



## John Patrick Nicholson

July 21, 1936 - January 17, 2021

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To view a recording of the Live Stream of the Funeral Mass for Pat please [CLICK HERE](https://vimeo.com/508990135)(<https://vimeo.com/508990135>>)

John Patrick ("Pat") Nicholson, 84, died on January 17 after a long battle with diabetes. He is survived by his wife, Sheila Mary (Thompson), brother Mike (Joan), sons Jim (Peggy, deceased 2020), Mike (Allison), Bob (Sarah), Timothy (Kristen), and his Swiss "daughter" Karin Staub (Nik Sutter) and ten grandchildren. Pat took great pride in the fact that all of his family lived in the greater Toledo area. Pat was born in Toledo on July 21, 1936, the first son of James and Kathleen Nicholson. His grandparents were George and Molly Covert of Toledo and Dr. John and Margaret Nicholson of Sandusky, OH. His parents and grandparents preceded him in death along with brothers Bill (Jean) and Tom (Peggy, still living).

Pat was a 1950 graduate of Rosary Cathedral and a 1954 graduate of Central Catholic High School. Pat earned an NROTC scholarship and, in an overnight decision selected Villanova University in Philadelphia, PA where his cousins, Bob and Bill Sur, were about to graduate. He was never sorry!

Pat loved his four years at Villanova. Wildcat basketball was exciting. Villanova track and field dominated college sports. Villanova Coach Jumbo Elliot was the Knute Rockne of college track and Pat and Jumbo became dear friends. In Pat's junior year, his roommate and life-long friend Ron Delany won the gold medal in the Olympic mile in Melbourne. Later, Pat took over 2,000 students to New York City for the IC4A National Championships in both his junior and senior years when Pat was Student Body President. Delany had one of the greatest college careers in the history of college sports. For four years he was unbeaten in indoor mile competition running against the greatest milers in the world and led Villanova to multiple NCAA and IC4A track and field championships.

In June of 1958 Pat was commissioned an Ensign in the U.S. Navy Supply Corps. He spent 18 months on the USS Lloyd Thomas, a destroyer DD764 in the Atlantic fleet, in charge of the Supply Department. He also served as a rescue swimmer. After earning a Certificate of Merit for Outstanding Supply Department and a letter of commendation from Rear Admiral Weakley, Commander Destroyer Force, US Atlantic Fleet, he returned to the Navy Supply School in Athens, GA as an instructor for his last year of active service. In total Pat spent 13 years in the Navy and Navy Reserve and loved it. While at Villanova and in the Navy, Pat met and was befriended by Senator John F. Kennedy. Pat became a lifelong friend and admirer of the Kennedy family.

Pat returned to Toledo in early June of 1961, the same week that Sheila, a graduate of the Nursing School at St. Louis University, returned to Toledo as a nursing instructor at St. Vincent's Hospital. They renewed their interest and were engaged on Christmas Eve, 1961 and married on June 30, 1962. Pat and Sheila celebrated their 58th wedding anniversary in 2020. Sheila was called by family and friends as "Saint Sheila" and she was "the best person Pat ever met."

Due to his father's health, Pat returned to the family concrete business, Nicholson Concrete, that his father started and helped his father and brothers manage the business. For nearly 20 years he served as Sales Manager, General Manager and from 1968 to 1979 as President and CEO.

Pat developed a great interest in reuse of electric utility ash and cement industry kiln dust. In 1977 Nicholson Concrete created a wholly owned subsidiary N-Viro Energy Systems, Inc. (NESI) to develop uses of cement related by-products. In 1979, Pat acquired control of NESI in exchange for his stock in Nicholson Concrete. He organized an Ohio Limited Partnership, N-Viro Energy Systems, Ltd. (NESL) with the assistance of 16 Toledo investors with NESI as the general corporate partner and Pat as the general individual partner.

Pat worked closely with Dr. Donald Angelbeck and Dr. William Kneller of the University of Toledo and Dr. Jeffrey Burnham of the Medical College of Ohio. They explored many opportunities. Pat was the inventor and developer of 10 international patents on by-product utilization. An outspoken advocate of resource conservation policies and practices, he also co-founded two national non-profit resource recovery organizations and was involved in lobbying for meaningful resource conservation and recovery legislation. Together with Dr. Burnham they developed the N-Viro Soil™ pasteurization process which was the cornerstone of the company's growth.

In 1988 the U.S. EPA recognized the N-Viro Soil technology as meeting the highest criteri

a for municipal sludge treatment, and in 1990, the U.S. EPA named it "the outstanding sludge utilization technology in the USA." In October 1991, Pat was honored by the President of the United States, receiving the President's Environment and Conservation Challenge Award Citation presented to NESL for "excellence in developing innovative solutions to the nation's environmental challenges." Pat received the citation in a White House ceremony from President George H.W. Bush. In June, 1992 Pat was the guest of the U.S. State Department in Rio de Janeiro, one of the six speakers who made U.S. Information Agency-sponsored presentations at the Earth Summit. From that trip Pat became seriously concerned about the dangers of global warming.

In 1993 NESL became a publicly traded company on the NASDAQ stock exchange under the name N-Viro International Corporation. Pat served as CEO and Chairman until he retired in 2002. Over a 25-year period, N-Viro marketed millions of tons of fly ash, kiln dust, and organic byproducts as valuable construction materials, structural materials, topsoil, and ag-lime agronomic products.

Pat was a long-time community leader in Toledo. He served as co-chairman of the original TARTA levy in 1971. He chaired three Toledo Public School levies and was a member of the "School Reform" Citizen's Committee; was active on the City of Toledo's strong mayor charter change in 1991; served for sixteen years on the Toledo-Lucas County Port Authority where he was Chairman from 2000-2002, was a Director of the Toledo Chamber of Commerce; Director of the Regional Growth Partnerships; and a Director of the Catholic Diocese of Toledo Board of Education. Cardinal Stritch High School, Central Catholic High School and St. Francis de Sales High School. He was co-founder and Chairman of the Toledo Civic Hall of Fame and held many other business and civic positions. The Civic Hall of Fame was the first in the USA. When Pat retired as Chairman after 15 years, 75 Toledoans had been inducted.

With a keen interest in politics, Pat was a life-long Democrat, actively involved in the Presidential campaigns of John and Robert Kennedy, serving as the Northwest Ohio Coordinator for Jimmy Carter, and long-time supporter and friend Senator John Glenn, Congressman Marcy Kaptur, Congressman Lud Ashley, Harry Kessler, Ned Skeldon and Gene Cook. His best memories involved those many efforts where he worked together with his oldest and dearest friend, the legendary Tom Hart. Pat and Sheila were the guests of the Glenns when the Senator went back into space in 1998 from the Kennedy Space Center.

Pat served as a Director of the Ohio Nature Conservancy and the American Health Association, the American affiliate of the World Health Organization. In 1994 Pat was named to the President's Forum of Villanova University. In 2002 the Press Club of Toledo named Pat

as the fourth recipient of its "Touchstone Lifetime Achievement Award for Service to Toledo." The award was an honor that Pat deeply appreciated. The timing was wonderful. Pat's father had a motto: "Build Toledo by Boosting Toledo and Boost Toledo by Building Toledo." Pat hoped and believed he had truly tried to do both!

Pat and Sheila raised four sons in Westmoreland, one block from St. Francis. Pat's father, "Big Jim" Nicholson, was a Founder of St. Francis, his brothers attended St. Francis and Pat had a great love of all the Oblates so there was never a question of where their sons would attend high school.

In 2004 Pat and Sheila moved to Sylvania and soon grew to love the area. Pat particularly loved the Spuyten Duyval Golf Course and their partner, the Fairways Grill. Pat was deeply grateful to both the University of Toledo and the Medical College of Ohio for their assistance and was delighted to help in their merger in 2005, at the request of Dr. Johnson, UT's President.

Pat was a generous father and friend. If you ever spent time with him at the lake, on the boat, on the golf course or even playing ping-pong in the basement on Richmond Road, you knew you had a loyal friend for life.

Besides his family, Pat loved Villanova basketball, all things Toledo, and his beloved golden retrievers, in particular Dudley, K.C. and Riley. They were inseparable.

The family would like to thank all the healthcare workers who cared for Pat over the years and in particular over this last year. You are all truly heroes. Your commitment to your work, your professionalism and your daily acts of kindness and compassion are truly a beacon of hope and inspiration for humanity.

A funeral mass will be held Friday, January 22 at 11AM at Gesu Catholic Church in Toledo, OH. Coyle Funeral Home has assisted with arrangements. Condolences may be shared with Pat's family at [coylefuneralhome.com](http://coylefuneralhome.com). In lieu of flowers, the family wishes you to consider a donation to Central Catholic or St. Francis.

# Cemetery

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## Resurrection Cemetery

5725 Hill Avenue

Toledo, OH, 43615

# Events

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JAN

22

Mass

11:00AM

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Gesu

2049 Parkside Blvd, Toledo, OH, US, 43607

# Comments

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“ An external video has been added.



**Coyle Funeral and Cremation Services** - February 05 at 03:43 PM

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“ Dear Sheila and family, We were saddened to learn of Pat's death. He was a man who never gave up on trying to solve a problem. He was a good man.

Our prayers are with you all.

John and Sue Harron

**John G Harron** - February 17 at 10:29 AM

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“ From another classmate and admirer of Pat; what a contributor to the school, the city and the world; we'll all miss his presence here! God bless the family as he goes onward! Fr. Jim Auth, class of '54

**Fr. Jim Auth** - January 24 at 02:34 PM

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“ Our friendship started as freshmen at CCHS, shooting baskets at the Toledo Club, many parties and boat rides at the lake, and. being Best Man in your wedding.  
Thanks  
for the great memories and friendship.

**William Kennelly** - January 22 at 10:14 AM

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“ Their home to so many was headed by a man with a personality larger than life and a matriarch with the love and patience of a SAINT.

Many a cherished childhood memories started or, more likely, ended with Mr or Mrs Nicholson's, "BOYS?!!!!" followed by honest or mischievous laughter. "Boys" referred to any combination of the Nicholson 4 along with whichever friends happened to be there sharing a day or a moment. Whether on Richmond Rd eating Mr. Nicholson's Churchill cookies or at the lake standing directly between Mr. N and his TV..... during a majors ..... during Sunday's final round - the joyous ruckus that followed was part of the fun (and memories) of being with the Nicholsons.

Reading his obituary I was astonished to learn about so many adventures. Growing up we were all aware Mr N. was hard working and successful but his modesty kept us from knowing the full extent of his accomplishments and his impact on Toledo and beyond. Presidential awards?! Mr and Mrs N were the parents that went to their kids' games, made dinners (or bought Dominos) for everyone, made sure the kids and friends actually stopped to to take a break when we were in the lake for days at a time.

I continue to thank Mr and Mrs N for the wonderful family they raised and allowing so many of us to share in their adventures. They provided a loving 2nd home for us neighborhood kids when we were running around - right up until Mrs N let us know when it was time to go home. This was usually when we were just about to finish emptying the fridge, freezer, and pantry - or after we broke something (of value). Speaking of which, I should now confess that a Nicholson son to be named, another friend to be named, and I accidentally broke those Jimmy Carter for President mugs - sorry about that Mr. Nicholson.

**Don Ganthier** - January 22 at 03:24 AM

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“ A man of his word. Always respectful and considerate of others even in times of disagreement. Toledo will miss him.

**Dennis Duffey** - January 22 at 12:51 AM

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“ 1 file added to the album John Patrick Nicholson



Robert Nicholson - January 21 at 11:07 PM

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“ Sheila and boys,  
It feels like a chapter has turned. I'm grateful to Pat and the N-Viro team for the opportunities provided me. I had a fascinating and successful career with you all and it helped mold who I am today. Pat always respected me and allowed me to develop my position with N-Viro. And we had a lot of fun doing it.

Rest In Peace dear Pat. You are fondly remembered.

Cindy Drill

cindy drill - January 21 at 09:07 PM

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“ Pat was a Centralite, and we Centralites stick together. I contacted him because he was into the environment with N- Viro, and I was just beginning S.A.V.E. (Science Alliance for Valuing the Environment.) Several of us met with him for guidance and the input he gave us was very helpful. He told us about N-Viro and gave me a video to share with my students at Lourdes. In 1997 we sponsored an Earth Festival and he sent men from his company to exhibit at it. I can't thank him enough for all his help to get us started! He also was a Corporate sponsor of SAVE in the early days!

May God grant him peace in his new heavenly home and grant peace to all the family members left to mourn.

Sister Rosine Sobczak OSF (Class of '60)

Sr. Rosine Sobczak - January 21 at 09:00 PM

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“ Oh boy! The Nicholson family has always been larger than life. My condolences to all in the Nicholson family!  
Steve Smith. Past neighbor in the Mt. Vernon And Richmond days in Westmoreland.

steve smith - January 21 at 08:01 PM

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“ To Sheila and the Family of Pat Nicholson:

Please accept my heartfelt condolences on Pat's passing. He was a consummate gentleman while still being a "man's man," astute businessman and wonderful friend to and supporter of all of us in Northwest Ohio. He will be greatly missed!

May God be with you all during this time of great sorrow.

Tom Crothers - January 20 at 11:44 AM

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“ I'm sorry to read of Pat's passing. He had worked with my dad at Nicholson Concrete and always welcomed me as a friend when I would call on him on behalf of Central Catholic. I will remember him with that kindhearted huge smile on his face.  
May God rest his soul and comfort all who loved him.  
Sincerely,  
Mary McCarty Pierce

mary Pierce - January 20 at 10:04 AM

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“ Mr. Nicholson was a great man to whom I always had a lot of respect. He helped Mrs. Nicholson raise four boys into great men. I learned a lot more about him reading his obituary, he was also very humble. He will be missed but our memories will last forever. Your all in my prayers!

Jim McGuire - January 20 at 09:51 AM

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“ I am sorry for your loss. He was a great guy. He welcomed my mother and sisters to his house one snowy night during a blizzard. Their car had broken down and Pat's house was their haven. Margaret Shufflin Lloyd

Margaret Lloyd - January 19 at 07:53 PM

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“ 19 files added to the album John Patrick Nicholson



Robert Nicholson - January 19 at 12:46 PM



“ Great photos Bob!

Kristen Nicholson - January 19 at 01:23 PM



“ Great pics!

Don Ganthier - January 22 at 03:32 AM



“ Thank you for this great tribute especially for those of us far away. Sending our love and respect. the Kerrville, Texas Stone Family

Linda Stone - January 22 at 10:43 AM



“ Pat, I will miss you my friend, Sheila, devoted wife and sons will always remember your spirit and friendship

Darryl Fingers - January 23 at 03:23 PM

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“ Love's Tapestry was purchased for the family of John Patrick Nicholson.



January 19 at 09:51 AM