



Mary Lee Kathleen Johnson

August 5, 1937 - May 30, 2026

Mary Lee Johnson, age 88, passed away peacefully on May 30, 2026, surrounded by the love of her family and the legacy of a life devoted to faith, learning, creativity, and service to others.

Mary Lee Kathleen Arneson was born on August 5, 1937, on her family's farm in Cromwell Township, Clay County, near Hawley, Minnesota. She grew up alongside four sisters and one brother, developing the strong values of hard work, family, and community that would guide her throughout her life.

Following her graduation from high school, Mary Lee attended Moorhead State University, where she earned her teaching degree. She began her career teaching in East Grand Forks, Minnesota, and later taught in the Richfield Public Schools.

On December 19, 1964, she married her beloved husband and lifelong partner, Gerald Warren Johnson. Together they built a home centered on faith, family, and service. After their marriage, Mary Lee dedicated herself to raising their three children and creating a warm and welcoming home. She was actively involved in her children's schools, church, Bible studies, and neighborhood activities. Her leadership and creativity shone through in church drama productions, including Christmas pageants and Easter Passion plays that brought people together and strengthened community bonds. Mary Lee

was never one to sit idle, spending her days creating, serving, hosting friends and neighbors, and enjoying cross-country skiing well into her seventies.

A lifelong student of the arts and humanities, Mary Lee continually pursued creative projects and sewing. She was known for organizing arts and crafts projects that introduced her own children and countless neighborhood children to the joy of creating, learning, and expressing themselves through art.

After her children were grown, Mary Lee returned to education as a substitute teacher in the Bloomington Public Schools. She continued to share her talents and generous spirit with her grandchildren, creating treasured memories through activities, crafts, and hands-on learning experiences that reflected her enduring love of teaching.

Mary Lee was preceded in death by her beloved husband, Gerald Warren Johnson. Parents Truman and Katherine Arneson, sisters Lorraine Bradford and Inez Nelson.

She is survived by her sons, Karl Johnson and Paul Johnson; her daughter, Kristine Johnson and her spouse, Amy Christiansen; her brother, Dennis Arneson; her sister, Evonne Andersen; her grandchildren, Christian, Caitlin, and Payton; and eight great-grandchildren.

Mary Lee will be remembered for her gentle spirit, her devotion to family and faith, her love of learning, and the children she enriched through her teaching.

A funeral service will be celebrated June 13th, 2026 at 1:00 PM, at the Washburn-McReavy Bloomington Funeral Chapel, 2300 W. Old Shakopee Road, Bloomington, MN, with visitation starting at 12:00 PM.

In lieu of flowers, donations may be made to the Alzheimer's Association, ww

w.alz.org.

www.washburn-mcreavy.com

Werness Brothers Chapel 952-884-8145

Previous Events

Visitation

JUN 13. 12:00 PM - 1:00 PM (CT)

Bloomington Chapel
2300 W. Old Shakopee Road
Bloomington, MN 55431
(952) 884-8145
info@washburn-mcreavy.com

Memorial Service

JUN 13. 1:00 PM - 2:00 PM (CT)

Bloomington Chapel
2300 W. Old Shakopee Road
Bloomington, MN 55431
(952) 884-8145
info@washburn-mcreavy.com

Tribute Wall

BI

“ Dear Cousins, I have cherished memories of your mom, my Aunt Mary Lee. Her kindness, attention, and generosity were not just occasional gestures, they were a steady part of how she showed up in my life. From giving my first book of my own to remembering me with a gift I still have from her trip to Italy. Through thoughtful gifts and genuine encouragement, she (and Gerry) made me feel seen and special. Even more, she opened doors to new interests, experiences, that have shaped me, and continue to enrich my life to this day. And as importantly, she and Gerry were kind to the love of my life.

As we honor her life, we do so with thankfulness, but also with hope and confidence. Our belief in Jesus gives us the promise that death does not have the final word. While we grieve her loss, we look forward with assurance to the day we will see her again. Love Beth

Beth Nelson Iverson - June 12 at 06:41 PM

NK

“ Nicole K. planted a grove of 3 [Memorial Trees](/store/Product.aspx?ProductId=4518) in honor of Mary Lee Kathleen Johnson.

Nicole K. - June 12 at 04:58 PM



“ Serene Retreat was purchased for the family of Mary Lee Kathleen Johnson.



June 09 at 12:04 PM



“ A [Memorial Tree](/store/Product.aspx?ProductId=4518) was planted in honor of Mary Lee Kathleen Johnson.

June 09 at 12:04 PM



“ Dear Kristine—Sending prayers of support to you! I remember your mom as a sub at Hillcrest. She and Florence Smallfield were my favorite subs. Both didn't need a list of things to do - just a schedule for the day and I knew the class was in good hands. I remember your mom's smile most of all- that will be a treasure to remember. Love you!

Elizabeth Beissel - June 07 at 01:34 PM