

Johnny Johns – Feb. 20, 2026

Rest in peace, Johnny Johns



Johnny Johns, a U.S. champion in pairs and ice dance in the 1970s and a longtime, beloved World and Olympic coach, passed away on Feb. 20, 2026, following complications from knee surgery. He was 74.

In 1973, Johns competed at the U.S. Championships in both the ice dance and pairs disciplines, a feat rarely undertaken at such a high level. That year, he earned the bronze medal in pairs with partner Emily Benenson and won the title in ice dance with partner Mary Campbell.

Johns finished his ice dance career at the 1973 World Championships with a career-best sixth-place finish.

As a pairs skater, he won U.S. titles with Melissa Militano in 1974 and 1975. He was a World Team member from 1971-75, with a career-best sixth-place finish at the 1975 World Championships.

Johns was also an accomplished singles skater during this time and was known for being able to rotate a double Axel in both directions.

He attended traditional schools during his skating career and studied at the University of Delaware in the early 1970s while under the tutelage of his coach, Ron Ludington.

Johns was a featured performer with the Ice Capades from 1976-79.

Following a successful career as a skater, Johns embarked on a coaching career that spanned more than 35 years. He spent 27 years at the Detroit Skating Club before moving to the Arctic Edge Ice Arena in Canton, Michigan, in 2006, and then to Hertz Arena in Estero, Florida, in January 2019.

Johns' teams included 1997 World Junior pairs champions and 1999 U.S. senior pairs champions Danielle and Steve Hartsell; 2006 World and Olympic pairs skaters Marcy Hinzmann and Aaron Parchem; and 2007 U.S. senior pairs champions Brooke Castile and Benjamin Okolski.

"Johnny saw things in people and brought out the best in them," said Mitch Moyer, who coached with Johns from 1988 to 2006. "He made it fun to skate. He kept his smile, kept you laughing. He always had a way of keeping things in perspective. The skaters who worked with

him loved him."

"He was more than just a coach. He believed in me when I didn't believe in myself and helped me rise to my full potential," U.S. Olympian and Johns' student Marcy Hinzmann (Simpson) said. "It wasn't more reps, it wasn't training harder. It was training smarter, actually enjoying the process, and finding something to be grateful for. I will miss him dearly. My whole family will; he was so good to us."

Later in his career, Johns worked with multiple World and Olympic champion ice dancers alongside Marina Zoueva, his longtime partner in coaching and in life.

"Johnny brought a unique balance of expertise and professionalism at the highest level, as well as a passion and joy for the everyday and a sense of humor that always brightened the atmosphere in the arena," Zoueva said. "With Johnny, we always worked hard but laughed even harder. The joy he shared with us all will be terribly missed."

Johns is survived by Zoueva, his daughter, Jillian Johns (Pounders); Jillian's husband, Scott Pounders; and their sons, Phoenix and Ozzy.