



Dr. John Johnson

April 9, 1946 - January 2, 2026

Dr. John William Johnson died on Friday, January 2, 2026 from complications related to Lewy Body Dementia at the full age of 79, in Waterloo, IA. In the days before his passing, John was surrounded by family and friends who loved him, and the music of Bruce Springsteen. For the past several months, he was in the capable care of the people at Nation Cottage with the Western Home. During this time the family was able to visit and spend time with him—and his wife, Becky, and oldest son, Matthew, in particular were with him on a daily basis. In his final days, following injuries and worsening health, the caregivers at Allen Memorial Hospital in Waterloo ensured that John was comfortable at the end and passed in his sleep.

The outpouring of sympathy, condolences, and cherished memories from loved ones near and far in these final days have been the testament to a long and full life. John loved nothing more than the esteem of those he valued, and it is without hesitation that we assert he valued you highly if you are reading this. The richness of his time on earth is alive in the many special people that this message will reach and the interesting places it will find you.

Despite the wide net cast by John's life, it is worth remarking how much his community in Cedar Falls and at the University of Northern Iowa meant to him. While he grew up in Minnesota and his career as a professor took him to various places like New York, South Carolina, and even Alaska—making dear

friends and carrying forward meaningful work in each of these communities—it was in Cedar Falls, IA that John truly and ultimately made his home.

He found such satisfaction in the work and collegiality of the History Department and the greater UNI community, he bled purple and gold for all panther sports (particularly volleyball and basketball) through the good times and the trying times, and he found purpose after retiring in good works like the Reading Buddies program with Cedar Falls Community Schools and as a member of the Arcturus club. In his free time, he would usually be found on the golf course, cross-country skiing, reading his e-reader, or in the company of friends and colleagues.

John is survived by his wife, Becky Hasenclever; his sons, Matthew and Noah Johnson; his daughters-in-law, Darcy Fair Johnson and Jessica Fiedler Johnson; his grandchildren Lucas, Stella, Liam, and Evie Johnson; his brothers, James and Joel Johnson; and his former wives, Charlotte Mull and Maureen Murphy. He is preceded in death by his parents, William Arthur Johnson and Jean Olstad Johnson; and his first wife, Deborah Garland Johnson.

John William Johnson was a scholar, a facilitator, a teacher, an earnest music-lover, a golfing enthusiast, a Panther fan, a mentor, a colleague, a father, a husband, a brother, a son, a grandfather, and a dear friend to many. We are so appreciative of the time that we had to know him and only regret that it could not have been longer. We will cherish his memory and carry forward the lessons that we learned from him to the end of our days.

A visitation will be held at the Richardson Funeral Service at 615 Main St, Cedar Falls, IA 50613 from 2:00 p.m. to 5:00 p.m. on Saturday, January 10, 2026. Interment will take place at Fairview Cemetery in Cedar Falls at 1:00 p.m. Saturday, April 11, 2026. In lieu of flowers, the family asks you to

consider donating to these worthy charities that John supported: Northeast Iowa Food Bank, Cedar Bend Humane Society, or the Cedar Falls Historical Society.

Previous Events

Gathering of Family and Friends

JAN 10. 2:00 PM - 5:00 PM (CT)

Richardson Funeral Service
615 Main Street
Cedar Falls, IA 50613
(319) 266-3525
richardsonfuneralservice@gmail.com
<http://richardson.funeralplan2.com>

Graveside Service

APR 11. 1:00 PM (CT)

Fairview Cemetery
12th and Division Streets
Cedar Falls, IA 50613
(319) 273-8628

Tribute Wall

JL

“ I took a senior seminar with Dr Johnson back in 2012, and loved his class so much. I tell people regularly about that class and how much I learned from John. I'm grateful to be part of the legacy of students he taught, and wish your family heartfelt condolences and healing in your loss. He was a generous, kind and thoughtful man.

Jacquelin Lawson - May 29 at 02:21 PM

SH

“ Becky, thinking of you during this difficult time. I talked with Kaye lately and she updated me. May peace be with you. Sheryl Hammel

Sheryl Hammel - January 11 at 03:29 PM

JJ

“ My deepest condolences to John's family. He was such a good man.

John and his colleagues at UNI were always so kind to let me tag along with their golf group at Pheasant Ridge as a kid. Great memories and it was so nice to reconnect with John later in life as an employee at UNI.

With deepest sympathy,

Jim Jermier

Jim Jermier - January 10 at 10:20 AM

JH

“ Jen Chase, Ball Kirk & Holm purchased the Medium Dish Garden for the family of Dr. John Johnson.



Jen Chase, Ball Kirk & Holm - January 09 at 11:56 AM

KS

“ Kirk and Steve planted a [Memorial Tree](/store/Product.aspx?ProductId=4518) in honor of Dr. John William Johnson.

Kirk and Steve - January 08 at 12:26 PM



“ Beautiful in Blue was purchased for the family of Dr. John Johnson.



January 08 at 12:26 PM



“ Simply Elegant Spathiphyllum was purchased for the family of Dr. John Johnson.




January 05 at 05:30 PM

JH

“ My deep sympathy to Becky, John's sons, and all the family. I knew John well as a UNI colleague, although we were in different departments. He was awarded Emeritus status upon retirement. We furthered our connection as members of the Cedar Valley Unitarian Universalist congregation. In the past year, our paths crossed again at Western Home Communities Gilmore's Restaurant. Our interactions always were mutually supportive and optimistic.
Sincerely, Judy Harrington

Judith Harrington - January 04 at 08:51 PM

 Nick
Pace

“ Dr Johnson was an all time favorite. A model colleague, educator, and man.

Nick Pace - January 04 at 08:17 PM

DY

“ Dr. Johnson was my mentor, advisor, and friend. I will always remember sitting in his office thinking I had found my thesis topic and after my pitch, Dr. Johnson would turn to his library pull out a book and ask if I had read this one. Now, I have much of his constitutional history library, which I will always cherish.

Dale Yurs - January 04 at 04:45 PM