



## Mary Ellen Johnson

July 27, 2014

Johnson, Mary Ellen Born Jan. 23, 1933 in Mpls., passed away July 27, 2014 in Bemidji. Mary grew up in Mpls and graduated from Edison High School. She graduated with an MS in Biology from Bemidji State College. She was a Professor of Biology teaching classes at BSC. She also taught students at Choctaw Indian School in Philadelphia, MS. Mary Ellen was also an artist and an author. She studied at the Mpls Institute of Art doing mostly painting and illustration. She was known for her creative talents which were many and varied. She loved to design and make clothing and toys. She was a member of the family puppet troupe called The Animal Crackers Puppeteers. She wrote the show scripts, designed and made the puppets and props. She put on shows throughout the Midwest. She wrote, illustrated and published four books. Her first book was a family friendly guidebook to Bemidji. Her next book was a children's book called Baby Bigfoot. The third was about her and her family's experiences living in Philadelphia, MS during the late 1960's and early 1970's. Her latest book was a children's book about the family Saint Bernard. She was married to her husband Richard (Dick) for 62 years. Since 1985 they lived on a beautiful lake outside of Bemidji. Over the years they had developed many trails throughout their woodlands. Both Mary Ellen and Dick loved to be outdoors in their woods. It was their own special sanctuary. In her younger years she was very active enjoying biking and hiking. Mary even climbed Mount Hood in Oregon with Dick. While living in Mississippi, she was selected to appear in the 1971 edition of Personalities of the South.

Biographees chosen for this publication had contributed to the life of their community either by professional or civic activities. Mary loved dolls and stuffed animals. She collected many different types of dolls plus all kinds of stuff animals. Teddy bears were her favorite. Mary Ellen was a wonderful wife and mother. She will be dearly missed by her family and friends. She is survived by her husband, Richard; son, Gary (Sharon) Johnson; daughter, Marjorie (John) Smith; brother, Richard Nelson; brother-in-law, Eldon Johnson; and nieces and nephews. She was preceded in death by her daughter, Katherine; parents, Albert and Ethel Nelson; and brother, Milton Nelson. In lieu of flowers, memorials preferred to the First Lutheran Church Preschool Program (Bemidji, MN.) Mary Ellen was a member of First Lutheran Church in Bemidji. A memorial service for Mary Ellen is pending at First Lutheran Church. The Funeral will be officiated by Rev. James Vadis, retired senior pastor of First Lutheran Church in Bemidji. The services will be held 11:00 AM Friday, Aug. 1 with visitation one hour prior at: [www.Washburn-McReavy.com](http://www.Washburn-McReavy.com) Hillside Chapel 612-781-1999 2610 19th Ave NE, Mpls.