



SONS OF UNION VETERANS OF THE CIVIL WAR
DEPARTMENT OF MISSOURI

www.suvcwmo.org

Robert AuBuchon, DC
Commander

commander@suvcwmo.org

DEPARTMENT ORDER NO. 6
Series 2024-2025
10 March 2025

Passing of Past Department Commander John Charles Rutherford

Brothers, it is with sorrow to report the passing of Past Department Commander John Charles Rutherford of Springfield, Missouri on 8 March 2025 at the age of 62.

Brother John joined the Sons of Union Veterans of the Civil War in 1994, deriving his right to membership from his 3rd Great Grandfather, Captain Dewitt Wadsworth, Company C and I, 24th Ohio Infantry Regiment. He was a charter member of Phelps Camp #66, serving as their first Camp Commander; Past Department Commander of Department of Missouri in 1999-2000; and host committee chair for the 2001 National Encampment held in Springfield. John was an avid historian and genealogist on local history and the Civil War, his last publication being *We Gave Them Thunder: Marmaduke's Raid and the Civil War in Missouri and Arkansas* co-authored by William Piston.

In memory of Brother Rutherford, the Department's Charter and web site shall be draped, all Camp Charters and websites shall be draped, and Brothers shall attach a black mourning ribbon to their membership badge. Following Department Policy #103, this order shall remain in effect for thirty days from this date.

Ordered this 10th Day of March 2025,

Attest:

Robert AuBuchon, DC
Commander
Department of Missouri
Sons of Union Veterans of the Civil War

Dale Crandell, PDC
Secretary-Treasurer
Department of Missouri
Sons of Union Veterans of the Civil War



John Charles Rutherford

June 5, 1962 — March 8, 2025

John Charles Rutherford

John Charles Rutherford, 62, passed away at CoxHealth Medical Center South on March 8, 2025, after an extended illness. He was born in Fremont, Ohio, on June 5, 1962, to Leland and Ethel (Damschroder) Rutherford.

He met his future wife, Clara Lee Gunn, in Murfreesboro, Tennessee, where both were attending Middle Tennessee State University (and where John earned a Bachelor of Science degree in 1987, majoring in Historic Preservation). One of his favorite stories involved Civil War history—as his ancestor's regiment, the 24th Ohio, fought at the Battle of Stones River. Clara's ancestor's regiment, the 2nd Florida, also fought there, and the 24th OVI captured the 2nd FL! He always said she "got them back" by capturing him! They married on April 25, 1995, at the Heart to Heart Wedding Chapel, located at the time on West Chestnut Expressway in Springfield, Missouri.

Over the years, he worked for the National Park Service at Stones River National Battlefield, Perry's Victory and International Peace Memorial, and Antietam National Battlefield. He authored numerous magazine articles, newspaper columns, and with Dr. William G. Piston, co-authored *We Gave Them Thunder*, a nonfiction book about the Civil War battles of Springfield, Missouri, and Hartville, Missouri. He retired in 2022 after a decades'-long career in the Springfield-Greene County Library's Local History Department.

His lifelong love of history led him to join the Sons of Union Veterans of the Civil War. He was a charter member of the Phelps Camp #66 and served the organization as Missouri Department Commander, 1999-2000.

John was preceded in death by his parents, Leland and Ethel Rutherford. He is survived by his wife, Clara; a brother Kevin, of Perrysburg, Ohio; his aunt, Carol Ballard, of Bowling Green, Ohio; several cousins; numerous nieces and nephews; and friends too numerous to count. He will be remembered for his sense of humor, friendliness, dedication to research, and his willingness to talk about what he knew.

An opportunity to celebrate and remember John will be hosted by Bill and Nancy Piston on April 17 from 2:00-4:00 p.m. - with tributes at 2:30 p.m. Location: 828 S. Delaware Ave. in Springfield.

If you wish to express a remembrance of John, please donate in his memory to The Library Foundation, c/o Brian Grubbs, 4653 S. Campbell Ave., Springfield, MO 65810 (please specify that your donation be directed to the Local History Department Fund); or to the Phelps Camp #66, Sons of Union Veterans of the Civil War, c/o Kirk Singleton, 13679 Lawrence 1245, Billings, MO 65610.