



William Jasper Johnson Jr.

August 14, 1925 - September 21, 2016

William J. Johnson Jr. was a man of many passions.

Those passions came to an end early Wednesday morning, Sept. 21, when he died at the age of 91. He died peacefully in his sleep after undergoing recent surgery. He had been in increasingly failing health for about a month. He died at his home in Pleasanton, Calif.

His death came the day after the anniversary of his wife Margaret's birthday. She preceded him in death in July 2011.

Bill was born Aug. 14, 1925, in Fayetteville, N.C., to William J. Sr. and Sophronia (Cooper) Johnson. He grew up being called Jack by his family, but after going away to school, he was always known as Bill. During World War II, he worked at the Marine air base at Cherry Point, N.C. After graduating with a degree in mathematics from Appalachian State College where he played tennis, Bill took a job teaching high school math and science and coaching the girls basketball team at Gatesville High School in Gatesville, N.C..

He met his wife, Margaret, on a blind date. For Bill, it was love at first sight, a love that endured until his death. They married Dec. 1, 1956.

He was hired as an engineer with the U.S. Geological Survey. He started as a

surveyor in the field, then moved to headquarters in Washington, D.C., before transferring and moving his family to California in 1963. He and Margaret raised four sons and one daughter in their house on Farwell Drive in Fremont, Calif. They lived in a tight-knit neighborhood, establishing lifelong bonds with their neighbors

Bill had many passions. He loved his job making maps for the U.S. Geological Survey. In the days before satellite imagery, the maps were drawn by hand by engineers such as Bill. Even after his retirement, Bill would go to the USGS office in Menlo Park to help organize and preserve the old maps.

As his children grew up, he and Margaret were active in their lives. Bill coached his sons' Little League baseball teams and was a leader in Scouts and the school PTA. He and Margaret rarely missed one of their children's many activities.

At least one night a week was spent at the bowling alley as part of the USGS bowling league. In later years, he would travel around the country on bowling teams and several times bowled in national championships. He loved to golf and played on the Pinehurst, N.C., championship golf course a couple of years ago with his son, Michael.

A favorite family memory was Sunday breakfasts where Bill would surprise the family with his own recipes for pancakes -- chocolate chips in the pancakes were a favorite, cream corn was not as popular. Mealtime at the Johnson household was always preceded by a family prayer.

Thanksgiving dinners were huge affairs, with the extended family and many relatives and close friends. Summers were spent at Lake Tahoe in early years and later at Sun River, Ore., where Bill and Margaret would get matching T-shirts for the grandchildren.

The Johnson home was always open to far-flung relatives and friends visiting California. The huge table in the kitchen was often filled with people. Guests were always welcome in the Johnson house.

After retirement, Bill established a daily routine, Mass at Holy Spirit Church and a walk around Lake Elizabeth, usually with his camera in hand and a tweed cap on his head. Bill was passionate about photography. In his travels around the country, he would photograph old churches. At family events, he would snap pictures and then rush to the camera store to have prints made of the photos, often before the event was finished.

Attending his children's events was replaced with a passion for attending grandchildren's school events after his children grew up and started families of their own.

He never lost his Southern charm, although his Southern accent faded a little with the years. He was always the gentleman, holding open doors for women and helping them with their chairs. That charm was especially evident in his love for his wife, whom he cherished through their 54 years of marriage.

They moved to The Parkview assisted living facility in Pleasanton in 2009, where he was active in the residents' association. He rarely missed a bingo game and loved playing bridge.

Another of his passions was his Catholic faith. For more than three decades, he was a lector at Sunday Mass at Holy Spirit Church in Fremont and taught Confirmation catechism classes. After moving to Pleasanton, Bill would take the bus to Mass on Sundays.

Bill is survived by his children, William James (Bridget) of Anamosa, Iowa, Michael (Laura) of Rocklin, Calif., Brian (Crusita) of Fremont, Calif., and Mary Ann (Bob) DeRenzi of Pleasanton, Calif.; 11 grandchildren, Jenna, Jaclyn and James Johnson, Caitlin (Robert) Armstrong, Meghan and Cooper Johnson, Elizabeth Lawlor, Leah and Jessica Johnson, Melissa and Christopher DeRenzi; two great-grandchildren, Wesley and Vincent Armstrong; and longtime neighbors and dear friends, Jack and Adeline Gosen.

He was preceded in death by his wife, Margaret; a son, Kevin Johnson; his parents; and his sisters, Elizabeth and Lois.

Visitation will be held on Thursday, October 13th, from 5-8pm with a Vigil at 6:30pm at Fremont Chapel of the Roses, 1940 Peralta Blvd., Fremont, CA 94536. Funeral Mass will be celebrated on Friday, October 14th, 11am at Holy Spirit Catholic Church, 37588 Fremont Blvd., Fremont, CA 94536. Private burial at Chapel of the Chimes Memorial Park in Hayward, CA.

Memorial donations may be sent to Sister John Marie's Pantry, which assists people living in the Tri-City area of Fremont, Newark and Union City. Send donations in care of St. Joseph Church, P.O. Box 3276, Fremont, CA 94539.

Previous Events

Visitation

OCT **13**. 5:00 PM - 8:00 PM (PT)

Fremont Chapel of the Roses
1940 Peralta Boulevard
Fremont, CA 94536
(510) 797-1900
fremontchapeloftheroses@yahoo.com
<https://www.fremontchapeloftheroses.com>

Vigil Service

OCT **13**. 6:30 PM (PT)

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Tribute Wall

TF

“ *The Compugraphics Family purchased the Sacred Duty Spray for the family of William Jasper Johnson Jr..*



The Compugraphics Family - October 04, 2016 at 08:23 PM

HF

“ *Our prayers are with Bill's family. I was his Branch Chief when he was in the Program Management Branch in the 80's. He was one fine gentleman and I considered a friend.*

One funny story for your sad time. One time when he was on a trip to AZ he had a rental car. A few days later we received a call from a woman who said she had his overcoat and wanted to know where to send. Turns out they both had the same rental car sitting side by side and Bill's key actually opened the other car. He didn't notice and put his coat in her car, went back to his meeting and she left with the coat. We all got a big laugh about that, kidding him while knowing it was an accident.

Butch and Joyce Fiebelman

Harold Fiebelman - October 03, 2016 at 07:25 PM



“ 1 file added to the album *Memories Album*



Fremont Chapel of the Roses - September 22, 2016 at 04:28 PM