



## James Winfred "J.W." Johnson

October 6, 1921 - January 27, 2015

J.W. (Jubby) Johnson, 93, of Tyler died peacefully at home Tuesday January 27th

after a long, wonderful life. Services will be held on Monday, February 2, 2015 at 2:00 PM at Marvin United Methodist Church in Tyler. Rev. Gerry Giles will officiate under the direction of Stewart Family Funeral Home.

He was born October 6th, 1921 in Denton Texas to Stanley and Clara Johnson of Sycamore Street. He attended Denton Public Schools and North Texas State University. He received additional education at Columbia University, the University of Houston, Southern Methodist University, and The University of Texas in Austin. In 1943 he enlisted in the U.S. Army. He served in the Pacific Theater as a medical technician for 17 months receiving multiple citations including 2 Bronze Stars for valor. While part of the Army force occupying Japan after the war he had a popular Armed Services Radio show going by the moniker Texas Jim. Upon separation from the Army as a Corporal in 1946, he re-enrolled in North Texas State where he received a Masters of Music in 1947. During this time he met Varina Powell of Tyler who was his piano student at the University. They married in June of 1949 and have lived in Tyler on Glenrose Street since 1957.

Upon graduation from North Texas State he worked as Chairman of the Department of music at Wharton County Junior College. Subsequently he left teaching to work in the insurance business; moving to Tyler from Dallas to head the New York Life Tyler office and later for Pacific Mutual. In 1965 then

TJC president Harry Jenkins invited him to return to the world of music education. He never looked back. In 1977 he became Chair of the TJC Music department where he founded the singing group Harmony and Understanding and presented yearly Broadway musicals that have become the stuff of legend.

Along the way he was Conductor of the Rose Festival Coronation Orchestra and the director of many Lion's Club Minstrel presentations. He was a longtime Lion's Club member and past chapter President, a member of the Sharon Lodge, and a Rotarian. Additionally he was the past President of Floyd Graham Society at NTSU. His trio, the East Texas Philharmonic was a long-time staple at Willowbrook Country Club and the Tyler Petroleum Club. He was a member of Marvin United Methodist Church since 1957 where he was a member of the Chancel Choir and pianist/song leader of the Friendly Bible Class. At TJC he was named Outstanding Teacher of the year in 1972. The J.W. Johnson Presidential Scholarship was established in 1990 and he was the recipient of the Black and Gold Award by the TJC Alumni Board in 1997. In 2012, a portion of the Music Building at TJC was named in his honor. He is predeceased by his parents, his brother Capt. Silas Johnson, and twin brother and sister, who died at birth. Survivors include his wife Varina, daughter Tina Hattan of New York City, son J.W. Johnson Jr. of Montclair, NJ, grandchildren Cameron Johnson and Alice Hattan, nephew General Silas Johnson Jr. and niece Nancy Mogle.

Honorary pallbearers are A.J. Triggs, Bill Lust, David Shelton, Frank Kimlicko, Gene Barron, Mitch Andrews, and Larry Marta.

In lieu of flowers the family requests that donations be made to Hospice of East Texas, 4111 University Blvd., Tyler, TX 75701.

# Cemetery Details

## **Rose Hill Cemetery**

2400 S. Donnybrook  
Tyler, TX 75702

# Tribute Wall

JK

“ *My entire family has been touched by Mr. J's kindness and generosity over the years. I grew up going to TJC musicals and Pops Concerts not knowing that one day I would be in several TJC Musicals and Pops Concerts myself. The one constant was this sweet man at the center of it all mentoring, advising and gently helping an endless steam of young people toward their creative destinys. One of my favorite memories of Mr. Johnson is seeing him siting in front of a piano during a choir concert or a Harmony and Understanding gig. He would count us off and off we would go. He was one of us, part of the choir part of Harmony. I like to think that somewhere up there Mr. J is counting off a Heavenly Choir. 1 2 3 4....*

*Jon Kimlicko*

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**Jon Kimlicko** - February 04, 2015 at 07:28 PM



Kathryn  
Mooring

“ *Mr. Johnson was a huge influence on my life and career. I was in Harmony from 1971-73, and the confidence I gained under his instruction was life-changing. I became a high school choir director, and my biggest hope is that I had a positive influence on my students and passed along some of what I learned from him. I'll never forget performing at Texas Stadium for the Cowboy game halftime shows. Kathy Corley Mooring*

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**Kathryn Mooring** - February 03, 2015 at 04:37 PM

RR

“ JW called me when i was around eighteen and was working as a dj at KGKB in Tyler.i had been playing drums with some local bands and he wanted me to join his trio.JW on piano and Selby Barnett was on the bass.we played every saturday nite at the Willowbrook Country Club.and other jobs friday nites.he was also selling New York Life Insurance at that time.we played all the great standards from the big band era.just last week i had been thinking about him.we had not talked in a long time.i never met a nicer person and i had a great deal of fun playing drums for him and he paid good for the times.my sympathy for the family.i remember he had a real pretty wife and a boy and a girl.he was proud of his family.if there is a heaven then i am sure he has been invited to stay.Randy Robins

Randy Robins - February 02, 2015 at 03:52 PM

CH

“ For the Family of J.W. Johnson: My prayers are with you for the loss of such a wonderful person.....I will always remember Mr. Johnson and how he was such an amazing positive influence on my life and the lives of so many.. He was always so kind to me when I was a little girl hanging out with my Dad at TJC Musical rehearsals, as well as when I was a memeber of "Harmony and Understanding". I am a choir teacher now and I hope I will have that wonderful kind of influence on my students as he had on his. He made such a meaningful difference in my life. Many prayers and blessings from Catherine (Kimlicko) Holmes.



Catherine (Kimlicko) Holmes - February 02, 2015 at 02:59 AM

CW

“ So sad to hear of J.W.'s passing. He was one of my mentors and holds a special place in my heart. I learned so much under his direction and am proud to say I was one of his kids. Rest in peace, JW. Thanks for the memories.

*Carole Crawford Walker*

*Harmony and Understanding 1971-73*

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**Carole Crawford Walker** - February 01, 2015 at 01:20 AM

LA

“ Loving, funny, kind and true - that was J.W. through and through. Cute and humble and full of joy; he was the best of the best and a "good 'ole boy." Daddy would answer the phone and say, "Hi, J!" His sweet bald head and shuffling walk could always brighten my day. From the stories he told to the smile on his face, in all of our hearts he holds an honorable place.

*His children and Varina, his friends, students and colleagues too- he loved us all and always remained true. He'd brag to all who'd listen about those that he loved, and Harmony and the TJC musicals were second to none. My heart was a little saddened at his music library dedication because those young Harmony members didn't get a chance to see J.W. in an earlier generation. He was a true Master and could play anything! Singing on stage with him at the keyboard was always like a dream!*

*I love you sweet J.W. and you're forever in my heart, and now that you're in Heaven, I'll bet your greatest performance is just about to start.*

*Goodnight, my Someone....*

*Linda Holbrook, TJC, Class of '83*

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**linda holbrook armstrong** - January 31, 2015 at 07:54 PM

JW

“ Loved the man. His enthusiasm for many kinds of music, his warmth, and especially his sense of humor endeared him to a generation of music students at Tyler Junior College. He mentored so many, as has Varina. Their influence in Tyler's music community, and the community at large, is a powerful and positive legacy.

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**Judy Wilkins** - January 30, 2015 at 08:16 PM

JJ

“ Great guy. I know he will be missed by many former students, friend's and family.

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**Jeff Jones** - January 30, 2015 at 08:15 PM

CC

“ Mr. Johnson was the most wonderful teacher, choral director and friend. I loved him so much. He taught me to accompany myself, directed me in *Harmony and Understanding*, helped give me confidence in performing and loved all of his college kids! God bless the family in the loss of this great man!



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**Carleta Hathcox Cates** - January 30, 2015 at 06:14 PM

CN

“ Mr. Johnson gave me the opportunity to live my dream through music. He believed in me and instilled a level of confidence in me that I had never known. He was my mentor and lifetime friend and words cannot express how much he will be missed. He taught me so much more than music and allowed me to express myself both on and off the stage. Some people come into your life and you know that your life was forever changed by knowing them.

*Cindy Miller Nick*

*Harmony and Understanding 77-79*

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**Cindy Miller Nick** - January 30, 2015 at 05:45 PM



“ I had the pleasure to be under Mr. Johnson's direction a TJC from 1990-1992. I loved him and his passion for music. I love George Gershwin because of him. A true joy to know, and a real honor to have been his student. Heaven is filled with the beautiful music of Mr. Johnson, thank you for every smile and a wonderful sense of humor.

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**Chellie Sparks** - January 30, 2015 at 05:13 PM

 Jonna Fitzgerald

“ Although I was never blessed to study music under JW's tutelage, there were many opportunities through the years where I was honored to play a musical program with him. Varina was, however, one of my early violin teachers. I'm so very saddened to hear of JW's passing, but know without doubt there will be some wonderful, joyful music in heaven this week. Much love to you, Varina. You and your family will be in my prayers through the difficult days ahead.

*Jonna Fitzgerald*

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**Jonna Fitzgerald** - January 30, 2015 at 02:37 PM

TW

“ J.W. was one of my music pros at TJC. I accompanied the choir that he directed. He was a wonderful teacher and friend. His love of life and music was contagious. Tom Willoughby

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**Tom Willoughby** - January 30, 2015 at 02:16 PM



“ This gentleman remains one of the most beloved people apart from my family to me. During two much too brief years at TJC in choir and Harmony (1974-76) I fell in love with him as did every girl and guy blessed to be under his wing. He was talented, funny, smart, classy and had the most amazing rapport with college-aged kids. I am grateful to God for the gift of him in my life and he will not be forgotten. What a mark he made on so many. Dean and I send our love and sympathy to Varina and family. Brenda York Cagle

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**Brenda Cagle** - January 30, 2015 at 02:06 PM

SW

“ Sorry to read of Mr. Johnson's passing. I was in the TJC Choir under his directorship in 1965-1967.  
Stanley Waghalter

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**Stanley Waghalter** - January 30, 2015 at 02:02 PM