



## Roger Thornton Johnson

August 26, 1938 - April 8, 2025

### Roger T. Johnson Obituary

New Brighton, MN - Dr. Roger T. Johnson Jr., beloved parent, spouse, grandparent and brother, passed away on April 8th, 2025, at the age of 86. Known by all who loved him for the twinkle in his eye, Roger was an optimist that woke up each day with joy in his heart and ready for his next adventure. His sense of adventure led him to travel the world with his family, sail his Flying Dutchman sailboat through the waters of Green Lake, drive across the country in his convertible Austin Healey Sprite to start his first teaching job at Walt Disney Elementary School in California, and then relocate to Denver so he could ski the mountains of Colorado.

While teaching in Denver he met and married his wife Anne, a fellow school teacher, in 1964. After a brief stop in Oakland, CA, where Roger earned a Doctorate in Science Education from the University of California at Berkeley, they moved to Minnesota in 1968 where they raised their three children. Roger and Anne shared a passion for travel and sports of all kinds. They loved cheering on the Gophers and almost never missed a Gopher basketball game.

Roger grew up in Muncie, Indiana (including several years on the family farm) with his parents, Roger Sr. and Francis, and his siblings: Frank, Helen, David, Edythe, Keith, and Dale. Roger got his love music from his mother Francis, who had Roger and his siblings singing along while she played the pipe organ in churches around Muncie. Roger developed a love of sports from his father. They especially loved playing golf together and both experienced the magic of hitting a "hole in one" during their lives. After high school Roger stayed in Muncie to attend Ball State University where he earned a Master of Education.

Roger devoted his life to education and a passionate belief that learning best happens in cooperative groups. He loved teaching kids as an elementary school teacher in California and Colorado in the 1960's and teaching adults as a Professor of Curriculum and Instruction at the University of Minnesota for nearly 50 years. He and his brother David W. Johnson wrote and published dozens of books on cooperative learning, which have been translated into 16 different languages. Together Roger, David and their sister Edythe Holubec traveled the world teaching educators about the power of group learning and how to effectively use cooperation in the classroom.

More than anything Roger loved his family and ensured they had adventures of their own. To his son Todd he passed on his love of playing music and skiing the Rocky Mountains, to his daughter Kristin he shared his passion for empowering others and love of travel, and to his son Jack he shared his creative spirit and love of sports. May Roger rest in peace knowing he is survived by his wife Anne, his three children, and five grandchildren: David,

Dillon, Jasper, Alice, and Ethan. We are incredibly grateful to have benefited from his unconditional love, wisdom, and joyful spirit.

Please join us to celebrate Roger's life on June 7th, 2025, at 11:30AM at the University Baptist Church in Minneapolis. In lieu of flowers please support your local school in Roger's memory.

# Tribute Wall



“ I met Roger and co in the 1980's and he became a friend and colleague and my total commitment to what he was fostering in Cooperative Learning. Before retiring from DODEA in 2002 I conducted classes in CL to DODEA educators and prqac5and practice in my classroom instruction to 11 and 12 year olds. Roger was truly a great person both in what he strongly believed in as as well as friend and colleague. I think of him often as he had made many changes in my way of working with children (people in general). Truly one of the great educators of our time. Bod Bless you Roger. Edward J Brennan EDD USC 1978

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**Edward Brennan** - March 09 at 11:33 AM

“ Well, Dr. Roger Johnson, I didn't have the opportunity to know you as my former friend and colleague Laurie Stevan did; however, you changed my life! Your AERA SIG on school violence prevention in Seattle, WA., gave me the opportunity to test my own dissertation work based in New Orleans, "School-wide Discipline in Urban High Schools." Since then, in 2001, I've moved to Alabama. I continue to remember you fondly as we search for solutions to prevent violence. I guess, in that regard, I continue as part of your GREAT LEGACY of scholarship and caring. Rememberance. Monty J. Thornburg, Ph.D. University of New Orleans.

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**Monty J. Thornburg** - January 07 at 11:52 AM