



Norman Lee Johnson

December 27, 1943 - May 13, 2025

Norman “Norm” Lee Johnson, 81, of Spirit Lake, formerly of rural Dickens and Terril, passed away peacefully on Tuesday, May 13, 2025, at Accura HealthCare of Spirit Lake, after his long struggle with Lewy Body Dementia. Norman Lee Johnson was born on December 27, 1943, to Christy and Alta (Dotson) Johnson in Spencer, IA. He is a 1962 graduate of Lake Center High School. Norm graduated from South Dakota State University with a B.S. in Agriculture. After graduation, Norm entered the Navy Flight Program in Pensacola, FL to become a Naval Aviator. While studying at the UWF Library, he met the love of his life, Laura, who was working there part-time while she was attending Pensacola Junior College. Their first date was at the NAS Officers Club, for dinner and dancing with the Glenn Miller Orchestra playing. They were engaged when Norm received his Navy Wings on November 1, 1968, and were married on March 22, 1969, in Pensacola, FL. Norm flew helicopters during his 7 years of service. Their first home was on the Naval Weapons Center base in China Lake, CA. Next, Norm was stationed at NAS Imperial Beach, CA in Helicopter Support Squadron One (HC-1). During the Apollo 15 Mission Recovery, he piloted the helicopter with the moon rocks. Later, he served on the USS Coral Sea and Laura was able to spend two weeks with him in Hong Kong during his R & R. After his honorable discharge from the Navy in April 1974, Norm, Laura and six-month-old son, Shawn, moved onto Norm’s parents’ farm in Lake Township, Clay County, IA, living in Norm’s childhood home. Norm worked

most of his life as a farmer in the rural Dickens and Terril area. For a short period, he worked part-time as a pilot for Great Lakes Airlines, Spencer, IA, while still farming. Norm sold John Deere farm equipment for Northwest Equipment in Spencer from 1989 until 2014. He really enjoyed visiting farmers at their farms and many long-lasting friendships developed during these work years.

Norm was a 58-year Mason, spending most of that time as an active member of the Ruthven Masonic Highland Lodge #487. He was also a member of the Knights Templar in Spencer, IA. He was an active Methodist, serving on various committees while he was a member of the Ruthven United Methodist Church, Grace United Methodist Church in Spencer, IA, and the Spirit Lake United Methodist Church. In recent years, he especially enjoyed the close friendships he had with those in the adult Sunday school class.

Family was important to Norm. He valued education and just as Laura supported his dream of going back to farm, he supported her dream of finishing college. After farming all day, Norm watched the boys and cooked dinner for them to have upon her return from evening classes two nights a week in Spencer. The boys were able to watch their mom graduate from BVU while they were still in grade school, which could not have happened without Norm's support. Norm enjoyed music, especially attending his sons' band and choir concerts. He especially enjoyed live performances by musicians. Even on cruises, he loved going to live music performances.

Norm enjoyed travel and nature. As a family they took many road trips to Florida and Michigan to see family as well as trips to see National Parks and nature. He and Laura canoed together in the Boundary Waters Canoe Area Wilderness, MN, in Lake Superior, the Root River in Lanesboro, MN and in local area lakes. As empty nesters, Norm and Laura continued their joy of travel. Road trips went out west, and east to Maine. They enjoyed a John Deere trip to Monaco, rented a car for three extra days and explored southern France on their own. They vacationed in Kauai, Hawaii and took many cruises, to the Caribbean and one to the Fiji Islands from Sydney, Australia.

Norm introduced his favorite hobby of snorkeling to Laura, on their first cruise and then snorkeling adventures became highlights of future cruises. Norm also enjoyed riding his bicycle on the lakes area bike trails. Taking walks in the neighborhood were especially enjoyed if Norm could find a neighbor to visit with. He loved people.

He is survived by his wife of 56 years, Laura Johnson of Spirit Lake, two sons, Shawn (Lavinia) Johnson of Maple Grove, MN, Christopher Steven Johnson of Mexico City, Mexico; sister, Joyce Spieker of Spencer, IA; grandson, Finley Johnson; brother-in-law, Joseph "Joe" Chambers; nephews Robert "Bob" Erdman of Spencer, IA, Jeremy (Lindsey) Spieker of Nevada, IA, Justin (Brittany) Spieker of Spencer, IA and numerous other relatives and friends. He was preceded in death by his parents Christy and Alta Johnson; father-in-law and mother-in-law John and Estella Gieseke of Pensacola, FL; sister-in-law, Juanita "Nita" Chambers of Ann Arbor, MI; brother-in-law and sister-in-law, Cliff and Gloria Gieseke of San Antonio, TX.

A memorial service for Norm will be held at 11:00 a.m. Saturday, May 24, 2025, at the Spirit Lake United Methodist Church in Spirit Lake, IA. Masonic Rites will be held at 9:15 a.m. conducted by the Masonic Highland Lodge #487 of Ruthven on Saturday at the church followed by visitation at 10:00 a.m. up until the time of the service at the church. Military Rites will be held in the Lakeview Gardens Cemetery in Okoboji conducted by the American Legion Timpe Post #23 and VFW John W. Kidd Post #4514 both of Spirit Lake. Arrangements are under the direction of the Robinson Funeral Home in Spirit Lake. Online condolences may be left at www.spiritlakefuneralhome.com

Previous Events

Masonic Service

MAY 24. 9:15 AM (CT)

United Methodist Church
1812 Gary Ave
Spirit Lake, IA 51360

Visitation

MAY 24. 10:00 AM - 11:00 AM (CT)

United Methodist Church
1812 Gary Ave
Spirit Lake, IA 51360

Memorial Service

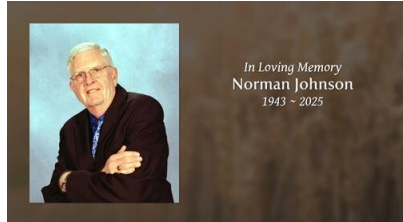
MAY 24. 11:00 AM (CT)

United Methodist Church
1812 Gary Ave
Spirit Lake, IA 51360

Tribute Wall



“ *Robinson Funeral Home created a Tribute Video in memory of Norman Lee Johnson*



Robinson Funeral Home - May 23, 2025 at 03:35 PM

DH

I enjoyed the Memorial Video that was posted here.

Daniel Hyde - April 19 at 11:41 PM

DH

“ *I was saddened to hear of Norms passing. He was such a great guy. I hired Norm to work with me in 1989 and he stayed with me until the dealership was sold in 2014. Norm had impeccable character and was as honest as they get. A true friendship came about as a result of working together. He was always so proud of his sons.*

May God grant you peace in this time of sorrow. RIP my friend.

Dave Hultgren

Dave Hultgren - May 24, 2025 at 09:50 AM

ME

“ So sorry to learn of Norm’s passing. We became acquainted at the John Deere dealership in Spencer; we were both Military Aviators, part-time farmers, and John Deere fans. I always enjoyed my visits and conversations with Norm-he will be missed! My condolences and best wishes to Norm’s family.

Mark Erickson - May 22, 2025 at 07:30 AM

DC

“ Dan, Carl, and Brian Chambers purchased the Country Basket Blooms for the family of Norman Lee Johnson.



Dan, Carl, and Brian Chambers - May 21, 2025 at 05:47 PM

JC

“ Joe Chambers purchased the Divine Peace Bouquet for the family of Norman Lee Johnson.



Joe Chambers - May 21, 2025 at 05:40 PM

RW

“ I will always remember the Holiday dinners with family at my cousin's Normans parents, Alta and Christy. We had lots of fun as kids playing games at those events. I always admired Norm and his achievements I hope he is at peace.

Russ Williams.

Russ Williams - May 19, 2025 at 12:01 PM

JH

“ *Laura, I am praying for peace and comfort for you and your family.*

Janice Harris - May 17, 2025 at 10:26 PM

AL

“ *Sincere condolences Laura and Shawn and to the entire Johnson family from your Accura Healthcare of Spirit Lake family.*

Accura Healthcare of Spirit Lake - May 16, 2025 at 11:47 AM

BC

“ *Laura, we were saddened to hear about the passing of Norm. We always enjoyed visiting with the two of you whether it was at the Spirit Lake Methodist church or a chance run-in down in Alabama. He will be greatly missed. Our condolences to you.*

Bill Carpenter - May 16, 2025 at 10:02 AM

RM

“ *Ronnie and Lily / Terence and Suet Mei purchased the Divine Peace Bouquet for the family of Norman Lee Johnson.*



Ronnie and Lily / Terence and Suet Mei - May 16, 2025 at 08:09 AM

AM

“ *Sorry to hear about Norman, I always enjoyed talking to him and you folks were good neighbors.*

Allen McGranahan

Allen McGranahan - May 15, 2025 at 12:40 PM