



In Loving Memory
CELEBRATING A LIFE

FUNERAL SERVICE:

11:00 a.m., Wednesday, January 6, 2016
First Presbyterian Church
Miller, South Dakota

OFFICIATING: Rev. Brian Jones

CASKETBEARERS:

Matt Cavenee - Ryan Hegg - Randy Johnson
Greg Droz - Clay Duxbury - Tim Graham

HONORARY CASKETBEARERS:

Grandsons
Cole & Mark Cavenee
Sawyer & Kale Hegg

PIANIST: Janet Fritzsche

MUSIC SELECTIONS:

"The Day God Called You Home"
"When I Get Where I'm Going"

Hope Strength

Arrangements Entrusted To Reck Funeral Home - Miller, South Dakota
www.familyfuneralhome.net



In Loving
M E M O R Y

Neal Aaron Johnson

November 24, 1953 - January 1, 2016



Neal's Story: A Tale in Love, Life, and Laughter

Neal Aaron Johnson was born November 24, 1953 to Wallace and Darlene Johnson in Miller, SD. After courageously battling cancer, Neal found triumphant peace with the Lord on January 1, 2016.

Though his 62 years on Earth are denoted by a dash, Neal's life will forever be measured by far more.

A rancher, fisherman, and hunter, Neal lived his life fully with a strong head and a soft heart. He was a competitive soul with a tenacious drive for quality and toughness—traits you could see whether he was driving a race car, building a cow herd, or fighting cancer.

You could count on his truth even when it hurt, and you could count on his love even when he couldn't express it.

To his parents, Neal was a dedicated son carrying on a family tradition. To his older brother Craig and younger sisters Brenda and Kim, Neal was a protector and an instigator, often reminding them he "smiled because he was their brother and laughed because there was nothing they could do about it."

After attending country school in South Hand and graduating from Miller High School in 1972, Neal enrolled at SDSU. He returned to the family farm after one semester. Neal once said, "This ranch is where I've always wanted to be. My goal from the beginning has been to be on the land and share what we've built with kids and grandkids."

He was not meant to build a future alone, and on March 22, 1975, Neal married Janet Holt in Orient, SD. He dubbed his wife the best help around and called her patience—with both him and animals—"simply amazing". For just over 40 years, the pair worked alongside Wally and Darlene to create a legacy for their family. Over all their other success, Neal called the couple's three girls, Stephanie, Melissa, and Ashley, "their greatest accomplishment."

Neal's boisterous laugh, dry humor, and contagious smile will be missed. His gruff voice when you'd done wrong will be remembered. His appreciation for life's finery will be cherished. His affinity for a good joke, buttered lobster, a wild beard, wind pants and untied tennis shoes will never be forgotten.

The void left by Neal's absence will be felt deeply by all who continue to love him, including: parents Wally & Darlene and wife Janet; daughters Stephanie (Matt) Cavenee of Bonesteel, Melissa (Ryan) Hegg of Madison, and Ashley Johnson of Watertown; grandsons Cole & Mark Cavenee and Sawyer & Kale Hegg; brother Craig (Louise) Johnson of Sioux Falls; sisters Brenda (Neil) Duxbury of Wessington and Kim (Jim) Petik of Keldron; uncles and aunts Lowell & Donna Droz of Miller, Mark & Bernadine Johnson of San Diego, Raymond Graham of Wichita, Carroll Morford of Highmore, and Betty Johnson of Kansas City; brothers-in-law Theron Holt and Warner Holt of Orient and Lyle Nichols of Palisade, CO; sister-in-law Mary (Bob) Roesler of Hotchkiss, CO plus many nieces, nephews, great-nieces and nephews, cousins, and friends.

Awaiting Neal in Heaven were his paternal and maternal grandparents, uncles and aunts Clemmet & Vivian Johnson, Earl Johnson, Margaret Morford, Jerrold & Irene Johnson, Harold Johnson, Mary Graham, special cousin Laura Eskandarion, parents-in-law Sheldon & Mabel Holt, and sister-in-law Phyllis Nichols.

In his own words, Neal reminds us not to get lost in the sorrow of death but to live in the hope of life: "Calving has to be my favorite time of year. It's a new beginning. Things aren't always good. Sometimes, bad stuff goes down. But, seeing those baby calves hit the ground reminds me there's always a new day, a new start and always something to be grateful for."

