



## John Dudley Burns

May 18, 1933 - October 20, 2025

John Dudley Burns (1933-2025)

John Dudley Burns, the founding CEO of Vista Chemical Company, passed peacefully from this life on October 20, 2025 after a long and full life of business and charitable leadership, world travel, and some serious golf and fishing.

John was born in 1933 to John Heard and Annie Lee (Peeples) Burns. He graduated from Lamar High School in 1951, Rice University in 1956 (B.S. Chem. Eng.), and an executive management program at Harvard Business school in 1973. He began his career as a junior chemical engineer at a Conoco chemical plant, rose through the ranks to become Executive Vice-President of Chemicals, and led the division through a management-led leveraged buyout from parent company DuPont in 1984 to create Vista. After Vista was acquired in 1991, John retired in 1992 but continued to consult and advise in the following decades.

John enjoyed golf worldwide on courses including Pebble Beach, St. Andrews, Sotogrande, Lochinvar, and River Oaks Country Club. He participated in the Bob Hope Pro-Am for many years. An avid sailor, he taught his family to crew and race a 27-foot sailboat. Over the years he took up tennis, snorkeling, jogging, and para-ponting (but declined an offer to do the loop-de-loop). John loved to travel with his family, living in Spain for several years and taking them to Africa, Europe, Hawaii, and the Virgin Islands. Throughout his life he collected wine and later native American Kachina dolls.

John played jazz clarinet in college, loved musical theater, and was a long-time supporter of Theater Under the Stars. He went on safari in Africa and served on the board of directors for the Houston Zoo. John was a longtime member of Chapelwood United Methodist Church, which he served in various capacities over the years, and with his wife generously supported the work of the church. He also believed deeply in educational opportunity. He assisted several people with college tuition and gave regularly to his alma mater, Rice University.

John is survived by his wife of 63 years, the former Margaret Garrett; his four sons, John Arthur Burns (Anita), Kevin Norman, Dan Burns (Catherine), and Bill Burns; his grandchildren Jackie McCleary (Paul), Daniel Burns (Grace), Allison Beaty (Jeremy), Abi Burns,

Thomas Norman,  
Maggie Norman, and John David Burns; and his great granddaughter, Lucy  
McCleary.

Services will be held at Chapelwood United Methodist Church, 11140  
Greenbay, Houston, TX,  
77024 on Monday, Nov 3. Gifts in his memory can be made to Chapelwood  
UMC or

Rice University. Call Chapelwood for service information 713-465-3467

# Previous Events

## Memorial Service

NOV 3 (CT)

Chapelwood United Methodist Church  
11140 Greenbay Street  
Houston, TX 77024