

JOHN BATES:

CELEBRATING THE LIFE OF ONE OF BALTIMORE'S OWN

By Doug Mace

John Bates never considered himself a forefather of craft beer in Baltimore, but anyone who knew him knew he provided everyone in the industry with so much more. The kind, caring, passionate man lit up everywhere he went with his smile and helped bring craft beers to the taps around town.

On July 22nd, 2017 the world lost a wonder. Not a single person who interacted with John forgets their conversations with the man who brought a lot of beer to Baltimore.

IN THE BEGINNING

John Bates began by moving to Baltimore in the eighties and, as a part time pizza deliveryman, brought pies to Racer's Cafe in Parkville, Md.

January 19th, 2004 Growler's Pub was born as John and Kristen closed on their purchase of the building at 600 Potomac Street in Baltimore. About a year and half later legal difficulties with a bar in St. Louis brought about the name change to Baltimore Taphouse.

As he was at the bar just about every day and lived just one street up the road, John ensured he could enjoy his favorite part about the bar; the people made the place for him.

John welcomed everyone into his "home" and as his wife Kristen puts it, "He always wanted the bar to be an extension of their living room or a basement hangout."



After health prevented him from bartending John got to enjoy time on the good side of the bar where he connected day in and day out. He knew names and stories and made it his work to ensure every person who walked through the door felt like family.

THE PEOPLE MAKE THE PLACE

Kristen explained, "John loved the art of conversation. He really engaged people one-on-one and loved hearing their stories."

"What John wanted to do ... and was equally or even more important than making money ... was to have a solid community and introduce people to good beer. John wanted others to do well and had the theory that traffic creates traffic."

The relationship between John and so many other small business owners and

people in the brewing, bars, restaurants and other industries across Maryland stems out of his genuine passion for communication and a desire to see others succeed.

Even just going to farmer's markets and corner stores became a staple of John's time outside the bar as he supported others. His goal always revolved around the local community and his love for the people around him.

Whether a sales person looking to sign on their first account or another local bar trying to get up and running, countless people have a "John Bates story" where he helped them out (honestly too many to include).

Current bartender and longtime friend, Jim McGinty accidentally stole the thunder coming in as the bar's first customer from Kristen's father (John wanted his father-in-

law to be the first customer), but John didn't bat an eye and welcomed him with a seat and a smile as he always would.

Kristen made clear that he appreciated the breweries throughout the area and around the country. Not only beer – specifically Sierra Nevada as anyone who knew John knew he loved – but John had a pallet for whiskies and wines as well. Whenever the two went out he made a point to incorporate food and drink into their many travels together.

Everyone knows John loved Blues music and trips to New Orleans in addition to his Sierra Nevada. In conversation with his closest confidant, Kristen revealed a fun, little-known secret about him. John never missed an episode of 'The Young & The Restless'.

John was a quiet person with a gentle soul and no matter what he did, he did it at one hundred percent. If he couldn't do it at one-hundred percent then he wouldn't do it at all. His drive epitomized one that remained young and restless.

THE LEGACY CONTINUES

Brian Cooke, who started just months after the bar first opened, takes on an increased roll as the Bar Manager now and Baltimore Taphouse remains as strong as ever. The great spirit of John Bates' carries on and the memories and the perpetual apprecia-



tion for him remains undeniable.

This month Waverly Brewing releases "Capt'n Bates" beer. You guessed it.

In John's honor Gregory McGrath announced the new brew on Facebook describing it as, "A beer to honor the legacy of a Maryland Craft Beer Pioneer, a Bartender, a Businessman, a Mentor, a Boss, a Father figure, and most of all, a dear Friend."

Thank you John Bates. You are loved, missed, and remembered, by so many and so fondly. Your impact, your smile, and your kindness will never be forgotten or properly cherished because perhaps no one could do it as smooth as you or the music you loved.

Cheers John! ■

BEVERAGE JOURNAL online

search distributor portfolios



dynamic search

search portfolios of your favorite distributors. explore for best deals, family plans, ratings and more. log in to **beveragejournalinc.com** and register today for full access.

get connected today.



website powered by
BeverageMedia.com