



Dale C. Johnson

November 26, 1931 - November 12, 2016

Dale Creston Johnson, longtime Owasso educator and community leader died November 12, 2016, at Autumnwood Memory Facility, in Claremore, Oklahoma. Dale was born to parents Clyde and Elva (Chaudoin) Johnson on November 26, 1931. Dale grew up in the hills north of Tahlequah at Moodys, Oklahoma, and spent his childhood running through those hills and fishing in the beautiful Illinois River. He never lost his love for that part of home. He graduated Tahlequah High School and went on to attend Northeastern State University where he received his Bachelors and Masters degrees. He then attended Tulsa University for advance studies for his Superintendent's Certificate also becoming a member of Phi Delta. Dale was a veteran of the armed forces having served his country honorably with the United States Army. He was stationed in Alaska during the Korean Conflict. Dale was preceded in death by his parents, his brother Jim Johnson, sister Hilda Chaudoin, and granddaughter Cen",„¢ Bowman. Dale married Sandra Vaughn in Sapulpa, Oklahoma, in 1964. They met while both were teaching at Jefferson Elementary School in Sapulpa. Both of their children, Kresta Bowman, of Owasso, and Kerry Johnson of Denver are Owasso graduates as well as their son-in-law, Tim Bowman. Their grandchildren, Pyper-Daley Bowman and Stryder Bowman attend Owasso High School and have grown up following in the Ram traditions, of which Dale was so proud. Dale and his family moved from Sapulpa to Owasso, Oklahoma in 1969. Little did he know that Owasso would become his dream job. He quickly fell in love with the community and worked endlessly to promote the town and the school system. Wherever he went from Washington D.C. to Oklahoma City, he told the accolades of the public schools and the Owasso community. He was a man of vision and he passionately desired to see the community and the Owasso Public Schools grow and prosper. Dale was a people person and thoroughly enjoyed speaking and welcoming people into his realm of friendship. It was an appreciated fact that Dale had an "open door policy" for anyone who needed to talk to him. Dale not only was an integral part of the economic development in Owasso, he also led the school system through massive changes during his leadership. Dale came to the school system in 1969 as High School Principal and then in 1975, he became the Superintendent of schools for an accumulated 35 years before retiring in 2004. When Dale began his superintendency, the 2A district had around 900 students or less and only three

school facilities. At the end of his tenure, there were more than 7,500 students. It had become a 6A school with 12 buildings: seven elementaries, centers for sixth, seventh, and eighth grades, a mid-high and high school. Also a state-of-the-art auditorium, sport facilities fit for a 6A program, administrative offices were expanded, and a transportation and plant operations building to take care of the district's needs for in to the future. The district could also boast of outstanding academics, outstanding band and choral programs, FFA, and several other top programs. Among Dale's professional organizations were the Tulsa County Administrators, Rogers County Administrators, The Oklahoma Association of School Administrators, the American Association of School Administrators, the Oklahoma Rural Organizations of Schools, the Oklahoma State Board School Board Association, the National School Board Association, and the Cooperative Council of School Administrators. He was listed in the Who's Who among American Superintendents, and honored as Administrator of the Year. Even with all that he was active in, he found time to teach finance classes to students studying for their Superintendent's Certificate at the University Center of Tulsa which later became OSU Tulsa. In 2007 he was honored by the Oklahoma Association of School Administrators with the Lifetime Achievement Award. This is only given to one former superintendent yearly and it's recognition of a career long ethical and professional leadership and contribution to education and community. An important accomplishment for him was the naming of the Dale C. Johnson Education Service Center. One of his last awards which pleased him greatly was becoming a member of the Owasso Athletic Hall of Fame. This was presented because of his dedication in the bringing athletic facilities to 6A prominence. Through the years Dale belonged to the Tulsa Chamber of Commerce and the Owasso Chamber of Commerce and served as the Owasso Chamber President. He was a charter member of the Owasso Rotary Club and also served as President, always prepared with a speech in his pocket just in case they needed a speaker that day, and of course the topic would always be the public schools. Dale served on various boards and committees for the chamber and as an Owasso Ambassador. He was privileged to be named the first member to the Owasso Chamber Hall of Fame and was very honored to receive the Owasso Chamber Community Appreciation Award. He served on the Water Resources Board, the Oklahoma Development Authority, and the Owasso Economic Development Authority. He was a longtime member of the Rogers County Water Board. He also served as a member of the Owasso Baptist Home for Children. He came to be known as the "Parade Director" since he co-directed the parades in Owasso for nearly 20 years. He and Sandra promoted this community as Mr. and Mrs. Trail Days in 1997. He was a member of Bethel Baptist Church in Owasso for 47 years. He enjoyed country music and Southern gospel music. He particularly enjoyed listening to the Sunday Morning Radio Gospel Show before he and Sandra would leave for church. As his Alzheimer's increased he asked every day, "Is tomorrow church day?" Dale was always a teacher at heart, always wanting to

teach others to fish, ski, to play golf and to garden. He enjoyed mentoring young Superintendents who were just starting out. Husband, father, grandfather, educator, and friend describe the roles Dale felt were important. He was a communicator and he took his God given purposes in life very serious. Dale's achievements were many but his greatest joy was to be surrounded by his family while entertaining his grandchildren with stories and songs of his childhood. They returned the favor, when he was so seriously ill at the hospital, as they gathered around the bed singing all of those "crazy" songs he taught them, like Johnson Had an Old Gray Mule, The Wabash Cannonball, and Sally Gooden, to name a few. While Dale was in the hospital, it was amazing how many Owasso graduates were among those who cared for him. They would ask, "Is he the Dale Johnson of Owasso Schools?" Dale is truly a man who been blessed with many friends, many awards and achievements throughout his life. His positive outlook on life and his humor, gave so much joy to others, as it continued even after his fight with Alzheimer's began to take his mind. He always saw the positive side of life and loved to share stories with his family, his many, many friends, and his caregivers. A quote by Henry Brooks Adams says, "A teacher affects eternity; he can never tell where his influence stops." Dale will be missed by a multitude of family, friends and all those whose life he touched.'

Tribute Wall

BT

“ *Mr. Dale Johnson was my teacher in 7th grade when President Kennedy was murdered in Dallas. I still remember the shock. Mr Johnson handled the situation with calm grace. Everyone loved him!* ”

Barbara Tiemeier - February 06, 2025 at 12:11 AM

RH

“ *'Prayers for you, Sandy and the rest of the family! Joy and I feel as though we lost a family member. Dale has been a huge part of both our lives for decades! So proud to have worked with such a great man and educator. Owasso was a better community because of our boss and friend!'* ”

Ron and Joy Hughes - December 02, 2016 at 05:03 AM

MW

“ *'Mr. Johnson was a great man, and will be missed by many!'* ”

Mike Wood - November 28, 2016 at 02:04 AM

DT

“ *'Dale Johnson hired me for my first teaching job in Owasso. I was honored to work with him and for him as a teacher, counselor and principal. He taught me many great lessons of exemplary school leadership and quality character, and provided me tremendous support and mentorship. I am greatly indebted to him for his friendship and example. May God bless his memory.'* ”

Dr. Tim Taylor - November 18, 2016 at 01:59 AM

BL

“ *'Kresta, I am so sorry for your loss. Please give your mother my best. Praying that God gives you strength during this time and that memories give you comfort. '* ”

Beth Kight Lowther - November 17, 2016 at 10:51 PM



“ ”

November 17, 2016 at 04:26 PM

NR

“ I started the first Special Education class at Owasso's Barnes Elementary in 1970, prior to PL 94-142 being implemented by mandate. Dale Johnson came to visit me in my "closet classroom" almost every other week. He would ask where I thought these children would be when they reached high school, encourage me as a first year teacher, listen to me cry as I felt inadequate, and introduce me to the custodian who had the key to all the supply rooms. He would occasionally sit with me on bus duty outside when it was freezing cold. Dale was a wonderful educator, a true innovator, and above all else---a wonderful person. I am so sorry for your loss; I am so sorry for everyone who lost a true friend, no matter how many years have passed. He has more than earned his "Angel Wings!"

Nancy Rhees - November 17, 2016 at 02:35 AM

TM

“ I'm Vernon Burney's daughter. I went to Jenks High School and so at any gathering the Rams/Trojans trash talk would start. Always in good fun. He was inspiring, and I don't know that I've ever met anyone else who served with such joy. I very much wish I could be there today, but I think Dale will understand. I'm at home, taking care of my husband, who has Alzheimer's. Go Rams Go'

Tina Burney Meyer - November 16, 2016 at 10:19 PM

LJ

“ Sandra and Family: I hope you know how much Dale's influence in my life meant to me. I am better because of it. He will be a part of my heart forever and I am comforted by the legacy he has left his family, the community, and the Owasso Public Schools. May God bless, strengthen and support you at this difficult time. Below is the poem about Dale we used at his retirement tribute. I think it is fitting to share it again. XOXO
Success
by Bessie Anderson
Stanley
He has achieved success
who has lived well,
laughed often,
and loved much;
who has enjoyed the trust of
pure women,
the respect of intelligent men and
the love of little children;
who has filled his
niche and accomplished his task;
who has left the world better than he
found it
whether by an improved poppy,
a perfect poem or a rescued
soul;
who has never lacked appreciation of Earth's beauty
nor failed to express it;
who has always looked for the best in others and
given them
the best he had;

Lynn Johnson - November 16, 2016 at 06:44 PM

RS

“ *'Mrs. Sandra: It was an honor and privilege to work along side Dale here at the Water District. What a wonderful friend. His faith is now sight, Dale will be missed.*

Rick Stull - November 16, 2016 at 04:30 PM

RA

“ *'Mr. Johnson was my principal, my superintendent, and eventually my boss. He was an important figure in my life, teaching me many lessons of how to be a man of service to others. A great leader! Mrs. Johnson was one of my teachers and also a mentor during my first year as a classroom teacher, I can not think of better people who blessed my life and the community of Owasso. I sing praises of joy knowing Mr. Johnson resides with Jesus, and I mourn for Mrs. Johnson and the family during their time of grief. Thank you for being in my life, my heart aches for all who will miss him for the short time before we meet again in paradise. May God bring the family and loved ones the peace only the Holy Spirit and love of others can bring.'*

Rick Antle - November 16, 2016 at 03:07 AM

LG

“ *'We are saddened by the news of Dale"s passing. Our sympathies to Sandra, Kresta and family and Kerry for the loss of your mate and father. I will always remember the time that Dale and I went for a ride around Owasso in his pickup truck showing me the beloved homeland of his. What a mark he has left in education in that area of OK. Rest in peace sir and we will see you upstairs in that Promise Land.'*

Launa & Curt Gillette - November 16, 2016 at 02:48 AM

DG

“ *'We are so sorry to learn of Mr. Johnson"s death. We were most fortunate that he was part of the wonderful group of administrators who welcomed us to Owasso in 1989. His support of the band program and the "new directors" was so important to us, especially the first few years. We will always have fond memories of him and the kindness he showed everyone who crossed his path.'*

David and Jana Gorham - November 16, 2016 at 12:06 AM

LR

“ *'Honored to have known you Dale! Your open-door policy was a big attribute to you! Thank you for all of your guidance over the years. Loved your compassion for teachers. Love and prayers to Sandra, Kresta and Tim and other family members. \r\nLinda Reutlinger '*

Linda Reutlinger - November 15, 2016 at 01:29 AM

CO

“ *Mr. Johnson was a tough act to follow as he handed me the keys to an outstanding school (much of it due to his outstanding leadership) district in Owasso Public Schools! He told me my first week on the job to always have a good speech in my pocket to brag on Owasso Public Schools as I would have plenty of opportunities to do so...he was right, it was the best advice he could have given me.'*

Clark Ogilvie - November 14, 2016 at 03:55 PM