



**HAROLD JAMES JOHNSON**

Former California and Arkansas resident, Harold James Johnson, 95, died peacefully on November 24, 2013, at his longtime home in Payson, AZ.

Harold, born June 4, 1918, is survived by Geneva Johnson, his loving wife of 52 years; daughters, Diane Layton, Sharon Medlicott, and Katy Johnson; grandsons, Dominic Johnson, Kirk Hansen, Erik Hansen, and Christian Hansen; five great-grandchildren, Ava, Tate, Sophia Kirky, Hansen and Reef Johnson; and a sister, Martha Munday.

Johnson's father, August, came from Norway by way of the Equator, where the ship was stuck and the rations low. August Johnson fell in love with America and worked hard to make Lancaster, CA home. Tragically, when Harold was 12-years old, his father died, leaving behind a young wife, Hilda, and three children.

During the economic hardship of the 1930's, Harold was sent to live with relatives at an early age and had myriad jobs, large and small. He worked on his uncle's chicken ranch, bailed hay, and mined gold.

As a mid-teen, Johnson was off and running. He continued a series of interesting jobs, such as sanding floors, pumping gas, and mining gold and tungsten.

During World War II, Harold applied his knowledge and self-taught engineering skills to the wartime ship-building business at Marinship in San Rafael and Sausalito, Ca. Harold was General Foreman of ship launching that specialized in Mission Class 10,500 ton oil tankers. In 1944 Harold joined the U.S. Merchant Marines and as a ship's carpenter, traveled during wartime, delivering sorely-needed rations and supplies all over the world.

When the war was over and he returned to civilian life, he became interested in hard rock water well drilling. He was a natural at hard rock drilling and had ingenious ways to access water from the hard granite rock of California. He was often rebuffed by others by declaring water was in the fractures of hard rock formation underground, and drilling down through alluvial to hard rock granite, then drilling laterals would produce a reliable water source. This idea gave birth to Johnson Drilling Company in Fresno, Ca. While Johnson has since sold his company, the Johnson name remains.

At age 55, Johnson retired on a 400-acre working cattle ranch in Huntsville, Ark. He loved this life and increased his herd to 100 cows. After a few years, he downsized his beef herd and started a Grade A dairy.

Eight years later, he sold his dairy cows and built two chicken/broiler houses and raised chickens for Tyson Co. During that time, he also started rebuilding his beloved cattle herd.

At age 76, Johnson retired the second time to Payson, a small town in high-desert Arizona. Harold always kept himself busy with projects. He decided to dig a cistern to catch the rainwater for irrigation from the house/garage roofs. So, with shovel and a steel bar, he began digging. A little over two years later, this cistern measured 26 feet deep and 10 feet in diameter.

**Harold Johnson, we miss your no-nonsense straight talking, honest and direct way of looking at life.**

## Harold James Johnson Obituary

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