

Jack David Johnson

Jack David Johnson, 90, of Billings passed away at Highgate Senior Living on Friday, Jan. 22, 2021 of natural causes.

Dad was born on Nov. 7, 1930 in Fargo, North Dakota. His parents were William Raymond Johnson and Muriel Elva (Cuthbertson) Johnson. They raised Jack and his sister, Merlys JB Larson, on the Johnson Homestead near the small towns of Erie and Ayr, North Dakota. After graduating from Mayville High School, dad continued his education at Mayville State Teacher's College. He earned his BS in education but more importantly, he met the love of his life, Vera Penas. They were married on June 2, 1950. Dad often remarked, 'We graduated from college in the morning, and got married that afternoon!' Dad completed his Masters of Science in Education from Eastern Montana College in 1962.

He retired from teaching after 35 years, 30 of which were in Billings at Lincoln Junior High and Lewis and Clark. He was a member of the Mayflower Congregational church and served his community in a variety of professional associations. Of all the recognition dad received for his community service, he was most proud of his 1972 'Montana Teacher of the Year' award. His sister describes him as a 'life-long activist'. Dad loved music-big bands, Willie Nelson or the Billings Symphony; baseball- no favorite team, just baseball! He was an avid reader. He enjoyed camping, fishing, swimming, singing, and an occasional 'Old-fashioned'.

He was a family man, teaching us many life lessons: 'Pay yourself first'. He fixed our cars, helped repair and paint our homes. He took us camping, to church, and found his greatest joy in spending time with his ever-growing family.

Dad was preceded in death by his parents, his wife of 56 years, Vera; 'best friend cousin'-Duane Johnson, and numerous brothers and sisters-in-law, nieces, and nephews.

Dad is survived by two daughters: Lorna (Steve) Norton of Buckeye, AZ and Claudia (Pat) Vandersloot of Billings; three sons: Jack D. Johnson Jr. (Karma) of Rock Springs, WY; Mark (Linda) Johnson and Jeffrey Johnson, all of Billings; five grandchildren: Ricki Ann Ketterling of Deer Lodge, MT, Ty Ketterling of Mesa, AZ, Andrew (AJ) Johnson, Vanessa Vandersloot (Zach Dalin), Nathan (Lauren) Vandersloot all of Billings; great granddaughters, Leah Maree Johnson and Elle Marie Vandersloot. In May of 2021, a great grandson and a great granddaughter will join the family! He is also survived by his sister Merlys JB Larson of Modesto, CA, cousins Amy McLeod and Dallas Johnson, sisters in-law Jennifer Morris, Carole Matthews, Carrie Larson; brothers in-law Glen Penas, Harlan Larson, Clark Penas, and numerous nieces and nephews.