



## Ronald L. "R.J." Johnson

May 20, 1934 - April 7, 2022

Ronald L. "R.J." Johnson, 87, of Crystal Falls, passed away on Thursday, April 7, 2022 at the Iron County Medical Care Facility.

Ron was born May 20, 1934 in Marquette, MI, son of the late Arne and Helen (Fosmo) Johnson. He graduated from Graveraet High School in Marquette, MI where he played hockey, basketball and football. He had a full scholarship to play hockey at Michigan State University but chose to attend Northern Michigan University because his mother was dying of breast cancer and wanted to be close to her. During his attendance at NMU, he played four years of football and was captain of the football team his senior year. He also met the love of his life, Carol, at NMU. He went on to receive his Master's in Education at the University of Michigan in Ann Arbor.

On June 14, 1958, Ron was united in marriage to Carol Eckola and the two shared 63 years together. Ron worked in several school districts prior to taking a position with the Forest Park School District as High School Principal and Athletic Director from 1970 until 1981, and then became the guidance counselor at Forest Park until his retirement in 1989. Ron enjoyed hunting, fishing and spending time with his family. He was an avid sports fan and enjoyed watching his grandchildren play sports.

Although Ron was an extraordinary athlete, Ron's life and memory are not

defined by sports. Those who worked with Ron and those that were close to him knew him best for his honor, integrity and compassion. For others, he was at times a source of support and relief in their times of troubled waters. The lives he influenced in a positive way, especially young lives, will never be matched. He was an old school educator with compassion and understanding that you could trust and rely on. He was unique in every way. Unknown to him as a young teacher, his decision to work at Forest Park would lead to the creation of an extended family that would not exist today without his influence.

Left to cherish his memory are his wife, Carol; son, Aaron (Jean) Johnson of Ironwood; daughters, Lori (Mike) Betti of Iron Mountain, Katrina (Dave) Anderson of Aurora, WI and Julie (Emil) Kezerle of Iron River; grandchildren, Brittany (Abe) Khoury, Matthew Johnson (Jess), Ryan (Torina) Hendershott, Chelsea (Jamey) McCole, Korie (Bob) Reid and Connor Kezerle; and great-grandchildren, Haley, Raelynn, Ryan, Zoey, Aubree, Easton, Brogan, and Layla.

In addition to both of his parents, Ron was preceded in death by his sister, Janet Melka and his brother, Lowell Johnson.

Private family services will be held at a later date. Burial will be in Marquette Cemetery Park.

Condolences may be expressed to the family of Ronald L. Johnson online at [www.ernashfuneralhomes.com](http://www.ernashfuneralhomes.com)

The family has entrusted the Erickson-Rochon and Nash Funeral Home of Iron Mountain with the arrangements.

# Cemetery Details

## **Marquette Cemetery Park**

301 N. 7th Street  
Marquette, MI 49855

# Tribute Wall

MG

“ *My thoughts to the family. Mr. Johnson was Principal when I graduated ( 1971). He was very fair to all students. I would see him occasionally in Iron Mt. walking in the mall or in later years at Bingo at ICMCF. He always remembered me by name which is remarkable considering how many students he met. He will be missed.*

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**Mary Gagala** - April 13, 2022 at 09:24 AM

KP

“ *My thoughts and prayers are with you all. I attended St. Luke's with Carol and we all knew Ron and thought he was a great guy. I last saw them about a year and ten months ago at the care facility and caught up with them on their walk. Glad for that lasting memory.*

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**Kay Price** - April 12, 2022 at 07:21 PM

BB

“ *I babysat for the children of Ron & Carol Johnson during my senior year at Forest Park.  
I lived a block away so Mr. Johnson would walk me home when I was done. I was so moved by that at the time. He was such a kind gentleman.  
My sympathy to the family. To Ron: job well done! Bev*

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**Beverly Broad** - April 11, 2022 at 01:45 PM