



Owen V. Johnson

February 22, 1946 - August 6, 2022

Owen V. Johnson, 76, a retired Indiana University professor who trained hundreds of students to be professional journalists around the world, died Aug. 6 of natural causes. He was a lifelong collector of facts and stories, and loved using them to make connections between the people he met all over the world.

Johnson was born February 22, 1946 in Madison, Wisc., to Verner and Marianne Johnson. He grew up in Pullman, Wash., where he fostered a lifelong interest in journalism as editor of his high school newspaper and sports editor for the Pullman Herald. He worked at KWSC Radio and TV while attending Washington State University, where he earned a B.A. in history.

He received an M.A. and a Ph.D. in history from the University of Michigan with a certificate in Russian and East European Studies. After teaching for a year at Southern Illinois University-Carbondale, he joined the Ernie Pyle School of Journalism at IU in 1980.

He taught a variety of journalism and history courses. He loved to engage with his students as fellow learners, and delighted to support them and celebrate their accomplishments when they left his classroom. He was a favorite professor of many. Elected to leadership positions in several academic organizations, Johnson also held administrative positions at IU and had

visiting professor appointments to several foreign universities. When he retired from IU in 2014 and was granted emeritus status, he continued to research, write and make public and scholarly presentations.

Johnson wrote prolifically on a variety of topics, including a book on World War II correspondent Ernie Pyle, and another on education in Slovakia during the interwar period. More than 37 scholarly publications in North America and Europe published his work, plus he created dozens of articles, letters and programs for more general audiences such as National Public Radio, the New York Times, and local public radio. He appeared in one episode of PBS' History Detectives series about Ernie Pyle, and managed a Facebook page for the Friends of Ernie Pyle on which he posted daily quotes written by the author.

Johnson loved to travel. He visited more than two dozen countries, and all 50 states. On his first trip to Sweden in 1967 he met Marta Kučerová of Czechoslovakia. They married two years later and she became the mother of their daughters, Eva and Hana. They later divorced. He then married and divorced Ann Tryon.

He enjoyed collegiate athletics and professional baseball and attended countless games. He served as an announcer for IU Swimming & Diving, and was deeply invested in that community. He shared his love of sports with his daughters, and together they visited as many Major and Minor League Baseball stadiums as they could.

He was a member and ruling elder of First Presbyterian Church in Bloomington, and served as recording clerk for the Presbytery of Ohio Valley. He joined the Bloomington Rotary Club in 2015 and was a devoted Rotarian.

Johnson was preceded in death by his parents, and by his older brother, Dean

Johnson. He is survived by his two daughters, Eva Johnson and Hana Johnson Elliott (Layne); grandsons Connor and Colin; a brother Kyle Jansson; and thousands of worldwide supporters and practitioners of free and independent journalism.

Memorial services will be held on August 15th at 12pm, at First Presbyterian Church in Bloomington, with a reception to follow.

The family suggests donations to First Presbyterian Church or to the Friends of Ernie Pyle.

Allen Funeral Home and Crematory, 4155 South Old State Road 37, Bloomington, have been entrusted with arrangements. Online condolences, photos and memories may be shared with family and friends at www.allencare.com

Previous Events

Service

AUG **15**. 12:00 PM (ET)

First Presbyterian Church
221 E 6th St
Bloomington, IN 47408-3596
(812) 332-1514

Tribute Wall

GW

“ 1 file added to the tribute wall



Göran Westberg - August 23, 2022 at 03:07 AM

GW

Owen visiting me in Swedish hospital 2012

Göran Westberg - August 24, 2022 at 02:31 AM

RN

“ *I had the privilege of being at Ernie Pyle 1990-91 as an MA student and also being a TA for Prof Owen Johnson. We stayed in touch on Facebook over all these years. I am deeply saddened by his passing. My deepest condolences to his family.*

raju narisetti - August 15, 2022 at 09:55 PM

KN

“ *Owen was for decades a respected colleague at the International Association for Media and Communication Research - top scholar of journalism in Russia and Eastern Europe with an analytical instead of missionary approach. RIP.*

Kaarle Nordenstreng - August 15, 2022 at 12:55 PM



“ *Simply Elegant Spathiphyllum was purchased for the family of Owen V. Johnson.*



August 14, 2022 at 07:25 PM



“ *Dear Hana and Eva,*

We were so very sorry to hear about your dad's sudden death. He was a wonderful colleague and valued friend, with an amazing knowledge of Eastern Europe. We didn't always agree with him, but we always enjoyed debating with him and are grateful for all he did to promote Russian and East European studies at IU.

We hope his memory will be a comfort and inspiration to you in the years ahead

*Sincerely,
Dina and Marty Spechler*

Dina Spechler - August 14, 2022 at 03:43 PM



“ *The Ernie Pyle Legacy Foundation. purchased the Gracious Lavender Basket for the family of Owen V. Johnson.*



The Ernie Pyle Legacy Foundation. - August 12, 2022 at 08:53 PM

AT

“ Owen and I were high school sweethearts back in Pullman in 1960s. We went our separate ways until October of 1999,. We married in May of 2001. We were married for 14 years and experienced travel and IU sports together. As life changes and so do people, We will always be friends and my memoires of his family and especially his mom are sweet. God bless you Owen may God keep you in his loving arms through eternity. love, Ann Coonradt Johnson Tryon. Life is too short. Remember only the good times.

Ann Tryon - August 12, 2022 at 01:59 PM



“ Owen was "one-of-a-kind!" I knew him in several incarnations, but he always had the sharp wit, the incisive question, and sometimes the annoying repetition of his "favorites"--people and stories he loved to tell. He also had a sad side in his life, often covered by story-telling of Ernie Pyle and many other adventures. He loved the Presbyterians for their rich history and omnipresent controversies, but like a good journalist, he tried to be non-partisan. He liked the Rotarians for all their great activities, and weekly speakers that he could grill with tough questions. Despite a somewhat gruff exterior, he loved people, life, and as many encounters as he could squeeze into a day. If I wanted a brisk conversation, Owen was my table companion. And beneath it all was a deep and abiding faith that sustained him in difficult times. May it sustain him and his family in these times of sudden loss. (Rev.) Tim Jessen

Timothy Jessen - August 11, 2022 at 10:55 PM