



Thomas Lynn Johnson

March 15, 1949 - May 26, 2019

Thomas Lynn Johnson, age 70, of Buffalo, formerly of Dassel, died Sunday, May 26, 2019, at his farm near Cokato. A funeral service will be held on Saturday, June 1, 2019, at 1:00 p.m. at the Gethsemane Lutheran Church in Dassel with Rev. Laurie O'Shea officiating.

There will be a visitation on Friday, May 31, 2019, from 5:00 p.m. to 7:00 p.m. at the Johnson Funeral Home in Dassel. There will be a one-hour visitation prior to the service on Saturday at the Gethsemane Lutheran Church in Dassel.

Thomas Lynn Johnson, the son of Richard and Kathryn (Kildaw) Johnson was born on March 15, 1949, in Litchfield, Minnesota. Thomas grew up in the Dassel area where he was baptized and confirmed at the First Lutheran Church in Dassel. Thomas graduated from Dassel High School in 1967, he then proceeded to attend Willmar Technical College before completing his education at Mankato State University with a degree in Civil Engineering.

Thomas had a very successful, professional career, that started at Meeker County Parks. Tom held other positions with various county parks before he started his career as a highway engineer working for the Minnesota Department of transportation. He was also employed by Metro Transit, Smith Parker, and Hay Dobbs, where he was a project manager & provided consulting services. He loved a challenge and dedicated his life to making transportation and urban design work seamlessly. He had been involved with many important transportation projects in the metro area. He had the ability to make a complex concept understandable to everyone. He was a dedicated public servant who loved his job and the people he worked with.

He enjoyed spending time on his farm where he raised brown swiss cattle. He loved the land and enjoyed mentoring the young men that worked on his farm and he was dearly loved in return. He believed in doing a good day's work and doing it the best way possible.

Family was important to Tom and he would always attend his grandchildren's sporting events, concerts and dance recitals. He also enjoyed spending time attending family events, and holiday gatherings. He was very proud of his children and all their accomplishments. He was a devoted father, grandfather, brother and friend. He always had time to have a quick conversation with someone. He could walk into a room knowing no one and walk out of the room having made the acquaintance of half the room. He will be missed by his family and his friends.

He is survived by his significant other, Diana Korpela of Buffalo, daughters, Melanie (Peter) Fox of New Brighton, Sarah (Scott) Shewmake of New Brighton, Diana's children; Katie (Kyle) Golby of Maple Lake, Kelli Fehn of Monticello, grandchildren, Corbin, Mitchell, Sawyer, Sadler, Kelsey, Ellie, and Eli and his brother Rick (Marcia) Johnson of Dassel, sister-in-law, Kim Benson-Johnson of St. Paul. He is also survived by several nieces, nephews and other relatives and friends.

He was preceded in death by his parents, Richard and Kathryn Johnson and a brother, David Johnson.

Previous Events

Visitation

MAY 31. 5:00 PM - 7:00 PM (CT)

Johnson Funeral Home
PO Box 1 611 N 2nd Street
Dassel, MN 55325
(320) 275-3381
jfhdassel@spectrum.net

Service

JUN 1. 1:00 PM (CT)

Gethsemane Lutheran Church
221 Atlantic Ave E
Dassel, MN 55325
office@glcdassel.com
<http://www.glcdassel.com>

Tribute Wall

LK

“ Rick, I was sorry to hear about your brother Tom. I know he was a fun guy and I'm sure you will miss him. Lee Peterson called me to tell me , but we were in Canada when Tom died. Lee and I were talking about how much fun your mom and dad had with my mom and dad. We also recalled how your dad had his leather coat taken from a restaurant when they went out to dinner with Mom and Cal. Mom and Cal then went to Arizona for the winter. They have dinner with Dick and Tudy when they get back. Dick said he wore this coat all winter that doesn't even zip up "because some darn guy stole his coat last fall". Turns out it was Calvin and they finally got their correct coats back with lots of fun over the story.

It's pretty obvious that Cal's coat would be way too tight on Dick and Dick's coat would be way too big for Cal..

Thanks again for coming to Bernie's funeral. It was good to catch up with my childhood friend. You have my sympathy. Linda Kmitch . Lindakmitch@gmail.com

Linda Kmitch - June 06, 2019 at 12:25 PM

“ final class of 67

On Wed, May 29, 2019 at 12:03 PM Dan denora abbott deedan2us@yahoo.com wrote:

Although Tom and I were good friends in high school, our friendship became deeper as we got older. I remember when we went away to Mankato State after we got out of Junior College. Late the summer before our Jr. Year. We didn't have a lot of cash and we rented an upstairs of an old house off campus. There were 4 or 5 of us. I think Tom, our friend Daryl Curtis from Litchfield, Little Tom, and Larry lived there. I remember shortly after we moved in there Tom's Mom and Dad came up to visit. I remember Tom's Mom started crying when she saw what a dump we were living in. Problem is we were all over 18 and had signed a lease for the semester. The Landlord wouldn't release us. We came up with an idea. We would throw a party there the next week. Sure enough we got evicted and got let out of the lease. Great party but in retrospect not the way we probably should have handled it.

A couple of years ago we had a football reunion at Willmar in honor of our Warrior football teams from the late 60's. Although Tom was not allowed to go out because of injuries he ha got in high school. Tom was our number one fan and has always been included in team functions. That day was awesome seeing teammates and friends we hadn't seen for 50 years. The excitement became to much for me and my oxygen level dropped and I began coughing. (I have stage 3 chronic bronchitis, but this is worst attack I have had before or since) When Tom and our good friend Duane Melquist,, from Cokato, realized I was having problems stayed with me, and contacted Dee . Dee ended up getting me to the Rice Memorial ER where I stayed for a few days and got back to health. What a great friend he has been.

Lately we have had an old farm boy argument about why he is raising Brown Swiss. cows. I mean Holstein, guernsey, jersey, even Ayrshire, but brown swiss. You city kids just won't understand. There are so many more things to say. I wish I could be with folks on Saturday. A few months ago I was talking on the phone to Tom. Something came up and he had to leave. He said he would call me right back. He didnt't get back to me yet but we will have to finish the brown swiss controversy on the other side. We love you Tom.

Thu 5/30/2019 1:08 PM On Thursday, May 30, 2019, 2:06 PM, dennis bengtson d gbengt@hotmail.com wrote: In the early '90s we were stationed in Naples, Italy. I hadn't seen or talked to Tom in years. Then one morning about 2:00 the phone rang, and rang, and rang. We didn't have an answering service so I climbed out of bed and went downstairs to answer the phone.

It was Tom. He gave me his typical friendly greeting and I asked if he knew what time it was.

"yeah, about 7:00"....."I said - in Minnesota, how about Italy?"

"Oh, it's probably different huh?"

By then I was awake and we had a great conversation.

Tom had demonstrated his characteristic perseverance by letting the phone ring a hundred times and amazing resourcefulness - still don't know how he got my off base Italian phone number!

Thu 5/30/2019 3:35 PM Shared Keranen pfkeranen@live.com

I hadn't seen Tom for many years and I saw him at my nephews wedding reception. There in the church he picked me up to hug me. I was saying, "put me down Tom, everyone is wondering what is going on here."

Sat 6/1/2019 11:36 AM chpropertieskarin@embarqmail.com

Hi Everyone,

Sadly, it looks like I will not make Tom's funeral today. I have an association that I manage and they have called a meeting for this afternoon because it is the only time people can meet.

I will be thinking of all of you and our friendship and shared memories. I will especially be thinking of Big Tom and all the ways he made our lives fuller. God bless him and also God bless his family as they navigate the difficult days ahead. Take care everyone. Love you all. Karin

Timothy R Hempel - June 01, 2019 at 07:45 PM

“ class of 67:

Wed 5/29/2019 12:58 PM Dale Isaacson disaacson28@gmail.com

Marjorie Rokala: I had a phone call from Marjie this morning, and she had heard about Tom from her sister, but wanted to know details about visitation and funeral. She did not know for sure, but she hopes to come to the funeral.

Marjie also has an e-mail address that she wanted to share, and said she would be glad to hear from classmates any time. Her address is marjiesunny1@gmail.com.

I am sure many classmates will be at the funeral, but I know that Denny and Barry plan to be there. I hope to see many of you soon. Dale

Wed 5/29/2019 1:42 PM Dan denora abbott deedan2us@yahoo.com

Forgot to tell you Barry, had to tackle Tom below knees. Ouch

Wed 5/29/2019 1:43 PM Landa Miller landam49@gmail.com

Hi to my Dear Classmates and FRIENDS forever!!!!

Thanks for sharing memories. This is good and healing for us all.

Big Tom was one of our great class clowns. Always happy and joking. My thrill with Big Tom came at the time of planning our 20th class reunion. I had the great privilege and honor being co-chair with Big Tom. I thought I had finally made it to be working with one of our GREATS!!!!

My thoughts and prayers are with you Glenn, cousin of Big Tom and with all of us grieving our dear classmate. I plan to be at the service on Saturday. Karin, you had a great idea of flowers from our class. I would be happy to help in paying for them.

God Bless the memory of our dear Big Tom.

Love and hugs to all, Landa

Wed 5/29/2019 1:46 PM Dan denora abbott deedan2us@yahoo.com

Barry, I had the same problem with a guy named Jack Spike. I yelled for help and finally 6 of us brought him down after he dragged us about 25 yds right before halftime on homecoming night. I didn't know about the below the knee thing than either.

Wed 5/29/2019 1:50 PM Barry Haglund <Barry.Haglund@mntc.org>

Ha ha. With a name like that, I would have run the other way. Thanks for sharing, Dan. Makes me feel much better.

“ more class of 67:

Wed 5/29/2019 9:19 AM Dale Isaacson disaacson28@gmail.com

One of my fond remembrances of Tom was Confirmation Questioning Night. That is a scary night when all the confirmands sit up in front of the church and answer questions about the catechism, asked by Pastor Juliet. I think everyone had all the answers memorized except for Tom. So when Tom was asked his questions he did not give the word for word answer from the catechism. He gave his own answer. Some of us kind of snickered at that. But after thinking about that, Tom probably got more out of that night than any of us. He gave his answers with some thought behind it, and not just memorization. I thought that was pretty good.
Dale

Date: 5/29/19 8:11 PM (GMT-06:00) From: dennis bengtson dgbengt@hotmail.com

Count me in as well.

On May 29, 2019, at 18:11, "kathyander@aol.com" <kathyander@aol.com> wrote:

I agree about the flowers. Count me in on helping with them.

Blessings, Kathy

On Wed, May 29, 2019 at 8:23 PM grandpopof3

grandpopof3@charter.net wrote:

Count me in as well. Sandy C

Wed 5/29/2019 8:30 PM Dale Isaacson disaacson28@gmail.com

Flowers. I did not order expensive flowers so it is really not necessary to donate. I ordered a plant that Chuck Ortquist will pick out and it only came to \$61.20 with tax. If you want to donate a couple dollars towards it, that is fine, but really not necessary. I am glad to do it. Dale

Wed 5/29/2019 12:02 PM Dan denora abbott deedan2us@yahoo.com

Although Tom and I were good friends in high school, our friendship became deeper as we got older. I remember when we went away to Mankato State after we got out of Junior College. Late the summer before our Jr. Year. We didn't have a lot of cash and we rented an upstairs of an old house off campus. There were 4 or 5 of us. I think Tom, our friend Daryl Curtis from Litchfield, Little Tom, and Larry lived there. I remember shortly after we moved in there Tom's Mom and Dad came up to visit. I remember Tom's Mom started crying when she saw what a dump we were living in. Problem is we were all over 18 and had signed a lease for the semester. The Landlord wouldn't release us. We came up with an idea. We would throw a party there the next week. Sure enough we got evicted and got let out of the lease. Great party but in retrospect not the way we probably should have handled it.

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teammates and friends we hadn't seen for 50 years. The excitement became to much for me and my oxygen level dropped and I began coughing. (I have stage 3 chronic bronchitis, but this is worst attack I have had before or since) When Tom and our good friend Duane Melquist, from Cokato, realized I was having problems stayed with me, and contacted Dee . Dee ended up getting me to the Rice Memorial ER where I stayed for a few days and got back to health. What a great friend he has been.

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Timothy R Hempel - June 01, 2019 at 07:42 PM

“ continued memories from class of 67:

Tue 5/28/2019 11:37 AM jucway jucway@tds.net

I'm saddened to hear of our loss of Tom. Having grown up with him all those years in school, all the way from kindergarten age, our classmates almost feel like siblings.

I still recall and smile at a story that Tom shared at one of our class reunions years ago. Tom told of how he witnessed me falling over in kindergarten and he was shocked to see I was wearing yellow panties, thus, he needed to consult with his mother. He only had brothers and, at that time, he thought underwear should only be white. That was classic Tom.

Janet Urban Cafferty

Tue 5/28/2019 9:21 PM

Dale Isaacson disaacson28@gmail.com

Thank you to Karin and Dan who sent me the information on Tom's visitation and funeral. Dale

----- Forwarded message -----

Date: Tue, May 28, 2019 at 6:51 PM From: Karin Colberg klouisecolberg@icloud.com

Subject: Big Tom To: <disaacson28@gmail.com>

Thank you to everyone who has reached out to support our family these past couple days and help us cope with the unexpected loss of our Dad. Funeral arrangements are as follows:

Thomas L. Johnson, Age 70 from Buffalo passed away Sunday, May 26, 2019. A Visitation will be held Friday May 31st from 5-7pm at the Johnson Funeral home (611 N 2nd street, Dassel, MN). A Memorial service will be held at Gesthsemene Lutheran Church in Dassel on Saturday June 1 at 1:00 pm (221 East Atlantic Avenue, Dassel, MN) Full obituary to follow.

On Wednesday, May 29, 2019, 07:18:48 AM PDT, Dale Isaacson disaacson28@gmail.com wrote: One of my fond remembrances of Tom was Confirmation Questioning Night. That is a scary night when all the confirmands sit up in front of the church and answer questions about the catechism, asked by Pastor Juliet. I think everyone had all the answers memorized except for Tom. So when Tom was asked his questions he did not give the word for word answer from the catechism. He gave his own answer. Some of us kind of snickered at that. But after thinking about that, Tom probably got more out of that night than any of us. He gave his answers with some thought behind it, and not just memorization. I thought that was pretty good. Dale

Wed 5/29/2019 8:53 AM Barry Haglund Barry.Haglund@mntc.org

Here's a "contact" with Big Tom that I clearly remember...

I was playing defensive back in one of our high school football practices.

Suddenly the defensive line opened up and this huge freight train of a runner came charging toward me. I unwisely decided to make the tackle (LOL!). Tom

lowered his helmet and hit me head-on in the chest—knocked the wind out of me

like nothing I've ever experienced, up to then or since. I almost quit football that day! ☐

Barry Haglund

Director of Legacy Giving

Date: Wed, May 29, 2019 at 7:13 AM From: Dan denora abbott deedan2us@yahoo.com

Subject: Big Tom, To: Dale Isaacson disaacson28@gmail.com

For all of us who laughed with, played sports with, went to school with Tom, and ever had any contact with the Big Guy please share a Big Tom story or thought!! We miss you. RIP

Wed 5/29/2019 9:06 AM Marie Persinger mdpersinger1@gmail.com

I remember Tom as always having a great disposition! There were 11-13 females classmates who's moms held overnight sleepover birthday parties yearly for each of us (always so much fun). Tom was definitely one who brought the guys to crash our 🎈 parties. No one seemed to mind as I'm sure Tom led them back home without any problems (always a positive leader)! 😊

Marie

"Music is the voice of God speaking to the soul".

Timothy R Hempel - June 01, 2019 at 07:40 PM

“ My Name is Tim Hempel. I became the fiftieth classmate At Dassel High School my senior year. I did not have the privilege of knowing Tom for 12 years as most of my classmates did. I have learned more about the man named Tom (Big Tom).in the last week or so than I did in my senior year. the Emails have been travelling between classmates. The memories have been pouring out and the fondness and love for Big Tom is evident. I did edit but merely put the emails in their chronological order. I hope you his family will see how much he was loved.

Tom L. Johnson (Big Tom) Class of 67

Mon 5/27/2019 6:37 PM

Dale Isaacson disaacson28@gmail.com

Tom L. Johnson (Big Tom): I got the sad news today that Tom was killed in a tractor accident yesterday. That is really all I know. When I find out about services I will pass them on. Dale

Mon 5/27/2019 7:00 PM chpropertieskarin@embarqmail.com

Thank you Dale. I saw a post from his daughter this morning. She said he was doing something that he loved Hard to believe that bigger than life guy is gone. Blessings for his family. Karin

PS – should the class do flowers?

Mon 5/27/2019 7:00 PM Carol <cstabenow@comcast.net>

I'm so, so sorry to hear this. Thank you, Dale, for letting us know.

Carol Haugen Stabenow

Mon 5/27/2019 7:35 PM

Joyce Agnew jdagnewmn@yahoo.com

I am so shocked and surprised. Tom entertained me from the desk behind for 6 years. He was always kind and funny. Two summers ago, I visited him at his farm. We sat on a hay bale and reminisced. He gave me a fun tour of his alpaca farm and a great pick-ride through the countryside, which I dearly miss. These are a couple photos. He was very happy on the farm. I am in Wayzata for the summer and would like to hear about any arrangements for his burial. We have lost a loving "mascot" of our class. Joyce Johnson Agnew

Mon 5/27/2019 8:29 PM Kathy kathyander@aol.com

Very sad news. Will be praying for his family as they (and we all) grieve this loss.

Mon 5/27/2019 8:31 PM dennis bengtson dgbengt@hotmail.com

Truly one of a kind - he'll be dearly missed.

Mon 5/27/2019 10:38 PM Tom Johnson tomjohope@icloud.com

When my old I Pad gave up the electronic ghost this spring, I lost my easy access to the mail i receive on icloud.com, which resulted in my missing some messages. When i received a Facebook notification from Larry Gilmer today, thanks, Larry, with the news that Big Tom had died in a farm accident, I felt a jolt of loss.

Tom and I shared the same name, but no one would have thought us to be identical twins as we looked very different and were different in many ways, but Big Tom was a good guy and I feel good that we had a small connection to each other. Having a small connection to Big Tom was a "good thing" for me, resulting in many laughs and light moments. I did room with him for a year at Mankato State, as it was known then, and it was a good year.

As Dennis mentioned, Big Tom will be missed. He died too young and he did not have time to say goodbye to those he most cherished, but since we have to go sometime, it may not be so bad if we exit the stage in an activity we enjoy and love. I do believe I would rather succumb to some majestic timber wolves than to fall to the powerful microbes and enemy cells that hover around the last years of life.

You are probably too busy to read this, Big Tom, but if you do, know that your goodness and humor is and will be missed by those who knew you best and those of us who have valued you from the cheap bleacher seats over the last decades.

Little Tom J

Timothy R Hempel - June 01, 2019 at 07:36 PM

DN

“ *As a young teacher and coach in Dassel from 1960 to 63, Tom was one of my students and football players. As a young man I will always remember him, Tom was a kid that enjoyed every part of school. He was one of the factors that I continued as a teacher for 34 years. Tom's success in his career comes as no surprise. Tom's life made a difference to many. May his family be grateful for their memories of a great man.*

Dan Nelson - May 31, 2019 at 09:42 AM



“ *Sweet Tenderness was purchased for the family of Thomas Lynn Johnson.*



May 30, 2019 at 04:50 PM



“ *Grande Gourmet Fruit Basket was purchased for the family of Thomas Lynn Johnson.*



May 30, 2019 at 09:58 AM

MM

“ *Tom once asked me, during a (annual 4th July Celebration at Rick and Marcia's) if I ever farmed. I said, "yes," in VA had 18 acres. He said , "How big was your herd." I said, "One, one milk cow named Hamburger." He laughed really hard. A wonderful, smart, friendly guy. Peggy Maher (Sister Marcia and Rick).*

margaret s maher - May 30, 2019 at 09:45 AM

LG

“ *Knew Tom from 1st grade through college, always a great guy and fun to be around. Blessings to his family.*

Larry Gilmer - May 30, 2019 at 12:55 AM

SR

“ *Shelli Roorda purchased the Beautiful Dreams for the family of Thomas Lynn Johnson.*



Shelli Roorda - May 29, 2019 at 11:05 PM



“ *Beautiful in Blue was purchased for the family of Thomas Lynn Johnson.*



May 29, 2019 at 09:16 PM



“ *Simply Elegant Spathiphyllum was purchased for the family of Thomas Lynn Johnson.*



May 29, 2019 at 07:44 PM



“ *Rick And Marcia lit a candle in memory of Thomas Lynn Johnson*



Rick and Marcia - May 29, 2019 at 03:34 PM