



Pat (McLennan) Johnson

She passed away on May 3, 2013 in Bozeman Montana. An intestinal blockage problem along with some other longer term issues got worse and there was no further treatment possible.

The decline that caused her death began last November with major surgery for ulcerative colitis. She fought valiantly for the past six months, but it was not to be.

Wally her husband is heartbroken at losing the love of his life and partner of 58 years.



Patricia Mary (McLennan) Johnson (1934 - 2013) - Obituary

Patricia Mary Johnson (nee McLennan) passed away on Friday, May 3, 2013 at the Acute Care Hospital in Billings; her husband, son Mark and his wife Lorie were at her side. Death was caused by complications associated with surgery six months earlier. Pat was born in Chicago on Nov. 23, 1934, the daughter of Earl and Teresa McLennan, and the youngest of three sisters. Only Pat grew to adulthood as her two siblings died tragically early in life.

As a beautiful young lady, Pat married Wally Johnson her high school sweetheart and soul mate on July 9, 1955. The two went on to forge an inseparable relationship that was steadfast for the nearly 58 years they shared love and life together.

From grade school on, Pat was a gifted artist. Pre-marriage, she studied at the Art Institute of Chicago, post-marriage the couple moved to Michigan State University where Wally was majoring in wildlife biology. During that period Pat was employed as a graphic designer by the University and took art classes part-time. In 1957, Pat and Wally headed west to Washington State University where he embarked on graduate work leading to a doctorate (Zoology) in 1963. Over those years, Pat was the primary breadwinner working as a graphic designer in the WSU Publications Department, and again taking classes part-time.

From 1963 to 1965 they lived in Gunnison, Colo., where Pat devoted her time to raising their son Mark, and continuing her coursework at Western State College (now University) where Wally was teaching. At the end of the school year in 1965, the couple moved to Minnesota where ultimately they spent almost all of their professional lives. For several years Pat was the graphic artist at KFME (PBS television) in nearby Fargo, she then joined the Publications Department at Moorhead State College (now University) where Wally was a biology professor. Eventually, Pat rose to become Director of Publications, the position from which she retired. Along the way, another son, Lee, was born, and as usual there were more part-time classes. The latter finally culminated in a well-deserved BA (Graphic Arts) degree that she proudly received from Moorhead State in 1987. Retirement came in 1990 with a long anticipated move to Montana where the Johnsons had often vacationed and for a time owned a wilderness cabin on the North Fork of the Flathead River.

For many years (both pre- and post-retirement), Pat was Wally's partner in ecological research involving birds. They developed a profound interest in the incredible transoceanic migrations of Pacific Golden-Plovers, a bird that winters across the tropical Pacific and nests in Alaska and Siberia. The couple led a multi-faceted project (variously funded by such agencies as the National Geographic Society, Hawaii Department of Wildlife, and the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service) that lasted for over three decades and produced extensive new knowledge of migratory pathways over a vast portion of the globe. Their studies required periods of fieldwork at various locations from Alaska southward to Hawaii, Samoa, and Saipan. Many volunteers in Hawaii and elsewhere assisted in the project including Pat's dear friends the late Shirley Gaisford and her daughter Kelly, from Bozeman. Notably, Shirley passed away only two days after Pat and of similar causes.

She is survived by her husband, Oscar (Wally) Johnson of Bozeman; children, Mark (Lorie) Johnson of Bozeman, Lee (Setsuko) Johnson of Bellevue, Wash.; grandchildren, Kristen Johnson of Portland, Ore., Kai Johnson of Bellevue, Wash.; and great-grandchild, Madison Johnson of Portland, Ore.