John Narcy

July 7, 1935 - February 19, 2023

March 4, 2023  
Sun City Center, Florida



# Obituary

John Narcy, 87, of Sun City Center, FL, passed away on February 19, 2023, peacefully in his sleep.

John was born in Gary Indiana to Eleanor and Frank Narcy on July 7, 1935. He went to Tolleston High School where he became the Indiana State Diving Champion and graduated in 1953. He went on to earn his Bachelor's degree from the University of Michigan where he was a Phi Epsilon Kappa member and earned his Master's degree from Michigan State University. In 1957, at U of M, as a two-time All American, he was voted Captain of the NCAA Swimming and Diving Championship Team, placed 3rd in the NCAAA Diving Championships and received the Yost Honor Award awarded to students who "were outstanding for their moral character and good fellowship, scholastic ability, intellectual capacity and achievement, physical ability and vigor and who showed real capacity and promise of leadership and success."

John was the Head Swimming and Diving Coach at Argo (Illinois) Highschool where he led Argo to their most successful season in their history, winning the South Suburban Conference Swimming Championship. He went on to become the Diving Coach at Niles (Illinois) Highschool and Hinsdale (Illinois) Highschool. John dove professionally including the AquaRama in New York, performing expert dives as well as comedy diving with The Three Stooges.

In 1960 John became the first Diving Coach at Michigan State University where he produced diving champions and Olympians, achieved numerous awards, including Big-Ten Coach of the Year for 4 years and his divers received All-American Honors on 50 occasions, retiring in 2002 as a legend in the diving world.

John is survived by his wife, Patricia J. Narcy of Sun City Center, FL. Daughter, Brandy Oliver of Seffner, FL. Sister, Barbara Narcy of Loveland, CO. Niece, Donna Climer of Loveland, CO. Nephew, Joe Narcy of Denver, Colorado. Nephew, Brett Narcy of Denver, CO. Nephew, David Narcy of Pleasant, NJ. Niece, Charmayne Narcy of Beaumont, TX. Niece, Kimberly Narcy of Texas. Nephew, Michael Strassburg of Illinois. Niece, Laura Stephenson of Colorado. Nephew, Marc Strassburg of Colorado. Niece, Gina Koch of Denver, CO. Niece, Julie Lindberg of Denver, CO. Niece, Deborah Smallwood of Clearwater, FL. Nephew, Christopher Olson of Kennesaw, GA. Niece, Peki Prince of Macon, GA. He is predeceased by his daughter, Cynthia Baker of Gary, IN. Son, John Michael Narcy of East Lansing, MI. Mother, Eleanor Cripe of Commerce City, CO. Father, Frank Narcy of Gary, IN. Sister, Joann Meyer of Denver, CO. Brother, Bernard Narcy of Aubrey, TX. Brother, James Narcy of Denver, CO. Nephew, Kevin Ralph of Denver, CO. Nephew, Jimmy Narcy of Denver, CO. Nephew, Steven Narcy of Denver, CO.



# Order of Service

**Welcome & Opening Prayer**

**"Ode to John"** Read by Laura Seibold-Caudill (Zoom)

**Early Years & Nights in White Satin** Videos

**Words** from Howie Kuhns (Zoom)

**Words** from Mike Wagner (Zoom)

**"Sharing Memories"** Performed by Eric Best

**Words** from Tom Cramer (Zoom)

**Words** from Dave Burgering (Video)

**Coach & Family** Videos

**Words** from Gina Koch (Video)

**Words** from Connie Narcy (Video)

**Words** from Marco Stiner

**Words** from Chris Olson

**Awards & Achievements** Read by Brandy Oliver

**Open Mic** in person followed by Zoom

**"The Chairman of the Boards"** by Jack Seibold

Read by Laura Seibold-Caudill (Zoom)

**Thank You & Closing Prayer**



## "Ode to John"

Listen, my children, and you shall hear  
'Bout a fellow that we all hold so dear.  
John Narcy, The Great, is our leader's name,  
Our lives without him would have not been the same.

Our diving coach at old MSU,  
Got his training at Michigan - Go Blue?  
We love him so - we think he is grand,  
A diving coach - 'mongst the best in the land.

He was strict, he was stern, no goofing around.  
Ultimate focus and work did abound.  
"Get up on the board - get off your ass,"  
We worked and we worked 'till we really had class.

Remember the paddle ball games that we all had?  
We played and we played - it made our heart's glad.  
And jokes he was full of - he always had one,  
It made our work light - it added the fun.

He stays in good shape - he stays in good trim,  
He likes to go fishin' with real Spartan vim.  
We love him, respect him, and wish him the best,  
Our lives with John Narcy - we've truly been blessed!





## Awards & Achievements

- Indiana State High School Diving Champion, 1953
- NCAA All-American Diver, 1957
- Placed third at the NCAA Diving Championships, 1957
- Voted Captain of the NCAA Swimming and Diving Championship Team, University of Michigan, 1957
- Received Yost Honor Award, 1957
- Professional Diver: Aquarama in New York, including comedy with the Three Stooges
- Michigan State University's first Diving Coach, 1964
- Selected National Diving Team Coach, East Germany Dual Meet, California, 1974
- Selected National Diving Team Coach, Swedish Cup and Italian Cup, 1976 & 1982
- Selected by USO Olympic Committee to judge Olympic Trials, 1976, 1980, 1984, 1988, 1992
- Named Big-Ten Coach of the Year, 1989, 1990, 1991, 2001
- Received NCAA Coach of the Year Award, 1990
- Selected National Diving Team Coach, World Federation of Intn'l Athletics (FINA) Cup, Indianapolis, 1989
- Selected National Diving Team Coach, Alamo Challenge (China, Soviet Union), Ft. Lauderdale, 1989
- Selected National Diving Team Coach, HTH Classic, Orlando, Florida, 1989
- Selected National Diving Team Coach, International Grand Prix, Madrid, Spain, 1990
- National Diving Team Coach, Acapulco, Mexico (18 countries competing), 1991
- Received All-American Coach Award, Professional Diving Coaches Association, 1991
- Selected National Diving Team Coach, World Diving Championships, Perth, Australia, 1991
- Judged World Diving Trials in St. Louis, MO, 1994
- Received the Fred A. Cady Award, 2001
- Received MSU Intramural Sports Spirit Award, 2002
- Received "Sparty" Award, 2002
- Inducted into Honorary Membership of the MSU Alumni "S" Club, 2002
- MSU Diving created The Annual John Narcy Most Improved Award
- USA Diving "Rings of Honor" Inductee, 2020
- His diver's earned All America honors on 50 occasions
- His greatest accomplishment of all: Changing the lives of so many, for the better, he is a legend in the diving world



# The Chairman of the Boards

by Jack Seibold, 2002  
(small addition by Brandy Oliver 2023)

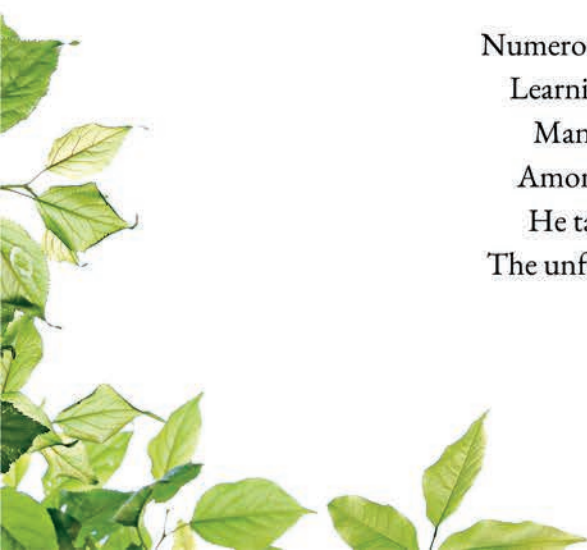
In the past thirty-six years there have been quite a few,  
Who have coached at the shallow end of the pool.  
There was Bill Wadley, Dick Fetters and McCaffree even later,  
Through the decade of the nineties it was one Richard Bader.  
Later there's Jim Lutz and associates three,  
Matt Gianiodis, Richard Mull and Christie.  
Against this legacy of coaching who's who,  
One mentor stood alone at the deep end of the pool.

That's our man Narc,  
The chairman of the boards

It was back in sixty-seven he burst onto the green scene,  
The first diving coach of the Michigan State team.  
Those original pupils were Ken Genova and Fred Whiteford,  
Doug Todd and Duane Green would later come aboard.  
They dove one meter, three meter even up to ten,  
There was Alward, Tom Cramer and Jim Henderson.  
Bill Scott, Mike Cook and Tom Benson would later rule,  
Under the mentor's watchful eyes at the deep end of the pool.

That's our man Narcy,  
The chairman of the boards.

Numerous talented women have also reaped his advice,  
Learning intricate aerial maneuvers ever so precise.  
Manchester, Farrell, and Weiden are but three,  
Among the numerous counted as Narcy devotee.  
He takes less-talented to levels they never knew,  
The unforgettable mentor at the deep end of the pool.



That's our man Narc,  
The chairman of the boards.

There are others to note like Griffin and Burgering,  
Each of whom once crowned conference king.  
Mike Brown a true champion and not to be outdone,  
There was Ovenhouse, Hepner, Visscher and Maxson.

And Seibold, McDonnell, Stiner, Wagner and Best,  
Hearts of gold they all have, yes they have been blessed  
Martha Scott had her day, Kim Ziemann as well  
Winners and believers with stories to tell  
Kuhns, who knew Narc before MSU  
must be mentioned with the rest of them too.

Have we been mistaken or have we been fooled?  
I now see no one at the deep end of the pool

Our man Narc, nowhere to be seen,  
What can this, what can this, what can this mean?  
Not a ripple, not a ripple, like a perfect ten  
He's slipped out of sight from the pool's deep end.

Gone but not forgotten,  
That's our man Narc,  
Always, chairman of the boards





# Narcyisms

"He who hesitates is lost"

"On or over, but never short"

"That needed an underwater call"

"Lean it a little" (diver too close!)

"Don't blame me for making you good"

"Each solution creates a new problem"

"Come back when you can't stay so long"

"Too bad the youth is wasted on the young"

"No no, don't go, it was so nice without you"

"That dive didn't need a save, it needed a rescue"

"Every action has an equal and opposite reaction"

"We might not be the best, but we're the best looking"

I've always cared about the diver first, then the diving"

"Is the next one going to be better? Then save it for the meet!"





# Tributes

"His influence extends through generations. What an inspiration. What a legacy. What an honor for me to be have been included in his life."

"John is one of the two people in my life (other than my parents) who selflessly helped me do what I wanted to do with my life. My gratitude seems insufficient."

"John was one of the kindest most loving people, what a gift to have had him in my life. He always left me feeling more loved, especially during the difficult transition moving away from my family to MSU. "

"John will always be the coach who taught me that people matter over anything else. I continue to teach that to my divers and my own children. He lives on through us."

"I have a special place in my heart and mind for this special man. He helped me more than anyone will ever know."

"I'm proud and happy to be able to tell everyone that I went to Michigan State University & dove with a great coach & man named John Narcy."

"Narcy....Oh My God....what a guy!  
My life would be so different had he not taken me in as a project to the MSU diving team"

"John Narcy taught me most of the life lessons I have needed to get by in this world."

"Time spent with Narc changed a person (for the better and for a lifetime)"

"John Narcy is a legend in the sport of diving And the most beloved among all the great coaches in the history of the sport."

"Everyone gravitated to the diving end of the pool for his wit and humor! He created a family with our team and I'm forever grateful to have been part of it."

**John Narcy  
Coach, Mentor, Teacher, Friend  
and Sick-Joke Teller.**

**You have made your mark  
on the souls of the people  
you touched on earth  
and  
left the world a better place  
because you were here.**

