



Jerry Ray Johnson

April 13, 1952 - December 29, 2020

Jerry Ray Johnson, 68, ended his journey on earth and entered his true home in Heaven on Tuesday, December 29, 2020. He was with his devoted wife, Sharon, at their residence and is now at peace after a five-year battle with PSP (Progressive Supranuclear Palsy).

Jerry was born on a blizzarding Easter Sunday, April 13, 1952 to Lawrence and Nellie Ann (Runnels) Johnson 45 minutes after his twin sister, Judy – much to the surprise of his parents. They joined his other siblings David, Jim, Jane, Barbara and Kathleen.

He was raised in Wautoma, Wisconsin where he enjoyed playing baseball with his siblings, spending summer days at Witter's Lake with his grandmother, Anna Johnson, swimming, fishing, and catching turtles and frogs with his siblings and cousins. The family moved to Monona, Wisconsin in 1967 where Jerry later graduated from Monona Grove High School in 1970. He moved to Milwaukee where he worked for Kmart and Miller Brewing Company for many years. He met and married Jaqueline Blend and they were blessed with two sons, Joseph in 1975 and Kristopher in 1979. Jackie and Jerry later divorced, and Jerry moved to Deer Lodge, Montana in 1984 where his brother Dave lived. Jerry began managing the Deer Lodge Golf Course and worked at the liquor store and bartended at The Broken Arrow before settling into his career at the Montana State Prison. He met Sharon Moore and was welcomed with open arms to the Moore family and group of friends. Jerry and Sharon married in July 1986 and were blessed with son, Joshua in

1988 and daughter Dannielle in 1992.

Jerry worked for the Montana State Prison for 29 years. He held several different titles through the years including Correctional Officer, Hearings Officer, and finally as Contract Placement Bureau Correction Manager. Jerry enjoyed work, but more importantly the people he met and friendships he made. He will probably be remembered by his coworkers mostly for his sense of humor, pranks, and easy-going attitude. Due to health issues, he retired from the prison in August 2016 and was honored for his years of service. Being born and bred in Wisconsin, Jerry was an avid Packer and Brewer fan and every trip to Lambeau Field and Miller Park was a special occasion, even to the point of paying homage by kissing the ground at Lambeau field with Kris and Josh. Family and friends loved to gather, often in full Cheesehead apparel, to watch the Packer games. He wanted to make sure everyone was well fed so brats and brews and a multitude of appetizers were staples. Jerry enjoyed all sports especially when his kids were participating – soccer and baseball with Joe, hockey with Kris, basketball and football with Josh and basketball, volleyball, softball and track with Danni. At Danni's various sports events he was known as the "King of Concessions" and would often have pockets full of treats to give away.

Jerry had such a gentle spirit, always wanting to make people feel comfortable and at ease. He had an infectious grin and a quick humor, regardless of the occasion. He would be the first person to crack a joke at his own memorial. Just ask any of his coworkers about his fart machine. He was the best guy to belly up to the bar with for a drink and always had a story to tell. With family and others, he was continually patient, kind, fair, understanding, impartial, and ready to listen.

Jerry was full to bursting with classic dad knowledge - how to build a deck, the best kind of pepper for salsa, dates of the French and Indian War, how tall Napoleon Bonaparte was, and the name of the 1967 Superbowl MVP. If you ever had the privilege to be on his team in a game of trivial pursuit, the win was in the bag.

He was always willing to lend a helping hand no matter the time or place. He was an Exalted Ruler for the Local Elks club, frequently acting as chef (where his potato bar was famous), and bartending where his humor and listening skills were greatly appreciated. He was an avid participant in their charitable activities around town like the Hoop Shoot, Hooked on Fishing , bike safety and various other community events.

Jerry loved yard sales, and on any given weekend you could find him scouring the streets of Deer Lodge looking for a bargain (or what Sharon called junk), the perfect gift, or just striking up a conversation, especially with fellow “collectors”, a trait that he passed along to Danni.

He enjoyed Monday night cribbage - looking for a 29 hand, men’s bowling- always striving for the elusive 300, and the occasional poker games on Saturdays at Benders. For many years, golfing was also an enjoyable activity with family and friends. Jerry loved to build, tinker, and fix. He was always working on a project - fixing a lawn mower, building a shelf, organizing the garage or elbow deep in his garden.

Jerry was loved by all who were lucky enough to know him. He made every life he touched better. Many would say he was “one of the good ones”.

Jerry was preceded in death by parents, Lawrence and Nellie, in-laws, Hugh and Lois Moore, brother Dave and Sister Barbara and brothers-in-law Pat Purcell and Robert Pohle. He is survived by his wife, Sharon; sons Joe (Alison) Sheboygan Falls, WI; Kris, Sheboygan, WI; Josh (Brittany) Belgrade, MT; daughter Danni (Joe) Kersten, Manitowoc, WI; brother Jim (Janice) Sidney, OH; sisters Jane (Pete) Brogle, and Kathy Pohle, Wautoma, WI; twin sister Judy Johnson (Gene) Wild Rose, WI. He is also survived by Brother-in-law David (Nancy) Moore, Deer Lodge; Janice (Chuck) Spencer, Helena; Meri (Greg) Hudoba, Minneapolis, MN and grandchildren, David, Mary, Daniel and Luke Johnson, Katelynn Johnson and numerous beloved nieces and nephews.

Sharon and the family would like to thank Julie and Grace from Senior Home Solutions for their wonderful care. A special thank you to Dr. Paul Siddoway for the years of care and support as well his determination to find answers. They are forever grateful. Sharon would also like to thank family and friends for their love, support and prayers these last five years which brought them joy and laughter even amid Jerry's health challenges.

A Celebration of Life will be held on Saturday, January 9, 2021 at 1 p.m. at the Rialto Theater in Deer Lodge. Join us in solidarity that day by wearing green and gold with the Johnson family Packer fans. Masks and social distancing will be practiced. The service will be live streamed from: Flint Creek Courier's Facebook page under Events.

In lieu of flowers, memorials can be made to CurePSP, Elks National Foundation, Christ Fellowship Church or donor's choice.

Previous Events

Celebration of Life

JAN 9. 1:00 PM (MT)

Rialto Theater

Deer Lodge, MT 59722

Tribute Wall

GV

“ *Sending my love to all the family. Sorry we can't be there to celebrate what a wonderful man Jerry was. He always had a smile and a joke. Love Gwynette and all your Vancouver clan.*

Gwynette E Vollmer - January 08, 2021 at 01:50 PM

CR

“ *So many great memories of Jerry, both from work and family life. He had the best smile and loved to tease. Steve, Carson, Taylor and I talked about the time the Packers and Broncos played in the Super Bowl (1998). Carson was 10 and a huge Broncos fan Jerry messed with him the week leading up to the game including sneaking over to our house at night and putting a Green Bay sticker on Carson's bedroom window! :) We know he is at peace now and are praying for all those left behind, especially Sharon, Danni and Josh. Cathy and Steve Redfern, Carson, Marne and Taylor*

Cathy Redfern - January 06, 2021 at 03:29 PM

JJ

Cathy that was SO JERRY!!! THANKS FOR SHARING THAT!!!

Judy Johnson - January 07, 2021 at 06:05 PM

MK

“ *Rest in peace Jerry. Mike and Deloras Kallas*

Michael D. Kallas - January 06, 2021 at 05:11 AM

LK

“ Jerry was the first person to welcome my family to Deer Lodge in 2011. We became good friends over the next five years. A great man. You will be missed. Rest easy my friend.

Leroy Kirkegard

Leroy Kirkegard - January 05, 2021 at 08:34 PM

EK

“ We came to Deer Lodge as a church (from Seattle) to help out the town with some community/church projects and provide some community fun (Danny Ray Magician, etc.). Mr. J. was one of the first people to volunteer to help cook/BBQ and set things up. Real help!! I really like him. I especially liked Danielle as well...we had lots of good talks!! I am truly sorry to hear this.

Ed Kelley - January 05, 2021 at 12:31 PM

JT

“ Heaven received an amazing angel and the biggest Green Bay Packer fan. Many fond memories of Jerry to hold close to my heart I was honored to care for him. Sending love and prayers to Sharon and family. Julie Tresidder

julie tresidder - January 05, 2021 at 11:34 AM

JJ

Thank you so much for taking wonderful care of my brother! He truly was the BEST!! He's my twin, and my heart is shattered, but he broke that chain that was holding him on to that horrendous disease! He's in heaven with our parents, our brother Dave and Sister Barb, along with Hug and Lois Moore

Judy Johnson - January 07, 2021 at 06:54 PM