



## John Houston Hawes

May 23, 1941 - April 3, 2026

John Houston Hawes, 84, passed away on April 3, 2026.

Born on May 23, 1941, in New York, New York, John was the son of John Hawes Jr. of Ridgewood, New Jersey, and Judith Baker Mays Hawes of Forest Hills, New York. He spent his earliest year in Greenwich Village before growing up in Glen Rock, New Jersey, alongside his sisters Amanda, Jane, and Lester.

John graduated with honors, magna cum laude, from Princeton University in 1963 with a degree in Public and International Affairs. During his time at Princeton, he served as Editor of the Princeton Review and pursued international interests that would shape his life's work, including travel to Ghana. Later in life, he earned a Master of Science in Secondary Education from George Mason University in 2001.

John dedicated three decades of his career to the United States Department of State as a Foreign Service Officer from 1963 to 1993. His distinguished service took him across the globe, including postings in Naples, Addis Ababa, Kolkata and New Delhi, Brussels (NATO), Vienna, Rabat, and Washington, D.C. He held several senior roles, including Deputy Assistant Secretary of State for Politico-Military Affairs, Deputy Chief of Mission in Rabat, and Head of the U.S. Delegation to U.S.-Soviet talks on Chemical Weapons Non-Proliferation.

While leading the negotiations for the Open Skies Treaty to advance international cooperation on arms control during the George H. W. Bush administration, John held the personal rank of Ambassador.

Following his retirement from the Foreign Service, John began a second career in education, teaching the International Baccalaureate (IB) Theory of Knowledge and Geography at Annandale High School in Fairfax County from 2000 to 2013. A passionate and engaging educator, he was known for challenging students to think critically about the world and their place in it. He was recognized as Teacher of the Year in 2010 and was a dedicated supporter of the school's drama program. He also taught at the Virginia Governor's School for the Humanities and Performing Arts, leading courses on topics such as the Crusades, Jihads, and Diversity and Tolerance.

John is survived by his former wives, Marisa Lambiase Hawes and Wendy Jean Chamberlin; five daughters, Fabrizia Hawes, Alessia Hawes Kirkland, Christiana Hawes, Chynna Hawes, and Jade Hawes; and his nine grandchildren, Justin Kirkland, Lauren Kirkland, Tosca Lanfranconi, Tea Lanfranconi, Caterina Lanfranconi, Jordan Leonard, Jaslyn Leonard, Jack Gooch, and River Gooch.

Ever an optimist, he believed in the power of ideas and dialogue to shape different outcomes on a path toward a more equitable future. John will be remembered for his deep intellectual curiosity, his commitment to public service, his dedication to education and lifelong learning, and his love for his family.

A celebration of life will be held at Mason District Park, Pavillion A, 6621 Columbia Pike, Annandale, VA 22003, Sunday, May 24, 2026 at 11AM.

To honor the dedication John Hawes had for the Annandale High School Theatre <https://www.annandaletheatre.org/> the family invites friends and loved

ones to contribute to it in lieu of flowers.

# Previous Events

## Celebration of Life

MAY **24**. 11:00 AM (ET)

Mason District Park  
6621 Columbia Pike  
Annandale, VA 22003

<https://www.fairfaxcounty.gov/parks/sites/parks/files/Assets/documents/picnics/maps/mason-district-park.pdf>

# Tribute Wall

JY

“ I had the privilege of teaching with John at Annandale High School for 13 years. Teaching was a second career for John, which he started in his early 60s. He had amazing energy, and his worldly knowledge was unmatched. John taught mostly upper level elective IB classes, Geography and Theory of Knowledge, and his classes were always full. He was a demanding teacher and many students were happy to get a C in his class.

John did so much for school and community He attended numerous sporting events, school plays, and band performances. As a colleague, he was the best. We all have so many great memories of him. John was always willing to help his fellow teachers, which included covering classes when needed, or helping with honor societies and clubs. He always had interesting perspectives on the education system and politics, which challenged us to think outside the box.

One of my best memories of John happened when our school was going through renovations and we were relocated to the trailers, which had questionable conditions. Three days before the year began, there were not enough chairs and desks for his classroom. John and another colleague took the initiative to literally go dumpster diving to pull out the old desks and chairs that were thrown out. After cleaning them, his room was ready for the first day of school!

The staff and students were so fortunate to have known John Houston Hawes, and his career as a teacher was only a small part of his Forrest Gump like life!

JJ York

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Jonathan York - May 12 at 09:25 AM

KK

“*Mr. Hawes is one of the best teachers I ever had and easily the most erudite and knowledgeable person I've ever known. I had him for 10th-grade Government and again for 12th-grade IB Geography and Theory of Knowledge. Over those three classes and four years, I got to know him well. The intellectual frameworks he provided, and the ways he taught me to view the world, are things I still lean on today. His classes influenced my college major, and I still refer back to the films and media he shared in everyday conversation. It is not hyperbole to say he changed the trajectory of my life. I'll never forget him calling me senior year, right when senioritis had set in and I was turning in assignments absurdly late, to ask what happened to the "bright-eyed" student he'd met back in the 10th grade. It really just showed how much he cared. I was actually just telling my dad about a conversation Mr. Hawes and I had regarding The Truman Show when I felt a sudden urge to look him up, only to find this obituary. Mr. Hawes, you have my deepest love and respect. May your name be found in the Book of Life, and may your soul find eternal rest in heaven.*

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**Kidist Ketema** - April 26 at 06:30 PM

JJ

“*John and I were colleagues at Annandale High School for more than a decade. Few teachers I witnessed during my career garnered more respect and admiration from their students than John did at AHS. Indeed, an entire decade's worth of students chose to study international relations largely because of John's influence. As a colleague, John was always gregarious and generous about sharing his insights and wealth of knowledge about current events. I will miss him both personally and professionally.*

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**Joel Jepson** - April 12 at 10:43 AM

TK

“ John was a colleague and mentor to me at Annandale HS. We taught IB Theory of Knowledge together for several years. The way I teach the course now has been greatly influenced by John. Even after he retired, John continued to share readings, films, and new insights that helped me to think more deeply and improve my practice.

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**Tim Kelly** - April 10 at 06:28 PM

JV

“ John was a such a smart and thoughtful person to know. Invariably at school, when I asked him a question on some world affair, his response often delved into areas that I had not even considered. I was always smarter after consulting with him even if my head sometimes was spinning. It was a pleasure teaching with him at AHS. Joe Valentino

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**Joe V** - April 10 at 05:41 PM