



Ed Johnson

September 17, 1968 - February 14, 2020

Ed Johnson

Age 51 of St. Paul, MN

Passed away Feb. 14, 2020 after a nearly 13-year battle against Multiple Myeloma.

Survived by wife, Anne Davini-Johnson; sons, Augie and Louis; sisters, Jean (Chris) Mellott and Holly (Chuck Beltz) Johnson; brother, Mitchell (Donia Bijan) Johnson; brothers-in-law, Joe (Amy) Davini, Matt (Sarah) Davini, and Nick (Mary) Davini; stepmother, Alice Johnson; mother-in-law, Virginia Davini; father-in-law, Ralph (Mary Pat) Davini; 14 nieces and nephews; and legions of friends and organizers he trained and inspired across the globe. Preceded in death by father, Lt. Col. Charles M. Johnson; mother, Jean; and sister, Susan Dambach.

Ed was born September 17, 1968 at Fort Hood, Texas, joining Susan, Jean, Holly and Mitchell as the second son and youngest child of Charles Mitchell Johnson, an Army Chaplain, and Jean Howie Johnson, a pianist. As a result of his father's army career, he moved frequently as a child, living in Texas, South Carolina, Kansas, and New York, ultimately settling in Virginia and graduating from Colonial Heights High School, where he was Class President. It was during these teenage years that Ed developed his love for cycling. In 1984, he easily won the Virginia state 15 and under road race and traveled to New Hampshire to compete at Nationals. The following year, Ed secured a spot on the Fanini junior racing team, which became the winningest junior

team in the country in his first season. During his tenure with the team, Ed secured a number of victories in key races up and down the East coast, traveled with the team to race in Italy, and demonstrated the qualities he would become known for throughout his life: intelligence, ambition, leadership and a sense of humor.

Ed went on to attend Duke University in Durham, North Carolina, where he was a member of the Alpha Tau Omega Fraternity and the Cameron Crazies. His passion for Duke athletics, pride in its academic excellence, and ability to offer data-driven soliloquies on both were unmatched. It was here he cultivated his love of politics and environmental concerns, graduating from the Sanford School of Public Policy in 1990.

After graduation, Ed joined the staff of the Fund for the Public Interest, part of The Public Interest Network, beginning a 30-year career in fundraising for progressive causes and environmental advocacy. From 2007 on, Ed directed all of the Network's grassroots fundraising and membership recruitment - ranging from protecting the Clean Air Act, to preserving our nation's forests, to reducing our dependence on single use plastics - generating 6 million individual donations for 96 organizations. In 2017, Ed became president of Environment America, though perhaps his greatest professional legacy lies in the literally countless number of activists and organizers who he recruited, trained and inspired.

In December 1998, Ed and Annie were introduced by friends at a shared staff / alumni vacation in Colorado. Within a few sentences, Annie mentioned that she recalled him from previous brief meetings as "the funniest guy ever!" and the rest is history. They were engaged within weeks and married in August of 2000, as soon as Ed could move to Minnesota - just as anyone who falls in love with a St. Paulite needs to do. He was embraced by the city and the Davini family alike, becoming the left-wing rabble-rouser they loved, rather than the electrician they thought they needed.

Though raised primarily in the South and living most recently in sunny Santa Monica and steamy DC, Ed embraced his adopted northern home like no

other. He was St. Paul's biggest fan, never missing an opportunity to sing its praises or rail against Minneapolis, cajoling legions of hesitant friends and colleagues to visit and compete in distance running during the winter, and voluntarily taking on the heartache that is being a Twins and Vikings fan. Though a self-described "retired Methodist", he made occasional guest appearances and consistent contributions to St. Thomas More Catholic Church and was an inaugural booster of the St. Paul Baseball Club.

In June of 2005, Ed and Annie welcomed their first son, Augie, and 2 years later, their second, Louis. Balancing his professional ambitions with the desire to be fully present and engaged with his family was a true challenge, but one that Ed not only took on, but excelled at - even helping others to follow in his footsteps. His boys were his greatest pride and joy: Augie the sporty sidekick and Louis the quirky character, both as smart, funny and handsome as they could be, just like their dad.

In April 2007, when Annie was 5 months pregnant with Louis, Ed was diagnosed with Multiple Myeloma, an incurable cancer of the blood. From that day he fought with all his might (which anyone who tried to present a half-baked proposal to him knew was a lot) enduring 3 stem cell transplants, radiation, multiple other stem cell therapies, a CAR T-cell trial, and literally every FDA-approved drug for myeloma save two which, in the end, would have accelerated his demise rather than staved it off.

In 2008, Ed formed TEAM TIRED ("Ed is Tired of Cancer") to benefit the Multiple Myeloma Research Foundation's pursuit of a cure for not only himself, but for all of those stricken by the illness. With his involvement and fundraising prowess, the Twin Cities 5k flourished, and TEAM TIR(ED) expanded to include runners and teams from Los Angeles to DC and everywhere in between, raising awareness and over \$100k to fund critical research.

All of this he did for the people and the world around him. He wasn't a religious man, but he was faithful to his core. Faithful to his principles, faithful

to his work, faithful to his family and friends, faithful to his role on this Earth.
Let perpetual light shine upon him, and may he rest in peace forever.

Visitation 4-8 PM Mon, March 2 at HOLCOMB-HENRY-BOOM-PURCELL
FUNERAL HOME, Shoreview, MN. Funeral 11 AM Tues, March 3 with
visitation 90 min. prior at ST. THOMAS MORE CATHOLIC CHURCH, St. Paul,
MN. Private interment Calvary Cemetery.

In lieu of flowers, memorials preferred to support the children's education, or
to the MMRF.

Tribute Wall

CW

“ *Deepest sympathies and condolences Annie and family. Saint Paul and the world have lost a great one.*

Chip wandling - March 28, 2020 at 12:00 AM

JL

“ *So sad to lose a truly great guy!*

Jeff Lackey - March 04, 2020 at 12:00 AM

DW

“ *From our family to yours, we are very sorry for your loss. May you find comfort in a life well lived and the gifts Ed shared with the world.*
- The Walkers

Dan Walker - March 03, 2020 at 12:00 AM

SR

“ *Annie and family, My thoughts and prayers are with you during this difficult time. My God grant you peace and comfort. With my deepest sympathy. Sharon*

Sharon Shaw Rumans - February 22, 2020 at 12:00 AM

SF

“ *Our deepest sympathy to you and your family.*

Stephen and Andrea Faust - February 21, 2020 at 12:00 AM

CC

“ Ed, you were a wonderful nephew and devoted steward of the Earth. I remember when you were such a cute little boy - a precious gift to our family! I love you very much and look forward to seeing you again in the Abha Kingdom. Aunt Cindy



Cynthia Howie Carter - February 19, 2020 at 12:00 AM

CC

“ Ed, we will all miss you and look forward to reuniting in the Abha Kingdom. I remember when you were such a cute little baby and boy. You were a precious gift to our family! I love you very much! Aunt Cindy



Cynthia Howie Carter - February 19, 2020 at 12:00 AM

MS

“ Ed was an early mentor for me in my professional nonprofit journey. He was an inspiring, dedicated, pragmatic, principled, and joyful leader and friend. I celebrate his life and those who knew him best.



Matthew Shaffer - February 19, 2020 at 12:00 AM

GJ

“ Rest in peace, Ed. It was a long struggle, but worth it. Annie and the boys are a test to that. From your 90 year old aunt Grethe. Love to the family.



Grethe H. Johnson - February 19, 2020 at 12:00 AM

CG

“ Even though I had a rule that none of my daughters could date a damn dookie, he came close to one of them. He turned out to be more of a Carolina guy and I'm sure he's now in Blue Heaven. So sorry for your loss.

Charlie Gowen - February 19, 2020 at 12:00 AM

LB

“ I am one of what must be thousands of people that respected and loved Ed; one in a million of lives he touched. He hired me, trained me, inspired me and pushed me. He honestly demanded more from me during my time with him than I think I was capable of providing. But I think that speaks to his unshakable faith that the best way to effect positive change was relentless, dogged, tenacious commitment. So, though I was unable to continue as a canvass director under him, I can say, with so much self love and pride, that Ed still taught me the value of not giving up. Sometimes you find yourself, in some psychological state, or worse, a terminal pathophysiological state "dreaming the impossible dream, fighting the impossible fight," but when the chips are down and you've got a binary choice, you choose the not giving up path. Thank you Ed for choosing that path & for encouraging me to choose that path. Thank you to your amazing family, blood, avowed & chosen, for cradling your ability to positively affect so many people. We are your legacy.

Lindsay Eleanor Bilhorn - February 19, 2020 at 12:00 AM

LG

“ Never forget the day I met him. He came to our house which is full of Carolina stuff. He just laughed. Such a great guy. May he never suffer again.

Luisa Gowen - February 19, 2020 at 12:00 AM

JD

“*Annie, Augie, and Louis, my deepest sympathies for your loss. Keeping your family in our prayers, and praying for peace and comfort during the coming days and weeks.*”



Jenni Dam - February 18, 2020 at 12:00 AM