



John "Jay" Hanna

November 3, 1946 - August 5, 2025

John "Jay" Hanna—a longtime prosecutor, tireless advocate, and devoted husband, father and grandfather—died peacefully at home Aug. 5, 2025, at the age of 78.

Born Nov. 3, 1946, to Roberta (Wealthall) and John A. Hanna, Jay grew up in Napoleon, Ohio, alongside his sisters, Lee and Gretchen, and a bevy of friends who remained in his circle well beyond their 1964 Napoleon High School graduation. His closest confidante, though, was his high school sweetheart, Lois Zimmerman, who he married Sept. 2, 1967. In their nearly 58 years of marriage, the two built a life based on friendship, respect, compassion for others, and, perhaps more than anything, a deep devotion to their seven children.

Jay graduated from The Ohio State University with a bachelor's degree in history in 1968 and the University of Toledo College of Law with a JD in 1972. (This education, combined with a brief high school teaching stint in between, later helped him lecture his children on grammar and dominate them in nightly viewings of Jeopardy!.)

Upon graduation from law school, Jay returned to Napoleon as an associate with the Hoeffel, Funkhouser and Short Law Firm; he soon became a partner and continued to work in private practice at what eventually became Hanna

Fisher & Rosebrook. In 1975, Jay successfully ran for Henry County prosecutor—a position to which he continually won election until he stepped down in 2016. He retired from private practice in 2018, at which time he was awarded a commendation from the Ohio Senate for his service.

This was one of many professional accolades Jay earned throughout his life, but his most cherished were those related to his community. Such honors included the Napoleon Parks and Recreation Service Award for his leadership of the late-'80s/early-'90s Blue Jays Little League team; induction into the Napoleon High School Athletic Hall of Fame for his high school wrestling prowess and hundreds of hours volunteered as an official at nearly all of his children's swim meets and water polo matches; the Napoleon High School Alumni Association Distinguished Alumni Award for his exceptional career achievements; and a scholarship named in his honor through Napoleon's Rotary International chapter, of which he served as president and, during his tenure, the longstanding and beloved Santa House began. In addition, Jay and Lois received the inaugural Champion for Children Award from the Symphony of Trees for their work in co-founding what is now the Center for Child and Family Advocacy and for Jay's career giving voice to and providing justice for those who need it most.

Jay was renowned for his work helping children, whether through the legal system or as a coach during kids' formative years. Even amid his impressive and demanding career, making time for children—his own and others—was paramount. Jay's children each recall regularly disrupting his workday with phone calls and visits to his office, and none can remember him missing a sporting event, theater performance or school program. Though he had many passions of his own—Ohio State football, poker club, obscure history, John Denver music and water skiing at least once per year at the family's beloved Hamilton Lake cottage—Jay found true joy and pride in his children's activities. He quickly developed deep loves for whatever interested them, from

Broadway musicals to WWE wrestling.

Jay was so committed to giving back that, upon his diagnosis with Lewy body dementia, he joined a five-year research study at Cleveland Clinic to help scientists better understand the neurodegenerative disorder; at the time, he agreed to donate his brain to further research to hopefully prevent the disease in others. Jay's loving wife, Lois—with the incredible caregiving staff of Waite Nightingales Nursing Agency and other private providers—cared for Jay at home since his diagnosis, with end-of-life support and care from Kind Hearts Hospice.

He is survived by Lois and six of his children: Tiffany Hanna (Cheryl Kempf), Joshua (Justine) Hanna, Megan (Hawken) Flanagan, Zachary (Michelle) Hanna, Nicholas (Katie) Hanna and Emily (Patrick) Mayock; 15 grandchildren; his sister Gretchen Downs; brothers-in law Don and Bob (Gina) Zimmerman; many nieces and nephews; and his bonus daughter, Robin (Chad) Hershberger. He is preceded in death by his parents, his son John, his sister Lee Hanna, and his brother-in-law Tom Downs.

Family members will greet friends during calling hours at Rodenberger-Gray Funeral Home (1010 Westmoreland Ave., Napoleon) Sunday, Aug. 10, from 11 a.m. to 4 p.m. Services will be held Monday, Aug. 11, at 11 a.m. at Rodenberger-Gray Funeral Home, with a private family interment.

Donations in Jay's memory can be made to the Center for Child and Family Advocacy (theccfa.org). Online condolences and messages may be shared with the family at rodenbergergray.com.

Cemetery Details

Forest Hill Cemetery

500 E. Maumee Ave
Napoleon, OH 43545

Previous Events

Public Viewing

AUG **10**. 11:00 AM - 4:00 PM (ET)

Rodenberger Funeral Home - Napoleon
1010 Westmoreland Avenue
Napoleon, OH 43545

Funeral Service

AUG **11**. 11:00 AM (ET)

Rodenberger Funeral Home - Napoleon
1010 Westmoreland Avenue
Napoleon, OH 43545

Tribute Wall

CG

“ I’m sorry for the loss of a kid who lived down Lynne Ave from us Scruta kids, had a turquoise go cart which really was a miniature car! Jay, you never said a mean word to me... when I first started Napoleon Swim Team, Gretchen was coach, then Jay. I mostly remember the cold mornings swimming. I wasn’t speedy but he always found me a relay team in an older age group! Such fond memories. Thanks, Jay!!! You are missed. From Cindy Scruta George

Cindy Scruta George - January 28 at 10:24 PM

SD

“ It was a privilege to work with John on several projects over the five years I knew him professionally. He was a thorough professional, highly precise, meticulous with documentation, and always willing to help. He will always remain in our memories. My deepest condolences to his family.



— Subh Datta, Aron Developers

S DATTA - January 06 at 05:39 PM



“ 1 file added to the album Tribute Video



Rodenberger Funeral Home - August 22, 2025 at 10:07 AM

MY

“ When I think of our family's swimming experience in Napoleon, the Hanna's are at the top of what made it great. I was fortunate to be mentored by Jay and worked side by side on the pool deck for many years. I learned so much from Jay. His integrity and passion for the sport and the kids was so evident. The Yoder family holds all of you close in our heart.
Mari Yoder

Mari Yoder - August 13, 2025 at 02:23 PM

CE

“ So sorry to hear of Jay's passing. I had the privilege of working in the law office with him many years ago. His family is in our thoughts and prayers during this difficult time.

Chris Engler - August 11, 2025 at 10:36 AM

BF

“ Our whole family sends our deepest condolences and prayers to all of Jay's family. This man who has made such a difference in the people who were lucky enough to know him. Our memories hold him dear. Love and hugs to all.

Buchenberg Family - August 10, 2025 at 04:17 PM



“ Beautiful in Blue was purchased for the family of John "Jay" Hanna.



August 09, 2025 at 02:07 PM

RM

“ Lois and Family, so sorry for your loss! Jay was an excellent Prosecutor! He was a Prosecutor for my family at one time! He was a stand up Man! Prayers for you and your Family! 🙏🙏🙏



Reda Maynard - August 09, 2025 at 11:00 AM

K(

“ So very sorry for your loss! I worked at the courthouse for years and had many contacts with Jay. He will me missed. Prayers and hugs for the family.

Kahty (Wiechers)Lieb - August 08, 2025 at 04:02 PM

JW

“ Lois, We are so sorry to hear about Jay's passing. He was a great friend and Attorney who we had the highest respect for. Our sympathy goes out to you and your family. John & Barb Whalen and Family.

John Whalen - August 08, 2025 at 02:52 PM

RC

“ RR PTA Council-Shelby/Kristin/Kate/Annie purchased the Emerald Garden Basket for the family of John "Jay" Hanna.



RR PTA Council-Shelby/Kristin/Kate/Annie - August 08, 2025 at 11:35 AM



“ A [Memorial Tree](/store/Product.aspx?ProductId=4518) was planted in honor of John "Jay" Hanna.

August 08, 2025 at 11:28 AM



“ Country Basket Blooms was purchased for the family of John "Jay" Hanna.



August 08, 2025 at 11:28 AM



“ Love Brad and Chris purchased the Magnificent Life Spray for the family of John "Jay" Hanna.



Love Brad and Chris - August 08, 2025 at 02:52 AM



“ My sincere condolences to all the family! 🙏🙏💔 Jay was a fine man of great values! RIP Jay! 🕊️

Vicky L Delventhal - August 07, 2025 at 10:44 PM

JW

“Lois and Family, Sharon and I were saddened to learn this morning of Jay’s passing. He was a classmate in our high school class and a friend. I’ve always appreciated Jay’s remarkable service to Napoleon and Henry County. He could have chosen to practice law anywhere, but stayed home. His passing leaves important and lasting contributions. Our condolences to you and your family.
Jim Whitaker
Hilton Head Island, South Carolina

jim Whitaker - August 07, 2025 at 06:21 PM

PF

I am 75 years old and one of my fondness memory of Jay was when I was 6 or 7 years old and Jay was my farm team baseball coach. His devotion to the community of Napoleon was born a very long time ago. My condolences to the entire family and the families whose lives Jay has touched. Phil Fronce, Tampa, Florida

Philip Fronce - August 13, 2025 at 07:53 PM

AJ

“And Jeanine planted a [Memorial Tree](/store/Product.aspx?ProductId=4518) in honor of John "Jay" Hanna.

And Jeanine - August 07, 2025 at 05:43 PM

AJ

“And Jeanine purchased the Loving Lilies and Roses Bouquet for the family of John "Jay" Hanna.



And Jeanine - August 07, 2025 at 05:43 PM

MG

“ *Matt & Buffy Gunter Family, Mary Gunter purchased the Beautiful in Blue for the family of John "Jay" Hanna.*



Matt & Buffy Gunter Family, Mary Gunter - August 07, 2025 at 05:03 PM



“ *Country Basket Blooms was purchased for the family of John "Jay" Hanna.*



August 07, 2025 at 02:51 PM

JG

“ *Jay was was such an asset to the community. My father, Judge Robert Gilson, thought highly of Jay's professionalism. I enjoyed encountering Jay when I was a court reporter. He will surely be missed.*

Jan Gilson - August 07, 2025 at 01:29 PM



“ *Simply Elegant Spathiphyllum was purchased for the family of John "Jay" Hanna.*



August 07, 2025 at 11:38 AM

SF

“ Mr Hanna was sooo great! I remember once after a swim meet he came up to me (I really sucked) and he came up to me after I had lost badly and he was like cheer up Fort you got something all those speedy kids don't. You have Lane 6 Pride.

Sara Fortner - August 07, 2025 at 11:36 AM

KH

Lois and family, my sincere condolences to all of you. Jay was a great and caring man. You will have your cherished memories of him forever.

Karen Harms - August 09, 2025 at 10:45 AM



“ Sweet Tranquility Basket was purchased for the family of John "Jay" Hanna.



August 07, 2025 at 11:02 AM

SF

“ Where do I even start Mr Hanna was a GREAT man, father and friend!!!!

Sara Fortner - August 07, 2025 at 10:11 AM



“ A [Memorial Tree](/store/Product.aspx?ProductId=4518) was planted in honor of John "Jay" Hanna.

August 07, 2025 at 08:21 AM



“ Beautiful in Blue was purchased for the family of John "Jay" Hanna.



August 07, 2025 at 08:21 AM



“ It is with great sadness that I heard of Jay's passing. I knew Jay for 60 years, starting as my summer swim coach, as my friend, and as my lawyer. My sincerest thoughts and condolences are with all of the Hanna Family at this time. Janis L Huston

Janis L Huston - August 07, 2025 at 04:10 AM



“ Bonnie Croninger lit a candle in memory of John Hanna



Bonnie Croninger - August 06, 2025 at 08:45 PM



“ Beautiful in Blue was purchased for the family of John "Jay" Hanna.



August 06, 2025 at 07:02 PM

GW

“ So many. Cherished memories with Jay and their family. Our sincere sympathy. The Werneckes.

Gary and Lila Wernecke - August 06, 2025 at 06:33 PM

DM

“ My heart goes out to you all. I knew Jay both as my sons' little league coach and my attorney. His care and compassion in both capacities is unmatched. He will be so missed! Deb Freyman McLean

Deb McLean - August 06, 2025 at 05:13 PM

CW

“ Sincere sympathy to you and your families. Jay was my partner for close to 20 years of officiating. A wonderful man who always was an advocate for children. He will be missed. 💙 I will never forget him and his tutelage over the years!

Char Weber - August 06, 2025 at 04:41 PM

CY

“ Sympathy to his family and to his dear Wife Lois! I remember many years ago, helping Jay score NHS diving. He was dedicated man to his Family and Community!! RIP Jay

cotter_nudi@yahoo.com - August 06, 2025 at 04:30 PM