

# Our Family News Letter

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## Marjorie Jean Johnson 23 Jul 1929 - 27 Jun 2010



### **Marjorie Jean (Heck) Johnson**

Marjorie Jean Johnson, a resident of Torrance, California, passed away on Sunday, June 27, 2010. She died peacefully in her home with her family at her side. She was born in Racine, Wisconsin, in 1929. Marjorie was a member of St Lawrence Martyr Church. Marjorie



### **Marjorie (Heck) Johnson and Donald Johnson on 15 November 1952.**

was a loving wife, ever-present mother, and dotting grandmother. She dedicated her life to God and her family. She loved to cook, knit, and spend time with her grandchildren. Marjorie is survived by her Husband, Donald Johnson; Sons, Jerald (Michele) Johnson and Laurence (Elaine) Johnson and Daughters Linda (Todd) Niepke and Janice (Tom) Schlesinger and grandchildren, Jessica Scheper, Sean Johnson, Carrie and Mark Johnson, Matthew and Mikaela Schlesinger, and Joseph, Jonathan, Anthony, Anna, David, and Miriam Niepke. Marjorie leaves behind 5 brothers-Richard (Cel) Heck, Larry Heck, Robert (Lorraine), Clarence (Mary), Eugene (Carol) and 4 sisters Delores (Bernie) Kunka, Shirley Heck, MaryKay (Dave) Hansen,

and Donna (Al) Benedict. She was preceded in death by her parents, Clarence and Frances Heck. A gathering of family & friends will be held at Rice Mortuary on Thursday, July 1, 2010 from 7:00pm to 9:00 pm. The Rosary Service will begin at 7:00pm. The Funeral Service will be held at St. Lawrence Martyr Church on Friday, July 2, 2010 at 10:00 AM. In lieu of flowers, donations may be made to the American Cancer Society.

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**Marjorie Heck was the flower girl at my parent's wedding on 29 June 1935. Marjorie, seated in front of her father, Clarence, was 5 years, 11 months, and 6 days old.**

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## **Summary of the Eulogy at the Mass Celebrating Marjorie's Life by her sister Shirley Heck**

Marjorie's beautiful life provides us with a life-long legacy of many treasured memories. Instead of storytelling, I've chosen to focus on the wonderful qualities that Marge has demonstrated throughout her life--- qualities that will continue to serve as an inspiration to all of us.

As Christians, we know that a major purpose in our life's journey is to prepare for our eternal life with God. Marge's life reflected her preparation for eternal life in many ways. One example was how much she valued family life.

Because of her love for family, can't you just visualize the kind of reunion she had when mom

and dad and Don's parents and other relatives welcomed her into her heavenly home? Over the last few days, I envision Marge updating all her relatives on Don's unconditional love, kindness, and, unwavering care and thoughtfulness. I can hear her talking about her children's successes in life and the wonderful stories about her Grandchildren whom she loved so dearly.

With his well-known sense of humor, Don said he envisions Marge finding a kitchen where she could make the most luscious dinner God ever had. He was only sorry he wasn't there with Marge to do the dishes.

Margie's love for family was reaffirmed during our many phone calls and the letters that she wrote. After each of the calls and letters, I felt I could write another chapter in a book about her devoted family.

Another distinctive quality of Marge was her belief in the power of prayer. Even during her courageous struggle with cancer, she never complained and always expressed her appreciation for our prayers and the novenas and masses we had offered for her. Several days before she entered her eternal life in heaven, I said to her "We all love you and are praying for you." She very faintly whispered, thank you ----a thank you that I will never forget.

As the oldest sister in our family of 10, Marge set the expectation bar very high for herself and for all of us. Even mom would say once in a while: "Marge would never do that; she would never stay out so late as her two youngest daughters do." Even the nuns at St. Catherine's High School, where Marge had such a sterling reputation, would comment to me that Marge would never do some of the things her younger sisters do.

The very fact that all Marjorie's sisters and brothers along with four spouses are in attendance here today shows what a great influence Marge had on all of us.

I asked each of my brothers and sisters to give me three adjectives that described Marge. Be-

cause of time constraints, I only selected one or two from each person's list. Since Dick was only a year older than Marge, he is the only one I am going to identify since his first response was "my playmate, my dish washing partner; and my mentor because Marge often helped me with my homework;" Dick tells the story how the nun at St. Catherine's asked Dick a question. Marge, who sat next to him in class, moved her homework sheet over to him so he could read the answer. When Dick finished reading the answer, the nun said "thank you, Marge!"

Other responses about Marge's qualities included: daddy's girl, lovable, skinny, religious, world's cleanest housekeeper, caring, positive attitude; same qualities like mom--- shy yet so thoughtful, an expert in embroidering and crocheting, hair rollers, molasses cookies, mom's brown eyes, always a smile, no smoking, no chicken, a masterful cook, love you honey; outstanding letter writer and beautiful handwriting. When I asked what "no chicken" meant, I was told the boys would go out on Saturday night and kill the chicken from our miniature city farm for our Sunday dinner. Sometimes they would even chase Marge around with the chicken. Once Marge saw them kill the chicken, she would never eat chicken at home again.

I am confident that our treasured memories of Marge will be kept alive in the hearts of all of us as we reflect frequently on the way Marge lived life and the many qualities that made her so special as a wife, a mother, a grandmother, our big sister, and, as a friend. Let us take comfort in our precious memories and in knowing that we can't even begin to imagine the joy, the happiness and the peace that Marge is experiencing in her heavenly home.

Shirley Heck  
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## **Marj Johnson Memorial by her sister, Delores Heck Kunka**

My sister Marj has been an inspiration to me all of my life.

Her caring and loving ways, especially, her dedication to family, reminds me of our mom. Marj deserves the "Joy of Eternal Life" she now has. I pray that all of those I love will be able to share in this "joy".

I love you Sis, Rest in Peace.

Dee Kunka  
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**Larry, Marjorie, and Dick Heck in about 1934 at Racine, Wisconsin.**

*The following notes were transcribed from an interview of Marjorie Johnson that was conducted by her niece, Cheryl Ann Heck, on 6 June 2006 in Torrance, California.*

Marjorie remembered working at a Hospital in Racine, Wisconsin in the 1940s for 35 cents an hour. She said that was a lot of money back then for a young single teenager.

She remembered things that she liked in her single life. She remembered going to dances and movies with her girlfriends. She said that they got together a lot in those days.

When she was a little older she met Don Johnson at an Eagle's dance in Kenosha, Wisconsin. She liked his sense of humor, his patience, his good looks, but she pointed out that he was not that good a dancer.

When Don was asked how he met Marjorie, he stated that he saw this cute girl across the room at the Eagle's dance in Kenosha. He said that he started to walk over to ask her to dance when Marjorie tripped him. That was how they met according to the ever-humorous Don Johnson.

Marjorie laughed when she heard that fib. She went on to say that they had their first date the following week and married two and a half years later in 1952.

Marjorie was the first in her family to get married. She and Don were married at Sacred Heart Catholic Church in Racine. They had a huge reception at Roma Lodge with many friends and family attending. They went to New York for their honeymoon and spent a week seeing the Statue of Liberty, Musicals, and Broadway Stage Shows. They had to borrow her Dad's car as they didn't have a car of their own.

The newlyweds lived in a lower flat in Racine. They didn't have many furnishings when they started out. One item was a couch that they purchased new. Marjorie and Cheryl were sitting on that same couch in Torrance for the interviews 4 years later. They had the old couch refinished twice during that 54-year period. Their first child, Jerald, was born in 1953 in Racine. Marjorie went on to say that he was just a small baby when they moved to California. They had an older car at that time and her dad, Clarence, said that they would never make it that far with that old car. They did arrive in California without a break down on the way but the car finally broke down just as they arrived in Torrance. The Police stopped them because the car was overloaded with their possessions so much so that they could hardly see out the back window.

Their three other children were all born in California: Laurence in 1956, Janice in 1962, and

Linda in 1967. The best thing about her pregnancies was that her mother came out to California to help. The first time was by train and the last two were by airplane. It took a bit of convincing to get her to fly.

When asked about vacations, Marjorie said that most of their vacations were back in Racine, Wisconsin to visit their families. They tried to do that as often as they could. She always enjoyed visiting with her Wisconsin family.

For local vacations they would often go to the beach in California. She remembered that they spent a lot of time with school events, going to the beach, and little league baseball. It really kept them busy.

Marjorie was very proud of her children and her grandchildren. She stated that her goal was to give the kids a good start in life. She said that she was blessed to have so many grandchildren. She liked being a grandmother especially when the grandchildren were little.

Marjorie loved to bake, do scrap booking, crafts and embroidering.

The entire interview took about two hours.



**L-R: Larry, Bob, Dick, Marjorie with  
Grandma Margaret (Henningfeld) Heck holding  
Joanne Heck in about 1937.**

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The photo below is a computer-altered picture from the funeral luncheon in Torrance, California. From L-R: Shirley Heck, Delores Kunka, Dick Heck, Don Johnson, Bernie Kunka, Bob Heck, Dave Hansen, Larry Heck, Loraine Heck, Gene Heck, Mary Kay Hansen, Donna Benedict, Clarence Heck and Mary Heck.

The altered portion of the photo was placing Don, Bernie, and Loraine in the photo and adding Larry facing forward. All of the images were taken on the same day at the funeral luncheon.

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**My Sister Marjorie**  
**By her brother, Bob Heck**

My sister Marjorie! Marjorie being the first girl in the family became "Daddy's Girl". She also was the first when old enough to do the kitchen chores and dishes. She always said, "Why can't the boys help?"

She slept in the same bed as Grandma Pier. She always looked out after Grandma. She was al-

ways as skinny as a rail.

I believe as our family grew we became less close to a single brother or sister. We were more just a family. I went away for four years to high school and in so doing missed out on many major events in Marjorie's life.

Having all nine remaining brothers and sisters at Marjorie's funeral indeed tells the story of our family!

Brother Bob Heck

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**Memory of Marj**  
**By her brother, Larry Heck as told to his daughter, Joan Thompson**

His memory is that when they were kids, the family raised chickens in the backyard. He remembers that during the depression years they had chicken for the main meal on Sundays. Marj would refuse to eat the chicken, because they ran around the yard after having their heads cut off, and this upset her.

Brother Larry Heck



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**A few notes on Marjorie  
By her sister, Donna Benedict**

Just a few notes on my sister. As you already know she was a very sincere, honest, caring and wonderful sister. If everyone would live their lives like her the world would be a better place. She has a very close and loving family.

On a personal note, Marge named me Donna Jean which is her middle name Jean, and she is my godmother. She is definitely missed by all her family and friends.

Donna Benedict  
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***Photo below: Marjorie Johnson, with her parents, Clarence and Fanny Heck, after visiting with Uncle Bob & Aunt Mary Heck at 1306 Jones Avenue in Racine on 15 November 1952.***

***This photo along with several others were shared by Marjorie during a visit by Cheryl Heck.***



**Marjorie Johnson  
By her sister, Mary Kay Hansen**

It's just so hard, to say good-bye; Sometimes all we can do is cry. But my sister Marge is with the Lord; There's no more pain, she has been restored.

She would not want us to be too sad; Cause she is in heaven, with our Mom and Dad. Together they're walking on streets of gold; The memories we have should be cherished and told.

I don't remember much, from when I was small; She was so much older, after all. I do remember when, she paid me to clean; And that she was always kind; and never mean.

She always kept everything, in its place; Her hair would be done, and a smile on her face. She loved her family, most of all; Here are a few stories, which I recall.

When we came down for Jerry's wedding day; We were headed to church; and on the way. We wondered what people were pointing about; We laughed when we learned, Don's tie was hanging out.

We played miniature golf at Larry's place; We wondered if Marge could keep up pace. It turned out to be a lot of fun; And she was the only one, to get a hole in one.

One time Janice had a party in the park; It was for Mathew's birthday, and as it got dark; The mosquitoes came out, and Marge was a hit; she was the only one who was getting bit.

Another time, we went to lunch; With Linda and her adorable bunch. As they waved good-bye, it was the cutest sight; To see them all standing, lined up by height.

Over the years my sister, became my close friend; We talked every other week, and on her I could depend. She was always happy, and she never complained; No matter how sick she was, her grace always remained.

And Don I know that she'd want me to say; that she cherished you, in every way. She spent her life, loving you; She was always so grateful for all that you'd do.

We will always love her, and miss her too; But we'll see her again, and this is true. If we talk about the memories, they won't go away; And she'll live in our hearts, until that day.

Love,  
Your Little Sister,  
Mary Kay Hansen

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**Remembering Marjorie  
By her brother, Dick Heck**

Marjorie and I were in the same class in school. I sat right behind her. One time I was asked a question by the Nun. After a little squirming I answered the question, after which the Nun said, "Thank you Marjorie". Marjorie and I each received a bicycle for graduation from the 8<sup>th</sup> Grade. We would take long bike rides together. One time we rode all the way to Kenosha. We had five cents between us so we bought a pint of ice cream. The store manager was nice enough that he cut the pint in half and gave each of us a spoon.

Dick and Marjorie were born 16 months and a day apart, Dick in 1928 and Marjorie in 1929.  
Brother Dick Heck



L-R: Larry, Dick, Bob, Shirley, Dee, Marjorie



L-R: Delores, Shirley, Donna, Marjorie, Don, Mary Kay.



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Wedding luncheon held at Racine, Wisconsin on 15 November 1952. Close family members and the wedding party were included. A large wedding reception followed at Roma Lodge later that evening.



Marjorie's First Communion. L-R: Joanne, Alvin and Stella, Clarence Heck, Bernice, Frances, Margaret, Mary & Bob. Front L-R: Bob, Larry, Shirley, Dick, Delores, and Marjorie.

## Treasured Memories of Marjorie

### By her brother, Clarence (Junior) Heck

I am sending you some treasured memories of my Aunt Marje, told to me, by my Dad, Clarence (Junior) Heck. Since my Dad is not computer savvy, I am helping him out by sending the information.

"Back in the 40's, before T.V., we listened to the radio. Marje enjoyed 'The Hit Parade' (songs)."

"She worked at Kreske's Dime Store as a bookkeeper and at the end of the week, she would bring home the latest songs on 78rpm records, from 'The Hit Parade'. Marje was a great help to Ma raising the younger children."

I hope you can incorporate my Dad's, short, but sweet, memories of his beloved sister, Marje in the newsletter. By the way, Bob, you do a wonderful job of keeping the Heck-legacy alive with your newsletter. Thank you for all your hard work...it is much appreciated.

Sincerely,  
Debra Heck

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Thanks to all who contributed to the articles in this newsletter. Marjorie enjoyed reading and sharing Our Family News Letter and I'm sure that she will enjoy this issue as well. God bless you. Bob Heck