



S. Joe Johnson

August 26, 1940 - December 6, 2025

Joe Johnson passed away peacefully in Wenatchee on December 6, 2025, surrounded by his loved ones. Joe leaves behind a legacy of kindness and creativity as well as a pure love for the mountains and “cruise music”.

Joe was born in LaFollet, TN on August 26, 1940 to Dorothy Johnson (Cooper) and Louis Johnson. He was the oldest of seven children and took his role as “big brother” very seriously. He enjoyed his evenings at home playing music with his siblings. He was a “hero” to them because they could always count on him. He was a true mentor for them.

In 1959 Joe married Esther (Liz) Coldiron and together they raised their four children—Joey, Shari, Lisa, and Lynnette—in Wenatchee, years they remember with great fondness. His daughter Shari shares a reflection of him from that time of his life; “Growing up, we called him Papa Bear. One of our most cherished memories is drifting to sleep while Dad played the piano, his music wafting up the stairs wrapping our childhood in warmth and safety. He taught himself every instrument he touched, just as he taught us to love nature, each other, and to find wonder in the world. We remember camping trips, fishing, road trips in the old VW bus, and his unassuming talent as a craftsman who could build or fix anything. He was quiet, gentle, thoughtful, and deeply loving. We imagine him now fishing in heaven with his beloved dogs at his side, finally at peace, still watching over us.”

On December 14, 1997, Joe married Jean Hansen. In addition to marrying her, he also inherited her five wonderful children. As his life story grew longer, so did the number of precious grandchildren. Jean says one of her greatest gifts Joe ever gave her was loving her children and grandchildren as his own. Together, the two enjoyed RV trips to Idaho, Montana, Olympic Peninsula, and Canada. The ultimate trips were any they made to visit family.

Joe worked as a welder and many of his projects can be seen all over the Wenatchee Valley. Fishing was also an important part of his life, and lived by his mantra of "Catching fish or not, the joy is in the serenity of the experience". Later in life, he dedicated his time to crafting beautiful musical instruments from guitars to banjos. He did not like many "specialty" wood working tools, and often resorted to his own ingenuity in crafting them. He found immense joy in gifting these instruments to loved ones, and did so in hopes of inspiring a passion for music. Joe never met a piece of wood he couldn't turn into a beautiful piece of art. He wore many hats, and made everyone he met feel so special.

Joe will be missed by all who loved him. He will always be remembered as a kind, gentle, creative and hard-working man of strength.

He is preceded in death by his parents, a brother, and two sisters.

He is survived by his wife of 29 years, Jean Johnson; children, Joey (Joanne) Johnson, Shari (Greg) Campbell, Lisa Sanchez, and Lynnette (Ron) Kramer; Jean's children, Christine (Cal) Mobley, Kathleen, Michael (Vickie) Hansen, Kevin Hansen, Ryan (Jessica) Hansen; sister Linda (Don) Rollings; brothers, Paul "Tim" Johnson and Ronald Johnson, and 24 grandchildren and 7 great-grandchildren.

A Celebration of Life will be held at Foothills Community Center on May 16, 2026 from 1-5 PM. Arrangements by Jones and Jones - Betts Funeral home.

Tribute Wall



“ 34 files added to the album *Life Tributes*



Jones & Jones~Betts Funeral Home - April 27 at 02:18 PM



“ 31 files added to the album *Life Tributes*



Jones & Jones~Betts Funeral Home - April 23 at 01:18 PM