



## PHILLIP DON JOHNSON

September 12, 1952 - October 8, 2020

Phillip Don Johnson of Lindström, Minnesota, aged 68, passed away after a brief illness on 8 October 2020. Diagnosed with a virulent form of cancer, he was cared for in his final days by his brother Paul Johnson and sister-in-law Sueanna (Schwanbeck) Johnson at their home in rural La Crescent, Minn. They were joined in this loving endeavor by Phil's eldest brother Michael Johnson and sister Eleanor Johnson.

Phil was born 12 September 1952 in Rochester, Minn. the youngest child of Donald Wesley Johnson and Claribel (Phillips) Johnson and raised in Mabel, Minn. Many members of their extended family lived nearby, so there were plenty of cousins to grow up with. He enjoyed playing sports, including baseball and golf, and as a Boy Scout one year attended the annual jamboree at the Philmont Scout Ranch in New Mexico. Fishing, hiking, cycling, vacationing with his family in northern Minnesota on Lake Darling, paddling in the Boundary Waters Canoe Area Wilderness, reading science fiction, watching the Twins and the Vikings on TV, attending the Methodist church—these were the activities that defined his childhood and youth.

A 1970 graduate of Mabel-Canton High School, Phil went on to earn a bachelor's degree in Geology from Winona State University in 1975. After a brief stint in the Peace Corps in Samoa, he moved to Tyler, Texas to work for Core Laboratories analyzing core samples drilled in the west Texas oil patch.

After the energy boom crashed in the 1980s, Phil earned an associate's degree in information technology at Brown Institute in Minneapolis and then worked in that field for the rest of his career. He was employed by a number of firms in the Twin Cities metro area, including the Hazelden Betty Ford Foundation, and most recently served as a subcontractor for Cargill.

Phil had a penchant for adventure, traveling throughout the country and the wider world. He went deep sea fishing in Costa Rica with his brother Michael, and solo toured the UK and Europe, even finding contract work at a NATO base in Sicily for a summer. Once he spent a three-day weekend in Iceland via a last-minute bargain charter, long before it became a trendy off-beat destination for tourists. Phil nearly completed checking off his bucket list the playing of a round of golf in each of the fifty states, although he did drive, chip, and putt on links in both Alaska and Hawaii.

Phil minored in Mathematics at Winona State in the early 1970s and his predilection was to logic, problem-solving, puzzles, and numerical pattern recognition. He was, not surprisingly, skilled at a variety of games, from Scrabble to Bridge to Chess and Settlers of Catan. Being a computer technician who found virtual worlds entertaining, Phil also excelled in playing video console and online multi-user games. Phil's gaming prowess spared no one—family, friend, or foe. In his will he left a modest sum to his friend Larry Kennedy to play some high-stakes bingo—and win!—in his memory.

As a life-long bachelor, Phil had no children of his own, but he leaves behind a grieving extended family who cherish his memory. He is survived by his brothers Michael P. Johnson of Lincoln, Neb. and Paul T. Johnson (Sueanna); his sister Eleanor S. Johnson (Michael Doyle) of Winona, Minn.; his nephew and nieces Ted Johnson (Sarah, son Kaine) of La Crescent, Anna Snyder (Nate, children Evan, Gracie, and Henry) of Grand Canyon, Ariz., Jessie Rose Pierick (Chris, daughter Olivia) of Boulder, Col., and Gwendolyn Herbert

(Benjamin) of Denver, Col.

By his own wishes, Phil's remains were cremated and his ashes interred in the Johnson family plot at the Newburg (Minn.) Cemetery. The Reverend Pamela Seebach, pastor of the Mabel-Newburg United Methodist Parish, officiated at a memorial service that took place on 16 October 2020; its attendance was limited to a small group of mostly family members due to Covid-19 protocols. Alumni of the Mabel-Canton Class of 1970 touchingly adorned Phil's final resting place with a floral mourning wreath.

Arrangements have been handled by McCormick Funeral Home in Caledonia, Minn., which maintains a webpage for posting memories and condolences in Phil's honor. In lieu of flowers, memorials can be sent to the Department of Geoscience Alumni Scholarship Fund c/o Winona State University Foundation  
175 W. Mark St.  
Somsen Hall 204  
Winona, MN 55987  
< <https://www.winona.edu/foundation/> >

# Tribute Wall

AA

“ *PHILLIP DON JOHNSON is an awesome individual that I have known for about 6 years. Working with him has been an experience that will linger for years. He is such an amazing person that is willing to help, support and find answers to all your burning questions. We discussed culture, work, nationality, and politics. While I share in the family grief, he will definitely be missed and remain golden in our heart.*



*Rest well Dr. Phil.*

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**Alex Akande** - November 05, 2020 at 11:38 AM

SR

“ *PHILLIP JOHNSON is my colleague at work and I know him for the past 3 years. I almost met him every single day at work. His work desk is just front of me. What a great gentleman. He loves to talk about different counties, culture, food, restaurants. He greets me every single day with great smile when I come to work and he was a great frontline computer engineer. With heavy heart I am writing this and I didn't think I have to say good bye to you my friend. You have been a great colleague and I miss you at work. I guess God liked you more than we like you. May your soul rest in peace.*

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**Sivakumar Ramanathan** - November 05, 2020 at 10:58 AM

JH

“ *I worked with Phil the last ten years at Cargill. He was a very kind person to work with. I will miss his adventurous stories, his smile and the way he brought laughter and fun into my life at work. My condolences to all his family!! Phil was a great guy and his teammates miss him very much!*

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**James Huckenpoehler** - November 05, 2020 at 10:52 AM

KK

“ Phillip was a cherished contractor at Cargill for many years. His kindness, strong work ethic, willingness to help others are just a few of the many qualities we will miss. It was so nice to read all of the wonderful experiences he had during his lifetime. Our deepest sympathy to your family during this very difficult time.

Warm Regards,  
Kim Kettler

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**Kim Kettler** - October 29, 2020 at 03:21 PM

PJ

“ 0 file added to the tribute wall

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**Paul t Johnson** - October 22, 2020 at 01:25 PM

KR

“ Our sympathy to Phillip’s family, Neil and I graduated with Phillip and we both remember him for his kind and friendly personality. Bless be his memory.  
Karen (Olson) and Neil Rasmussen

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**Karen Rasmussen** - October 16, 2020 at 01:55 AM

LJ

“ I was so sorry to hear of Phillip's passing. He was a classmate and I remember him fondly. Thinking of you all at this time and in the days ahead.

LeAnn Welch Jevne, Mabel, MN

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**LeAnn Welch Jevne** - October 15, 2020 at 05:22 PM

VS

“ I am so sorry to hear of Phillip's passing. We were neighbors and spent many hours as kids playing together. We so enjoyed climbing the trees in the back yard and playing for hours in the park. Phillip and I were also classmates throughout grade school and high school. He was so much fun to be around and such a kind and caring person. Know that we are thinking of your family as you navigate this loss.

Verona Strelow - October 15, 2020 at 01:16 AM

JJ

“ We're so sorry to hear of Phillips passing. We have fond memories of juniors and seniors in high school with him. From our post prom party at your Dads land by Hesper , complete with huge bonfire , to Phillip lending us his tent for an impromptu outing on the Mississippi River. Only problem with that adventure was we forgot the tent poles ! A picnic table sufficed in a pinch. Blessed be his memory.

Jim and Barbara (Hoff) Johnson - October 14, 2020 at 10:04 PM

MG

I am so sorry for your loss. Philip was in my class and I remember he was a kind guy.

Marcia (Masters) Goss - October 15, 2020 at 09:06 AM

GG

It is very sad to see Philip Johnson leave so soon. He was a colleague of mine in Hopkins, MN. Philip was quiet, hardworking and very dedicated to his profession. As a work mate, he was kind, caring and helpful. He will surely be missed. Rest in Peace, Brother!

Gbanne Gbafore - November 05, 2020 at 11:10 AM



Deanna  
Fisher

“ *Eleanor, Roger and I are so sorry to hear about the passing of your brother.*

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**Deanna Fisher** - October 14, 2020 at 07:46 AM

BH

“ *Paul and family,. You have our deepest sympathy in the loss of your brother. Barb and Dan Hurley*

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**Barb and Dan Hurley** - October 13, 2020 at 12:16 AM