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SIDE SHOTS

Professional Land Surveyors of Colorado

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REMEMBERING JB GUYTON

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To commemorate JB's commitment to excellence and his selfless efforts to see the profession benefited and advanced, I ask each of you to do two things; slow down and be thankful for the blessings you have as a result of the profession, and ask yourself, "What can I do to emulate the excellence that JB exemplified?"

As we all are struggling to keep up with the tremendous workload and continual technological advancements of our profession, let's not forget that we do what we do because of our desire to see our professionalism benefit our clients and our communities. Of course, all this altruism does yield us a living but I suspect we do not stay in this profession just for the money. We could apply our technical abilities elsewhere but choose not to so that we can have the fulfillment of impacting others by sharing the knowledge we have obtained along this journey we call surveying.

Isn't that what *Side Shots* is all about? Aren't we all just telling a story on every single plat we prepare and sign? Aren't we constantly looking for the next young person into whom we can invest our time and energy to mentor up in this profession we love? This is what I think of when I contemplate all that JB has done for the profession over the years.

It is my sincerest hope that we all will take a moment to reflect on why JB did what he did and how we might emulate that behavior in our own lives and businesses. It will not happen by accident but only by the intentional, consistent effort to put others before ourselves for the betterment of the whole.

Thanks,

Ralph Pettit, PLS
PLSC President





John B. Guyton

1946-2021

Pat and JB

By Pat Guyton

I was obsessed with hiking the Fourteeners. Many of these were solo journeys with a full pack for overnight. I felt peaceful and quite content to be alone. On July 4, 1989, I was camping below the summit on Mt. Yale. The following weekend, Harvard was next. Scouting for a place to pitch the tent for the night I reached the campground with a few early arrivals preparing for the night. Tent neighbors make friends and as a group we set out to summit. One man had a very friendly German Shepard named Albert. Albert meandered over to my tent and proceeded with a friendly canine investigation. He was the companion of an unusual gentleman named JB.

JB was curious about people and he introduced himself. He was fun and smart. We soon exchanged enough information to know that his business partner at Flatirons, Inc was dating a gal who had done Pilates with me. JB made an artful overture that if I ever needed a hiking partner, he was available. The rest is history. We were married on the winter solstice in 1991.

JB was prepared to enlighten me about surveying. His previous experience taught him that most people were ignorant of the history and the importance of this profession. I think he was surprised when I recounted that my uncle was a graduate of a Naval Military Academy and along with flight training he was also a surveyor. My second cousin was one of the surveyors of the original site of Disney World outside of Orlando. As a child, I went out with my uncle and his chains. Later I went with JB a few times as his "crew".



JB at Longs Peak

JB loved history and he would say that surveying was an ancient and noble profession. Then he would proceed to regale with a history lecture. He was a brilliant raconteur. His article of Summit of the Rockies was an example of how he entwined business and history. Often when driving to another Fourteener, he would point out some landmark where he had surveyed including a summer in South Park. Or he would tell me about some spot in Denver or Boulder where he had done some work.

JB was a business and history major at CSU. His plans were to return to his family business in Chicago. The family enterprise did not prevail and

the company was sold and his future as planned was gone. Needing a summer job a friend recommended that he should try job at a local survey firm. JB was a student radical of the 60's. He was a free spirit with long red hair, extremely athletic and independent. His father introduced him to Rocky Mountain National Park when he was a boy and they climbed Twin Sisters. JB described pulling himself up the cable route on Long's Peak in penny loafers. Thus began his outdoor adventures with McKinley in Alaska and in Peru.

JB revered his father and said that no one had a better Dad than he did. His father would often minister at summer camp. Often the sermon was from



Corinthians 13: *When I was a child, I spoke as a child, I understood as a child, I thought as a child: but when I became a man, I put away childish things.*" It was time for JB to set his compass toward the future.

JB began his survey career working in the field at Robinson Engineering. Due to his determination and singular personality he understood that he was not an ideal employee, he had to be the boss. He soon discovered that he was very ignorant about the science and business of surveying. Assiduous in his need to achieve, he returned to school to learn math and later went to the Colorado School of Mines where he met Dexter Brinker. No one at the company knew that he was applying his time, energy and money to earn his license. JB would grimace about the enforced suffering of many cups of coffee needed to stay alert for class after working a full day in the field. He took his PLSC exam and passed the first time. He continued to collect licenses in neighboring states.

When I met JB, he had just purchased half ownership of Flatirons Surveying. His financial advisor told him that this company was not a good investment. JB

obviously did not agree. I witnessed him write the check to complete the transfer of sole ownership. He accumulated all of his assets through hard work and delayed gratification. He was in the office seven days a week. There were tough times. He would sometimes write payroll from his personal checking. During the financial collapse, we managed to crawl out of the recession by using our retirement and through the loyalty of the employees who stood by the company.

As he matured in the business, his greatest joy was teaching and giving back to the profession. He was thrived on the pursuit of service to his community. JB loved expert witness work. We would sit at the dinner table and he would review a case, revise upon waking in the middle of the night and tell me while he showered how he had solved the problem. Sometimes, he would ask me to edit documents, the *Side Shots* and witness reports. Then he would ask me if I had read the material and ask for my opinion. I did learn a lot although my contribution was mainly grammatical. I was privileged to attend several sessions of lobby day in Washington DC with him. I met many of his colleagues and my friend, Becky Roland during

this trips. The gentlemen and Becky allowed me to sneak into the House and Senate where I would play the secretary.

It was our last trip to DC in 2019 and he was not feeling well. JB lived such a fit lifestyle. His doctors would tell him that the only improvements he could make were to limit his stress and take more vacation time. That was in the future plans. However, when we came home his pain had increased to the point that he wanted to go to the emergency room. That was when we received the news of his terminal diagnosis.

JB would say to you now that life is precious and ephemeral. He would tell you that man can never know when it is the last words of kindness uttered, a hug from a friend or a kiss from a loved one. He considered his employees at Flatirons as family and wished for their success as individuals and as a group. He cherished his colleagues in the profession. JB passed peacefully at home with Heather and me by his side. It was my greatest honor and privilege to assist him through his illness. He was brave, courageous and determined to the last. It was a joy to share a life with the perfect partner.

JB Guyton's Impact

I will never forget the first time I met JB. I had arrived to participate in a PLSC conference, and was standing in the hallway when someone I knew introduced us. It only took a short conversation for me to realize that I was talking with someone whose intelligence was totally "out of my league". What I learned as we became good friends is that JB is also an amazing human being whose love for his profession, and for people in general, is extraordinary. That combination manifested itself through the interest JB exhibited in his support of the annual NSPS Student Competition. During one of his first activities as a judge, JB was able to utilize his knowledge of Spanish, and dedication to fairness, to insure that the participating team from Puerto Rico was able to convey its message to the other judges. I am honored and proud to have been considered as a friend by JB. His light will always shine in my remembrances of dear friends.

Curt Sumner, LS (Va)
Executive Director
National Society of Professional Surveyor

I met JB on a chairlift in Winter Park. On the ride up, I expressed a desire to move to Colorado from NC to continue my career in land surveying. He told me to look up his company and hired me on the spot essentially. I worked for JB at Flatirons Surveying for 2 years. He and I had a working relationship through the PLSC for years after that. JB showed me and my fellow surveyors the importance of volunteering. His legacy editing Sideshots and his decades of surveying across Colorado is a lasting one. I will be retracing his work for the rest of my career.

Kayce D. W. Keane, PLS
Boulder Land Consultants
First Recipient of JB Guyton
Lifetime Achievement Award

It would be an understatement to say, I will miss my friend John Guyton (JB). I knew JB for over 20 years but only in the past few years, did I have the opportunity to get to know him. Those who knew JB, understood that he was a highly educated, a history fanatic and a passionate contributor to the land surveying profession. Forever the educator and mentor, whenever we had conversations, I would make a mental note to myself to look up a word or two that JB had stated. He loved to use unconventional words to convey his thoughts, and even through this minor way, he was educating me as he loved to do with anyone who would venture a discussion with him. JB, the dedicated professional, spent decades as editor of the Colorado surveying society quarterly magazine SideShots, participated in many activities in the surveying arena, represented the surveying community on numerous agency boards and spoke on a variety of topics at conferences. Never looking for thanks or appreciation, he just wanted to give of himself to the community. Over the last two years JB had to transform his life due to his illness. Fortunately for me, I had the opportunity to visit with JB at his home a couple of months prior to his passing. During the visit it was great to hear about his compassion for others and his desire to have the children of elder parents engage with their parents, to let them know they matter in this world and they are needed. JB always made me and others feel welcome, respected and appreciated. Treating others in this way has become increasingly rare in this world. I shall miss seeing JB, hearing his stories and engaging in thoughtful conversation. Godspeed my friend, rest in peace.

Todd Beers
PLSC Past President and NSPS and
WFPS Representative

JB Guyton was my first surveying mentor. We first met in 1980 when I was fresh out of the Brinker School of Surveying and Mapping. He took me under his wing and we shared a lot together. We worked together for 6 years. I climbed my first 14er (Longs Peak) with JB in 1981. I went on to climb 35 others. Though we shared a great deal within the surveying profession over the years, my fondest memory of JB is the birth of my daughter. Lorraine's water broke a week early. We were supposed to have a co-ed baby shower that day, but wound up in the hospital for an 18-hour labor. JB came to visit in the hospital...while Lorraine was in labor. It was a little awkward, but it gave he and I a laugh over the years when we remembered that story. JB would always give me time when I needed survey legal advice, or info for a job change or just sharing survey info or discussing politics. In the early years, we would do free lance survey jobs together. Our careers intertwined over the years through advisory boards, conferences, PLSC and just the profession. I know that if Flatirons had been in Denver that I would have worked for him. Whenever I would tell Lorraine, "that I taked to JB today" or "I saw JB at the conference", she didn't have to ask "JB who?". That's all I ever addressed him as.

Bill Hesselbach
Retired



John Bruce (JB) Guyton was a successful professional land surveyor and a giant in the profession. He had decades of land surveying experience, was a successful business owner (Flatirons Surveying), edited our professional publication, Sideshots, provided expert testimony in many legal cases and was a mentor to many, including me.

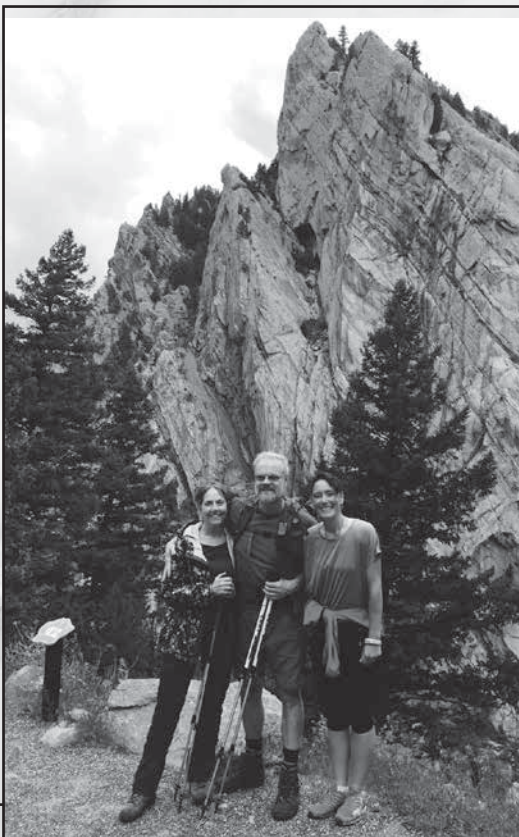
I met JB in the mid-1980s as a recent Civil Engineering graduate from CU-Boulder. JB helped launch my professional land surveyor career. Not only did he share his excitement and passion for this field; he also shared his love of the outdoors, skiing, hiking and travelling with me. JB was not shy about sharing his deep thoughts about life. These conversations would bring up many life questions for me. I appreciate him pushing me to deeper introspection. He was my compadre.

JB and I would have long conversations about family, politics, travel, philosophy and current events. Often when JB would talk about his exploits in South America while mountaineering, he would often break into speaking Spanish which would result in hearty laughter from both of us.

On the slopes, JB had these gargantuan boards (skis) and would attack the slopes with a zest that would leave me breathless. Keeping up with him was a challenge!

What I want people to know about JB, is that he was a gentle, empathetic soul. He was a good listener and a true family man. My compadre is now on his forever adventure, yet he leaves a void in my heart. Rest in Peace, my friend. ¡Vaya con Dios!

Jeff Jones
Retired



There are aspects of JB's life that I think were very important to making him the person he was. He was an explorer. When I first met him, he was diving all over the world. One of my favorite photos in his office was one of him diving with a whale shark. It was an amazing photo that spoke volumes to who he was. He was also a mentor to so many people in the profession. The main reason I wanted to work with JB was that we shared the philosophy that if you give people the opportunity to work in their own areas of strength, encourage them, and allow them to grow into whatever suits their strengths, they will be happy and advance more quickly than in a strict work environment. Many Flatirons employees went on to start their own businesses based on the knowledge they gained working with JB. His enthusiasm for the profession was unbounded. Another unique perspective to his personality was his knowledge of survey history. He constantly astounded others with his knowledge of history and this in itself gave him an in depth understanding of surveying. There is so much more that I could share, but in conclusion, I lost one of the best friends I have ever had and will miss him every day.

Ed Bristow, PLS
President and General Counsel of
Flatirons, Inc.

JB started out for me as an archival for business. However, during the recession when I hit bottom, he turned into a valuable ally. JB helped me up, dusted me off and I will always be grateful to him for caring and helping me to continue in the profession.

Karen Meckel, PLS

JB encouraged me to expand my skills to become a professional surveyor. He sent me to my first survey class, the PLS Refresher course in Golden. I loved it and it changed the course of my career. JB also gave me my first book on surveying – the 3rd edition of Curtis Brown's Boundary Control and Legal Principles. After I read it he let me disagree with him on boundary decisions as long as I could back up my reasoning. One day the weather was so bad no one came in to work except for me and JB. I was a hand drafter, and JB was the new owner of the company I worked for. We got a call from KBCO (the local Boulder radio station) in desperate need for a certified elevation on their broadcast antenna. We looked up the closest benchmark and packed the equipment into his personal truck along with his beloved dog, Albert. We hiked to the top of a peak to set up on the benchmark and then needed to get the target to the top of the radio tower. Hiking to the benchmark was an almost futile exercise. Each step was mid-thigh in light powdery snow. We came to a ravine where the snow was too deep for me to reach the ground and JB demonstrated a mountaineering technique and "swam" through the snow. He encouraged me to do the same. I got horizontal and was propelling myself through the snow when Albert decided to use me as a bridge and walked across the deep snow on my back!

Laine Landau, PLS
Lamp Rynearson

I was blessed to spend time with JB during the NSPS Congressional Visits each year. We would walk endless times, back and forth to between the buildings, for meetings in the various legislators' offices. He would share his impressions about the meetings, PLSC, surveying, the human race... basically everything possible. A few years ago, his wife, Pat, joined him on the trips. Our friendship quickly grew, and I was always so happy to spend time with them. Conversations were intellectual, sometimes emotional, and always filled with pearls of wisdom. JB was always so excited and proud to meet students at the event and share his encouragement. He was very proud to be a surveyor, and the profession meant so much to him. I will miss his smile and his endless knowledge of history. He was truly a student throughout his life.

Becky Roland
PLSC Executive Director