

## John Rudolph Eriksson obituary

August 10, 1935 – September 17, 2025



After many months of serious illness, John Rudolph Eriksson died peacefully at home on September 17, 2025. He was born on August 10, 1935, in Detroit, Michigan to parents G. Rudolph and Aina Eriksson. He attended a local elementary school on Detroit's West side and graduated high school from Cass Technical School with a major in electronics. While he attended Wayne State University, John worked a part-time job as a lifeguard and met the love of his life, Lois Rogers, also a student there. He continued at Wayne State and received his Master's Degree in Economics and Industrial Relations, but not before marrying Lois the day after she graduated with an Art Education degree in June 1957. John was awarded three scholarships that allowed him to attend the University of California at Berkeley.

After five years of study, he received his PhD in Economics. His thesis involved tracing the economies of several Central and South American countries. He and Lois traveled for five months to Mexico, Venezuela, Columbia, Ecuador, Peru, Brazil, Bolivia, Chile, Argentina, and Uruguay. After graduating, he became an Assistant Professor of Economics at Williams College in Williamstown, MA.

While living in Williamstown, he and Lois adopted two children, Mark and Beth. While on one sabbatical leave from Williams, John worked as a Research Economist for the International Labor Office in Geneva, Switzerland. The family enjoyed visiting France, Italy, and Belgium. In 1970, he began a career with the U.S. Agency for International Development ("USAID"), as a Chief and International Economist, as Deputy Director, as the USAID Mission to Sri Lanka; as a Director in the Office of Policy Development and Program Review; as a Deputy Assistant Administrator in the Bureau for Science and Technology; as a Director, USAID Mission to Thailand; and Director, Center for Development Information and Evaluation. During leaves from USAID, John was a Consultant for the International Labor Office and Organization of America States (Ecuador field work) and a Visiting Associate Professor of Economics at Arizona State University. He retired from USAID Senior Foreign Service in February 1995 with rank of Minister Counselor, and after receiving the Administrator's Distinguished Career Award. While at USAID, John received special awards of merit from three different U.S. Presidents.

After retirement, John worked for the World Council of Churches, the Lutheran World Federation, the Inter-American Development Bank, the African Development Bank, USAID, Danish International Development Assistance Program, Danish Institute for International Studies, Social Impact, Inc., IRG for the US Department of State Foreign Assistance Bureau, and ended his career with multiple senior consultant positions at the World Bank. He visited or worked in 70 countries during his distinguished career. He started Global Peace Services in 1998 and passionately worked to expand his national and international

network supporting those working in peace services – promoting nonviolent approaches to latent or emerging conflicts and developing innovating pilot education and training in peacebuilding, peace services curricula, and preventative measures against violence eruptions.

John was an active member of Saint Stephen Lutheran in Silver Spring, Maryland, and, when living overseas, many other Christian churches. He served in multiple leadership positions, and, even to the end of his life, he was more concerned with the ways his congregation cared for and accompanied immigrants/refugees than himself. John is survived by his spouse of 68 years, retired Reverend Lois; his daughter Beth of Ellijay, Georgia; his son Mark (Kelli) of Hagerstown, Maryland; grandchildren Morgan and Dylan; and many other beloved friends and colleagues he considered family.

All are invited to a Memorial Worship celebrating John's faithful life on Saturday, November 8 at 12:30pm ET at Saint Stephen Lutheran Church, 11612 New Hampshire Avenue, Silver Spring, MD 20904

(livestream: <https://www.youtube.com/@officeofsaintstephenluther6429> ), with a 2:30pm interment at Parklawn Cemetery, 12800 Veirs Mill Road, Rockville, MD 20853. There will be an international repast at Saint Stephen immediately following the interment. In lieu of flowers, memorial gifts may be directed to: Saint Stephen Lutheran, P.O. Box 4092, Silver Spring, MD 20914-4092, <https://www.saintstephenelca.org/give> or Global Refuge, <https://www.globalrefuge.org/get-involved/ways-to-give/> .