

John R. Burrows was born in Bryn Mawr, PA, on October 16, 1956, the son of Robert Nelson Burrows and Marion Jauch Burrows. As a child, John was reluctant to speak, first entering the world of speech when he was three and a half years old; he never stopped after that point, always ready with stories, anecdotes, and commentary on things around him. He was a happy boy, artistic from the start with a fertile imagination, boundless creativity, and artistic talent. When he was in the third grade his family moved to Whitewater, Wisconsin, and he became fascinated with the history of the region, eventually working during the summers at Old World Wisconsin in nearby Eagle, Wisconsin, after it opened in 1976. He also became interested in puppetry during his grade school years, and as a sixteen-year-old obtained on his own initiative a summer internship at Pelham Puppets in Marlborough, England. That experience spurred his interest in marionette theater and British culture. He soon convinced his father to build a stage for puppet performances and he developed shows that he performed at schools and shopping malls, to the delight of children and adults alike. As a boy, he played piano, learned to play the organ, and purchased a pump-organ which he took to Grinnell College to the astonishment of his dormmates. There, he fell in love with the study of art and architectural history, which began a lifelong interest in and passion for Victorian culture. John went on to complete graduate studies at the University of Virginia in architectural preservation and was hired as South Dakota's preservation historian, a short-lived career given the draconian policies against support for the arts implemented by then President Reagan. He then found employment in the business world, working for the historical design merchant Bradbury and Bradbury in Benicia, CA (near San Francisco), where he began to design period wallpaper patterns. After several years he moved to the Northeast, settling in Boston and becoming a "historical design merchant" in Victorian furnishings—carpets, lace curtains, and wallpapers. He founded his own company, "J. R. Burrows and Co." and opened his first store

on Newbury Street in Boston, later moving the store to a Federalist Period home he bought and restored in Rockland, Massachusetts, where the company thrived from the late-1980s until 2021. During that time John developed a relationship with Grosvenor and Wilton Company in Kidderminster, England, promoting their authentic reproductions of high-end wool carpets using original looms and patterns from the mid-19th century. He advised and oversaw the installation of period carpets, wallpaper, and other furnishings in historic buildings like Villa Louis, a stately mansion in Prairie du Chien, Wisconsin, and in churches as diverse as Trinity Church on Copley Square in Boston and the reconstructed Mormon Temple in Nauvoo, Illinois. He also oversaw carpet installations for two rooms in the White House (the Blue Room and the Lincoln Bedroom, during the presidencies of Bill Clinton and George W. Bush, respectively), and provided carpets and lace curtains for the interiors of Steven Spielberg's 2012 "Lincoln" movie. Hundreds of historical homes and buildings in cities and towns across the United States bear the imprint of his creative work as a restoration designer. He received numerous awards and accolades for his work in historical restorations, including a Lifetime Achievement Award from the Victorian Society in America. John interested himself in everything Victorian and had an encyclopedic knowledge of the history and culture of that period—in England and in the United States. Over his career, he spoke frequently at civic groups and academic conferences, always drawing others into his passions and curiosities. During the 1980s John became involved in "vintage dance groups", and participated in dance events throughout his life, enjoying a weeklong dance gathering at the Grand Hotel on Mackinac Island a week before his untimely death. John was a lifelong advocate for LGBTQ rights and causes. In 2001 he was instrumental in founding "Bear Week" in Provincetown, Massachusetts, an annual event occurring each July that attracts more than 10,000 gay men for a week of celebration and conviviality. In June of 2021 John moved back to the Midwest, settling in an

1880 Victorian home (which he named "Brackets Cottage") in Milton, Wisconsin, fourteen miles from Whitewater, where he grew up and where his mother still lives. Over the last several years, they enjoyed many days together as he rekindled his love of America's "heartland." John died peacefully in his sleep in his Milton home on Saturday, May 20, 2023. He is survived by his mother, Marion Burrows of Whitewater, Wisconsin; his siblings David N. Burrows of Oriental, North Carolina, Mark S. Burrows of Camden, Maine, and Linda Jauch Jennings of Falcon, Colorado; and his former husband Christopher Ricciotti of Montville, Maine.