



*John Dickens Owens*

1927-2022

*"My cup runneth over."*

On August 22, 2022, John Owens, 94, passed away peacefully at his home in Staten Island, NY. According to his esteemed binary system, he was 1011110. At his bedside were his beloved wife Basia and daughter Kathrine.

John lived through the Depression and Dust Bowl in rural Oklahoma and arrived in New York City in 1949 to study violin at Julliard. He slept his first night in NYC at Carnegie Hall. He played bass with Miles Davis and Charles Mingus, ran a truck business, managed a building in the West Village, joined the Merchant Marines in 1951, and enrolled at Columbia University in 1953 to study mathematics. In 1959 he embraced the emerging field of computer science through a room-size computer with vacuum tubes. He worked for IBM, directed a computer lab at the NYU's Courant Center, and established the department of computer science at the College of Staten Island within The City University of New York, for which he wrote the curriculum and hired faculty. He was its long-time department chair and well-loved professor. When nearly ninety-two, he finally decided it was time to retire from teaching. Over a decade earlier, he had been ordained as an Old Catholic Priest and in 2007 received a Master's Degree in Divinity.

John was a lifelong student of the Gurdjieff Work and a group leader at the Gurdjieff Foundation in New York. His teachers were men and women who had worked directly with Gurdjieff and he led groups for sixty years. Extraordinarily well read, John could quote long passages of poetry, from T.S. Eliot to Gerald Manley Hopkins and bring his loving attention to the moment. His favorite: Psalm 23, "The Lord is my shepherd; I shall not want. He maketh me to lie down in green pastures; he leadeth me beside the still waters. He restoreth my soul."