

Ronald "R.Q." Johnson

December 7, 1926 - January 16, 2011

Ronald Q. Johnson died peacefully Sunday, January 16th in Mesa, Arizona with his wife, Joyce and daughter, Becky at his side.

Ronald (better known as "R.Q.") was born in Cooperstown, North Dakota, to Melvin and Margaret Johnson on December 7, 1926. Five years later he moved to Elbow Lake, Minnesota where he grew up loving music – singing and playing trumpet – while also engaging in every sort of competitive sport.

He graduated from Concordia College, Moorhead, Minnesota where he was active in the concert band and played both football and baseball. He served in the U.S. Army's 317th Army Band at Camp McCoy, Wisconsin for two years during the Korean Conflict.

In 1951 he married his college sweetheart, Joyce Wetherbee in Fairmount, North Dakota. He began his teaching career as director of bands and choirs in Bagley, Minnesota where he served from 1953 to 1966. During this time, he received his Masters Degree in Music Education from Northern Colorado State University. From 1966 to 1970 he directed the Concert Band and Waldorf Singers at Waldorf College, Forest City, Iowa.

Upon moving to Valley City State University he directed the Concert Band and Marching Band while serving as Chairman of the Music Department and Fine

Arts Department. His passion for teaching, his devotion to music education and the training of future music teachers led him to direct festival bands and adjudicate music contests in the upper Midwest. During his career he was on the summer faculty of the International Music Camp, Peace Gardens, North Dakota and Arrowhead Music Camp, Barnum, Minnesota. In 2008 R.Q. was inducted into the Valley City State University Music Department Hall of Fame. He was an honorary member of Phi Beta Mu, the International School Band Master Fraternity.

He served as a church choir director and tenor soloist and trumpet player throughout his life. Whether it was “The Lord's Prayer,” or “How Great Thou Art” at a wedding or funeral, or “O Holy Night” at a Christmas Eve service, he willingly shared his talents.

In his leisure time he was an avid golfer (who often thought his next putter was the answer to an improved game.) He hunted and fished with his family and always wished the Minnesota Twins were playing just a little better.

In 1978 he and his wife, Joyce began what would be 20 years of summer management positions with the Theodore Roosevelt Medora Foundation in Medora, North Dakota. Following his retirement in 1992 they enjoyed balmy winters in Mesa, Arizona where R.Q. played trumpet with Myron Summerfeld's Orchestra and directed a neighborhood community choir.

A devoted husband, father, grandfather and great-grandfather, R.Q. is survived by his loving wife, Joyce of 59 years; son, Paul (Judy) Johnson, Medford, Oregon; daughters, Bonnie (Brian) Alton, St. Paul, Minnesota and Becky (Terry) Kadrmas, Vancouver, Washington; grandchildren, Medora (Paul) Benson, Josh, Abigail, and Katherine, great grandchildren Barrett, Bjorn and Brygg; and his brother, Gordon Johnson.

He was preceded in death by his parents, brother Miles, and son, Craig.

Previous Events

Service

MAY **26**. 2:00 PM (CT)

Our Savior's Lutheran Church
138 3rd St. NW
Valley City, ND

Tribute Wall



“ I just found out about Mr. Johnson's passing and wanted to extend my condolences to the family-especially to Paul. I only knew your dad for a short time, but what a lovely man, and a stellar human being. He surely left a lasting legacy.

Suzie French, Mexico City##imported-begin##Suzie French##imported-end##

August 04, 2011 at 03:48 PM



“ RQ was a class guy and a friend. Like many things in life, you didn't understand the lessons till you were in world making your own way. He was a kind and patient instructor. If RQ had one weakness, it would be that he was too nice; He would give you the shirt off his back if you needed it. Rest In Peace.##imported-begin##Dennis Klinkhammer##imported-end##

May 26, 2011 at 04:16 PM



“ I wanted to thank R.Q. Johnson for the sublime and wonderful and joyous role he played in my life.

It is difficult to believe that someone who was this great really was here among us.

I have a sense that he really still is here . He'll always be here with me.

*"But thy eternal summer shall not fade,
Nor lose possession of that fair thou ow'st,
Nor shall death brag thou wander'st in his shade,
When in eternal lines to time thou grow'st.*

*So long as men can breathe or eyes can see,
So long lives this and this gives life to thee".*

*William Shakespeare
from Sonnett 18*

My warmest greetings to everyone.

JohnK.##imported-begin##John M. Klukken##imported-end##

May 25, 2011 at 05:12 PM



“ Joyce & Family

We extend our deepest and most heartfelt sympathy to you and the family.

We did not know about R.Q. passing until this morning. We were in our Peoria, AZ, home at the time--as you know, that is just a short distance from Scottsdale.

I was on Staff at Bagley, when you and R.Q. graciously invited our three kids over for dinner while Ardy was giving birth to our youngest daughter at the local hospital.

We are still in Moorhead.

Clair & Ardy##imported-begin##Clair & Ardy Peterson##imported-end##

May 23, 2011 at 02:41 PM



“ *May everyone remember RQ's vitality and loyalty.##imported-begin##June Rauschnabel##imported-end##*

May 23, 2011 at 10:52 AM



“ I sent Bonnie a message on Facebook.
I remember R.Q. from our days at Waldorf, I graduated in 1969. I accompanied for the choir, and was in band. I sincerely enjoyed knowing him, and how he helped us enjoy our music. I was lucky to also meet Mrs. R.Q. and perform with Bonnie.

I have long enjoyed the music memories from Waldorf. Thanks, of course, to my wonderful teacher.

My heart is with you all.##imported-begin##Sue Mickelsen Corbin##imported-end##

February 15, 2011 at 09:47 PM



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I remember R.Q. from our days at Waldorf. I accompanied for the choir, and was in band. I sincerely enjoyed knowing him, and how he helped us enjoy our music. I was lucky to also meet Mrs. R.Q. and perform with Bonnie.

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My heart is with you all.##imported-begin##Sue Mickelsen Corbin##imported-end##

February 15, 2011 at 09:45 PM



“ I am so sorry to learn of R.Q's death. He played a big role in the musical education of my children's lives in Bagley and you just can't be from Bagley and not feel a big sense of loss, even with the passage of all these years. My condolences to you all!

Sincerely,
Marilyn Lewis##imported-begin##Marilyn Lewis##imported-end##

February 12, 2011 at 08:11 PM



“ Dear Joyce and Family,
I would like to add my feelings of admiration for R.Q for being such an inspiring and encouraging teacher in my highschool days at Bagley. As Mary Louise mentioned the Annual, I got it off the shelf and read what R.Q. wrote. He took the time to write personal and meaningful remarks which reflect the warm fondness I shall always feel for him and remember him by.##imported-begin##Kathy Bloom Goodey Bagley Class of 1963##imported-end##

February 02, 2011 at 04:59 PM



“ Becky and family,
Our thoughts and prayers are with your family. RQ was always so nice to me when I would hang out in your kitchen during our high school years. His spirit will be with you through your many memories. Our sympathy, Deb & Dave##imported-begin##Deb Ganyo Lutz##imported-end##

February 01, 2011 at 10:07 AM



“ Dear Joyce and Family ~

It's a treat to see RQ's picture, (great pink shirt), and read his story. The site should have also included the Bagley band in a rousing Sousa march and the choir singing "No Man is an Island".

I have spoken of RQ many times as the person from my high school years who most influenced me for the good. He seemed to see me and know me long before I was able to see and begin to know my self, as he provided just the right guidance in the right way at the right time. He cared about us as individuals! My yearbooks were casualties of the flood, so I cannot go back and read his thoughtful words from those days, but I'm certain that they are woven into who I am and written in my heart. I am deeply grateful for his life of loving service.

*ML Hershberger##imported-begin##Mary Louise
Hershberger##imported-end##*

January 31, 2011 at 07:07 PM



“ R.Q.

You will be missed for tyhe remainder of my life. I will keep all of those times that we had the "Heart-to-Heart" talks to include your attitude adjustments that I needed. My heart and prayers go with you to heaven.

*In His Hands,
Brent##imported-begin##Brenton Higdem##imported-end##*

January 31, 2011 at 03:50 PM



“ MY sincere condolences to the wonderful family of RQ. The biblical quote that goes something like, "by their fruits they shall know ye" tells me what a wonderful man he was, for I've yet to meet a member of the Johnson family who wasn't a warm, loving, caring and joyful human being. With all my love, Marion##imported-begin##Marion Conlin##imported-end##

January 30, 2011 at 07:47 PM



“ Dear Joyce and family - Our thoughts and prayers are with you. A very special man and he had such an impact on many students at VCSU. Full of life and time for the students he taught. God bless and take care##imported-begin##Bruce and Cyndi Stein##imported-end##

January 27, 2011 at 03:32 PM



“ Dear Mrs. Johnson and family, I have many fond memories of R.Q. while at Bagley High School. Those were the years that Bagley had a outstanding music department. I recall a small poster in the band room saying, "You're trying---very trying" and under it someone had posted "you too R.Q." He gave alot of energy to the BHS school reunions. We all looked foward to seeing you both. My sincere smpathy to you all. Gail Vorderbruggen Class of 67##imported-begin##Gail Vorderbruggen St. George##imported-end##

January 27, 2011 at 03:27 PM



“ R. Q. was Bagley's John Philip Sousa! When he left he left some pretty big shoes to fill. In my opinion, we have never found anyone to fill those shoes. He was the best. He has never been forgotten. Your loss is our loss, too.##imported-begin##Carol Oien Niewinski##imported-end##

January 26, 2011 at 07:00 PM



“ RQ was my Music Advisor while I was at VCSC from 76-81 and was always a gentleman and friend. I wasn't the greatest student for sure but he was always compassionate, kind and enthusiastic. I'm sad I never saw him after I left but I know he touched the hearts of everyone he met. My condolences to his family - I'm very sorry for your loss.##imported-begin##Martin E. Dahl##imported-end##

January 26, 2011 at 10:57 AM



“ Dear Joyce, Bonnie, Paul, Becky and families, Astrid and I send our deepest sympathies and prayers in the passing of RQ, a good friend and a really fine man. The years have gone quickly and even though we have not been able to visit, we have often thought of all of you and missed spending time together. You all will be in our thoughts and prayers.##imported-begin##Norman Mills##imported-end##

January 26, 2011 at 07:18 AM



“ *Becky and Family -*

My condolences to you at the passing of your Dad. May the knowlege of the peace he is now part of bring you peace and comfort as well.

Dan###imported-begin###Dan Klein###imported-end###

January 25, 2011 at 11:10 AM



“ *Dear Joyce and family'*

I am so sadend by the loss of RQ, I learned so much from this man. I worked work study with RQ and not only did I work for him but he became a fatherly figure to me RQ always took the extra time to for me There are many stories that I will always treasure. He meant a great deal to me and I will miss him. My prayers to you and your family. Dale Conrad###imported-begin###dale conrad###imported-end###

January 24, 2011 at 12:23 PM



“ *Hi Joyce, My sympathy to you and your family on the passing of RQ. Cherish his life and memories that were shared together. I always enjoyed the conversations I had with RQ on many different topics. May God continue to hold your family in the palm of his hand. God Bless. Larry###imported-begin###Larry Coles###imported-end###*

January 24, 2011 at 11:22 AM



“ I am sorry to hear of Ronnies passing. He was a very fine musician and a good guy. We were fellow Band Directors in Minnesota and played in the Concordia College Band together. Walt##imported-begin##Walter Lindbderg##imported-end##

January 24, 2011 at 10:36 AM



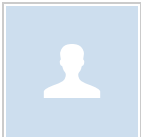
“ Our thoughts and prayers are with you.##imported-begin##Don & Pat Rominsky##imported-end##

January 23, 2011 at 10:08 AM



“ Dear Joyce and family. I was saddened to hear of R.Q,'s passing. I am so thankful for the opportunity to have had him as part of my life. I always appreciated the fact the he gave me a chance. He will be greatly missed. My heart goes out to you and your family.##imported-begin##Ellis Thompson##imported-end##

January 22, 2011 at 11:23 AM



“ Mrs. Johnson--My deepest sympathy to you and your family at the loss of your husband, father, grandfather, and friend. May your memories bring you peace in the days to come.##imported-begin##Julie (Quick) Sizer##imported-end##

January 21, 2011 at 09:29 PM



“ Dear Joyce and family, I am so, so sorry to hear of RQ's passing. In many ways RQ was like a cross between a big broher and a father figure to me. We shared many great times and some of our deepest pain. I learned much from RQ, about music, about teaching, and about life. He, John Reed and I used to call ourselves the "Three Musketeers". The last time I saw you both, we commented on being only two Museteers. I guess I'm the last Musketeer. Even though we havn't seen each other for a few years, I miss RQ terribly already. He will always be with me in spirit. I am so srry for your loss.
Stu###imported-begin##stuart glazer###imported-end##

January 21, 2011 at 09:00 AM



“ My deepest sympathy to Joyce and family. I was saddened to see RQ's obituary. He was a great man with a huge heart and great talent. I knew him as athe greatest musician, having him first as my instructor during music camp sessions at International Music Camp and then, during college years, as my music professor as a trumpet player at VCSC. I learned a lot from him. And, I always enjoyed his sense of humor. We played some great trumpet duets during my lessons. I looked at him as my father away from home when I started there. He was a man of great integrity and passion. I will never forget him! Your family will be in my thoughts and prayers as you mourn the loss of this dear husband, father, great/grandfather, and friend. God's blessing to you all!###imported-begin##Julie Gerig Tollefson###imported-end##

January 20, 2011 at 10:21 PM



“ Dear Mrs. Johnson and family,
Please accept my thoughts and prayers for your comfort and peace at the passing of RQ. He was my college band director at VCSU between '71-'75. Bonnie, you may remember me - the oboe player? I have always remembered how supportive he was to me personally - and his never ending enthusiasm for music and teaching. I have been a "Dr." in music education for almost ten years now; and he is big part of my success today. Thank you, RQ!##imported-begin##Dr. Valerie Meidinger##imported-end##

January 20, 2011 at 09:04 PM



“ Dear Joyce and Family, My deepest and sincerest sympathies and prayers to you and your family. Although it has been many years since I have seen you, there hasn't been a year that has gone by that I have not thought of you all. RQ was a wonderful man. I will keep you all in my prayers. God Bless all of you.
Tammie##imported-begin##Tammie Johnson##imported-end##

January 20, 2011 at 09:00 PM



“ Joyce and Family,

I was saddened to hear about the passing of RQ. He was THE person who provided me the "boost" (as only RQ could) to go forward and be a leader. RQ definitely was my hero and I will cherish his memory.

My sympathy to you and your family.##imported-begin##Joe Merseith##imported-end##

January 20, 2011 at 07:12 PM



“ Dear Joyce and family,
We express our sympathy. Our Lord is present with you to give comfort and strength. Blessings! Twila and Arvin##imported-begin##Arvin Halvorson##imported-end##

January 20, 2011 at 03:07 PM



“ Joyce and Family,
I am deeply saddened about the news of R.Q.'s passing. He was a wonderful person and a man that I considered a dear friend. I could tell story after story about memories I have of R.Q.'s classes during my years at VCSU. R.Q. always took time to help me out and mentor me. I think about the things he taught us often. R.Q. had a way of making things "real" and not always about the book. His memory will live on in all the people he touched during his lifetime. I will keep you all in my thoughts and prayers. I hope to visit with you in May.##imported-begin##john monilaws##imported-end##

January 20, 2011 at 11:53 AM



“ Dear Joyce,
I was saddened to learn of RQ's passing. While we have not seen one another for several years, I always considered him a friend and fellow musician, worthy of good natured kidding and friendly conversation. He certainly gave of himself through his musical talents and other skills. He will be missed by all who know him.

May you enjoy his life through the many good memories of times past.##imported-begin##Ernie Borr##imported-end##

January 20, 2011 at 06:04 AM