



Willard M. Johnson

June 27, 1925 - November 30, 2025

NORFOLK -- Celebration of Life Memorial Service, in honor of Willard M. and Mardell J. (Burdick) Johnson of Norfolk, NE, will be held on Saturday, March 28, 2026, at 10:30am, at the Stonacek Funeral Chapel in Norfolk, NE.

Inurnment will be held at Prospect Hill Cemetery in Norfolk. Pastor Tim DeFor will be officiating the services. Military rites will be provided by the American Legion Post 16, V.F.W. Post 1644 of Norfolk, and the United States Army Honor Guard. Visitation will be held one hour prior to the services. The service will be livestreamed on Stonacek Funeral Chapel website at: <https://www.stonacekfuneralchapel.com/obituaries/willard-johnson-12/#!/PhotosVideos> Willard passed away on November 30, 2025. Mardell passed away on August 11, 2025. They both had been residing at the Countryside Nursing Home in Madison, NE, at the times of their passing. Willard and Mardell were residents of Norfolk throughout the entirety of their 78 yearlong marriage.

Willard was born June 27, 1925, in Sterling, Colorado, to Curt and Edith (Anderson) Johnson. He graduated High School in 1943, enlisted in the US Army Air Corp the same year. Mardell was born on February 25, 1926, in Stuart, Nebraska, to Gail and Martha (Kaplan) Burdick. When Mardell was small, they moved to Creighton, Nebraska, for a short time. When she was a teenager they moved to Neligh, Nebraska, where she graduated from Neligh High School in 1944. In 1946 she went to Sioux City, Iowa, and entered the Cadet Nurses Training program.

In early 1946 the Corp took Willard to Sioux City, Iowa, for some specialized training. He and a buddy met Mardell and a friend while in line for tickets to a movie. Willard and Mardell began dating, then were quickly engaged to be married just as Willard was shipped out to Siam, Thailand. He was honorably discharged in December 1946, and continued to court Mardell through early 1947. They were married in Stuart, Nebraska, on June 22, 1947.

The young couple moved to Norfolk, Nebraska, in 1948 where they began a family. Willard worked for Jacobson Appliance Co., until about 1972 when he began to work as Maintenance Supervisor at Sherwood Medical, (now Cardinal Health) where he retired in 1991. Mardell worked at home with their 5 children until 1964 when she began working in the community. She was an office receptionist for a local dentist until 1970, then she started as a sales assistant for Putters Jewelry in downtown Norfolk, where she also retired in 1991. They then spent their years traveling the country to visit Willards siblings, their children, grandchildren and friends. The Johnsons were devout members of First Christian Church where Mardell was involved with choir and women's group. Willard was involved with Gun Club, and gun collecting, had many friends with like interests and hobbies. In later years they became regular members at Norfolk YMCA, in Aqua Size class and walking the track. Through the entirety of their 78 yearlong marriage, Willard and Mardell lived only in Norfolk and formed many friendships.

They are survived by their children, Steve, of Birch Tree, Missouri; Stan, and partner Gene Baxter, of Little Rock, Arkansas; Lyle, of Norfolk; Rich, of Lincoln, Nebraska; Barb Chamberlin, and partner Jeff Novak, of York, Nebraska; 14 grandchildren and their spouses; 9 great-grandchildren; and 1 great-great-grandson.

Cards for the family may be sent to

Barb Chamberlin
123 Meadow View Dr, #18
York, NE 68467

Condolences may be expressed to the family on-line at www.stonacekfuneralchapel.com.

Previous Events

Visitation

MAR 28. 9:30 AM - 10:30 AM (CT)

Stonacek Funeral Chapel - Norfolk
1200 N.13th St.
Norfolk, NE 68701
(402) 371-7676
info@stonacekfuneralchapel.com
<https://stonacekfuneralchapel.com/>

Celebration of Life Service

MAR 28. 10:30 AM (CT)

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Tribute Wall



“ *Stonacek Funeral Chapel created a Webcast in memory of Willard M. Johnson*



Stonacek Funeral Chapel - March 28 at 09:58 AM



“ *Beverly Tiedgen Rath lit a candle in memory of Willard Johnson*



Beverly Tiedgen Rath - December 11, 2025 at 06:51 PM

BC

Thank you so much for this beautiful gesture, from Willards family

Barbara E Chamberlin - December 13, 2025 at 02:18 AM