



## Fred Johnson Sr.

January 7, 1934 - January 13, 2019

Fred William Johnson, Sr. liked to tell his kids, “When the going get’s tough, the tough get going” and on January 13, 2019 Fred led by his own example to the very end and left this life as he lived it – strong and loved by countless people, especially his high school sweetheart and wife of 61 years, the former Peggy Sue Jordan. Fred was born in Beckemeyer, Illinois on January 7, 1934 in the middle of the Great Depression. His German grandparents raised him while his mother and father worked jobs throughout the state to make ends meet. Fred didn’t speak English until he was six years old. These two aspects of his childhood contributed to Fred’s resiliency and his immense fondness of talking to people. Fred Johnson never met a stranger. Once he learned English, he couldn’t stop creating conversations with everyone he met. The Johnson’s eventually moved to Centralia and his parents opened the Green Grill restaurant and later Johnson’s Drive In Liquor. Fred went to Irving grade school and then Centralia High School. A tremendous athlete, Fred earned varsity letters in basketball, football and track. He was the point guard on the 1954-55 Kaskaskia Junior College basketball team that was ranked in the top 10 in the nation. Fred was known for his smile, sense of humor and his genuine love for people. Johnson’s Drive Inn Liquor, the business he ran for 26 years, was extremely successful because he believed each individual person mattered. Fred worked hard and played hard whether it was on the basketball court during pick up games, playing poker at the Elks, earning extra money as a mail carrier with the US Post Officer, or as an entrepreneur

starting businesses out of his garage with Kay Chemical Company and Slot Car Race Track to supplement his income. And he was known (from time to time) to smoke stogies and share a beer with a Canadian Club and peppermint schnapps chaser with friends and tell stories while working the window at the liquor store. He was also an intense competitor who would not refrain from antics to throw off golfing opponents by saying things like, “Cats up a rat’s behind,” (or something to that effect) right before they putted. His children never beat him at a sporting event – ever – during Fred’s life. Service was important to Fred. He served his nation in the Army from 1955 to 57. He also served as a volunteer grade school basketball coach at Schiller and St. Mary’s schools. Fred was a member of the First Apostolic Church, Veterans of Foreign Wars, Moose and Elks. After selling Johnson’s Drive-Inn Liquor, Fred worked for Byrd Watson Drug Store delivering medicine to the elderly and those in need. Fred also bartended at the old “Sit’n Bull” bar on Popular Street from time to time just so he could hang out with his friends and tell stories. He passed a desire to serve to his kids. His daughter, Jan Brown, is a volunteer advocate for neglected and abused children and people with disabilities. His sons, Colonel Fred Johnson (USA, Retired) and LTC Theodore Johnson (USA, Retired), collectively served their nation for 54 years in the United States Army, deploying to a total six combat zones during their careers. Fred loved to sing the Battle Hymn of Republic, in a very poor imitation of Elvis, and from time to time he could be seen dancing by himself as he tended the garden he loved at the house he and Peggy made home on Raccoon Lake after he retired. Fred’s legacy continues through his children and his grandchildren Theo, Madelyn and Benjamin. When asked by his kids how he would like to be remembered, he said, quoting Frank Sinatra one of his favorite performers, “I did it my way.”

Visitation will be held on Thursday, January 17, 2019 at the Sutherland-Garnier Funeral Home, 235 North Sycamore Street, from 1:00 to 3:00 PM followed by a celebration of Fred’s life at Jerry’s Bigger Jigger at 835 Wabash

Avenue in Wamac from 4:00 PM until everyone is done and then we will probably walk over to McGuire's Bar and Grill for a night cap. A graveside service will be held at Hillcrest Memorial Park Cemetery, 2500 Old 51 Highway, at 3:00 PM on Friday, January 18, 2019 with Military Honors at the gravesite by the American Legion Post 446 and V.F.W. Post 2055. In lieu of flowers, memorial donations may be made to the V.F.W. Post 2055 and will be accepted by the Sutherland-Garnier Funeral Home in Centralia, who is honored to be of service to the Johnson family. Online Condolences may be made to the family by visiting [www.sutherlandfuneralhome.com](http://www.sutherlandfuneralhome.com).

Fred would say, "It's not the money or the toys that matter in the end; it's the number of good stories you can tell." Come and join us and share those stories that made Fred Johnson a very rich man.

# Cemetery Details

## Hillcrest Memorial Park

2500 Old Highway 51 North  
Sandoval, IL 62882  
hcmp1921@aol.com  
<http://www.sutherlandfuneralhome.com>

# Previous Events

## Visitation

JAN 17. 1:00 PM - 3:00 PM (CT)

Sutherland-Garnier Funeral Home and Cremation Services  
235 N Sycamore St  
Centralia, IL 62801  
(618) 532-3523  
headsutherland@aol.com  
<https://www.sutherlandfuneralhome.com/>

# Tribute Wall



“ *Sutherland Funeral Homes, Cemetery and Cremation Services created a Webcast in memory of Fred Johnson Sr.*

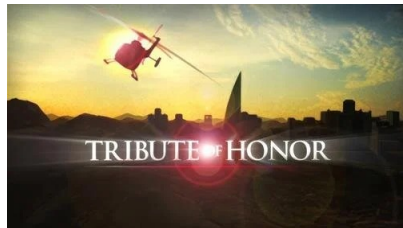


---

**Sutherland Funeral Homes, Cemetery and Cremation Services** - January 17, 2019 at 02:04 PM



“ *Sutherland Funeral Homes, Cemetery and Cremation Services created a Tribute Video in memory of Fred Johnson Sr.*



---

**Sutherland Funeral Homes, Cemetery and Cremation Services** - January 15, 2019 at 07:46 PM

RB

“ *I always loved Fres as a parent. When it came time to enroll his kids, he sat with patience for everyone else to go first. He played basketball with our teachers. He invited us to his parties. He ALWAYS was a super father! He as a great man. The world will miss him and anyone that can compare. --- Richard Baker, teacher of all 3 of his children*

---

**Richard Baker** - January 19, 2019 at 08:35 PM

BK

“ *Peggy and Family, we are so sorry on the passing of Freddie, and pray for your family during this time. —Patrick and Barbara Kyker*

barbara kyker - January 18, 2019 at 09:54 PM

BL

“ *Fred was a hard worker and a fun person. i know he will be missed by his family and his friends.*

bob logullo - January 17, 2019 at 09:11 PM



“ *Divine Peace Bouquet was purchased for the family of Fred Johnson Sr..*



January 17, 2019 at 07:34 PM

ML

“ *Mary Ann (Monken) Long*



Mary Long - January 17, 2019 at 01:56 PM

 Mark  
Jenkins

“ *Sorry for your loss. The pictures bring back many memories on the basketball court and running around the neighborhood. Fred made us all better.*

Mark Jenkins - January 17, 2019 at 01:21 PM

JF

“ All are in our thoughts & prayers. So very sorry for your loss. I always enjoyed going through the drive thru, it was an honor sir,thank you for your service.God Bless.



Janet Finley-Huffman - January 17, 2019 at 02:52 AM

RF

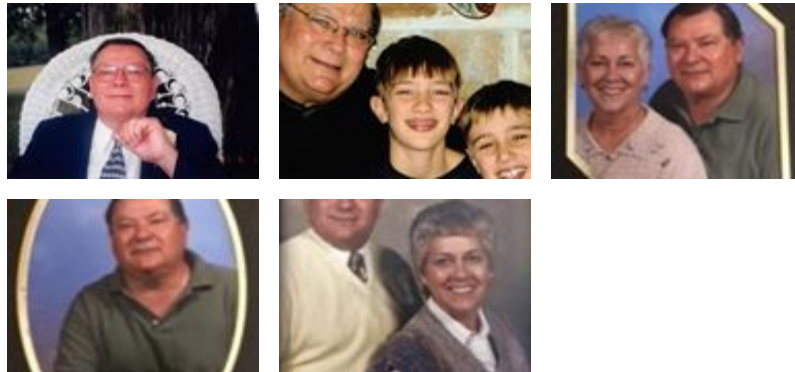
“ I am so very sorry to hear of Freddy passing and you have our deepest sympathy. I have known all of you since our children went to school together and what a wonderful family you are. I am so very sorry.

*Ruth Ann Friend and family.*

Ruth Ann Friend - January 16, 2019 at 11:36 PM



“ 144 files added to the album LifeTributes



Sutherland Funeral Homes, Cemetery and Cremation Services - January 15, 2019 at 06:37 PM

DK

“ We are so sorry to hear about Fred and know that your years together were so blessed. We pray for your comfort and peace as God embraces you with his love. You and the kids have so many precious memories to keep him close. Our condolences and love, David and Cheryl

David and Cheryl Killion - January 15, 2019 at 06:28 PM



“ Simply Elegant Spathiphyllum was purchased for the family of Fred Johnson Sr..



January 15, 2019 at 05:19 PM



“ Simply Elegant Spathiphyllum was purchased for the family of Fred Johnson Sr..



January 15, 2019 at 03:09 PM

VM

“ Hello Jan,  
This is Victoria Stover Migliore from Columbia Missouri. Sorry to hear about your dad.  
Know that my prayers will be with you.

Victoria Stover Migliore - January 15, 2019 at 01:44 AM



“ *Full Of Love Bouquet was purchased for the family of Fred Johnson Sr..*



---

January 14, 2019 at 07:51 PM



“ *Beautiful in Blue was purchased for the family of Fred Johnson Sr..*



---

January 14, 2019 at 07:20 PM