



## John Butler Vinson

June 27, 1964 - September 5, 2025

John Vinson, 61, born June 27, 1964 in Oxford, Mississippi, passed away peacefully in his sleep on September 5, 2025.

An avid tennis player and coach, cyclist, fisherman, and father, John was an integral part of the Tallahassee community for nearly his entire life. Depending on the time of day and the day of the week, John could be found hitting tennis balls with students across the Big Bend, cycling with friends on country roads and trails from St. Marks to Thomasville, or fishing the flats of the Forgotten Coast on foot or in his boat. John enjoyed all that life had to offer, often meeting friends at area breweries to enjoy craft beers and lagers of all stripes, while always sporting his easy, engaging smile alongside his friendly, funny self. His love of craft beer started long before he would try his first ale, with 12 year old John biking miles with his friend Eric Larson in search of rare cans at trash sites across Leon County. Eric recalls them riding a two-seater bike

together during this time, and in a true encapsulation of John's sense of humor, "every time John was the lead guy, he would break wind the entire time and laugh." Today, John's beer can collection numbers in the 1,000s and will continue to grow in his honor.

John also enjoyed watching and quoting his favorite movies like The Blues Brothers, Monty Python, and the Steve Martin classics to friends and strangers alike. He also loved identifying and "housing" snakes, sharing Far Side cartoons and music with friends, and admiring classic Triumph TR-250 and TR-6 sports cars, of which he had several throughout the years. Furthermore, he made a point of inviting new friends to join his family over the holidays on numerous occasions throughout his life.

All in all, John was a true professional at bringing folks of all different backgrounds together to join him on this journey we call life.

When John was 6 years old, his family moved to Tallahassee, Florida from Oxford, Mississippi.

At age 9, John's father Ken Vinson gave him his first tennis lesson, which planted the seed for a lifetime in the sport. John ultimately became a top ten ranked junior player in the state of Florida, known for his serve and volley style, soft hands, and biting slice backhands and dropshots that drove opponents crazy. John received an athletic scholarship

to Wake Forest University, becoming a top singles and doubles player for the Demon Deacons, and earning All-ACC Honors during his senior year.

John returned to Tallahassee in 1986 as assistant coach at Florida State University, where he coached many fine players, including future world number one ranked doubles player Paul Haarhuis. He then had stints as the Head Coach at Louisiana Tech and Utah State University, as well as the Director of Junior Player Development for USTA Florida. John returned to Tallahassee in 1994 to serve as assistant coach at Florida State University once more, before transitioning to private coaching in 1999. John coached numerous top area junior players, many of whom went on to have very successful college and coaching careers of their own. Among these were his son, Allen, and daughter, Anna, thereby keeping the family tradition alive and well.

In 2010, John took over as tennis coach for Lawton Chiles High School, where his children Allen and Anna would go on to become top players. In 2013, John became the head tennis coach at Maclay School, his high school alma mater, where he coached until 2019. After departing Maclay, John would go on to coach at Holy Comforter Episcopal School, while

also travelling to courts across Tallahassee to continue his private coaching of junior and adult players of all levels. When John took time off from coaching in his latter years, he often visited the West Coast to see Allen and Anna, or met them on adventures from Key West to Lake Tahoe.

John is survived by his children, Allen and Anna, his sister, Jenifer, and his former wife, Kim Vinson.

John is predeceased by his mother, Patsy, and his father, Kenneth. His two beloved canine companions, Murphy and Bo, will also both miss his love and walks immensely.

The JOHN VINSON MEMORIAL RIDE FOR THE ANIMALS will take place on November 9, 2025. The ride will begin at Bradley's Country Store on Centerville Road at 10:10 a.m. There will be several clay road/gravel bike ride options - all to support the Tallahassee-Leon County Animal Shelter Foundation in memory of John and two of his greatest passions, who were both adopted from the animal shelter.

- Contact [johnvinsonmemorialride@gmail.com](mailto:johnvinsonmemorialride@gmail.com) for more information here.

Thank you to The Hub at Feather Oaks for hosting an incredible Celebration of Life event on September 10, 2025. And special thanks to the over 300 friends and family

that were able to  
come together on very short notice to honor the life and legacy of John  
Vinson.

Finally, donations in John's name can be made to the following organizations:

Apalachicola Riverkeeper:

- Memorial gifts can be mailed to Apalachicola Riverkeeper, PO Box 8,  
Apalachicola, FL  
32329. Online memorial donations can also be made on our website.  
Here is the link <https://apalachicolariverkeeper.org/donate-now/>

Special Olympics Florida- Leon County Tennis program

- Checks can be mailed to: 325 John Knox Rd., Ste. K210, Tallahassee, FL  
32303

Ride Like MADD Florida Cycling Challenge:

- <https://fundraising.madd.org/r/mfl/donate>

Mr. Vinson is under the care of Jackie Fulford and James Sircy of Young  
Fulford Funeral Home, Tallahassee, Florida. 850.610.4444

# Tribute Wall

JG

“ I am deeply saddened by the passing of my good friend. I went to FSU with John and have great memories of fishing and tennis. I will miss him.



Jeff Gualtieri - December 26, 2025 at 03:24 PM



Thanks for sharing, Jeff! Do you know where you all caught these at?

Allen Vinson - June 17 at 12:53 PM

JB

“ When first tarpon fishing with John he had a dog named Eiko. When we'd throw a live pinfish out we'd use a balloon to float the bait . We quickly learned that Eiko felt it his job to jump ship and bring back the balloon. Changes were made! Will always miss you John....  
John S. Beebe

John Beebe - October 12, 2025 at 10:33 AM



Thanks for sharing, John! Was this the golden retriever Biko? :)

Allen Vinson - June 17 at 12:54 PM