New Jersey News

William E. Johnson Passes at Age 84

Proud, pure, perfect and Republican, WILLIAM EDWARD JOHNSON, passed away on Saturday, September 3rd on his farm in Medford, NJ at the age of 84. Survived by his wife Bette of Medford, his brother Edward of Vermont, sister Maria of Florida, daughter Hille Baldyga and her husband Robert and sons Eric and his wife Karen and Peter and his wife Brenda all of Medford, NJ, Bill was the proud grandfather of nine grandchildren Amanda and Benjamin Baldyga, Leah, Gilbert, Olivia, Natalie, William S., Wesley, and James Johnson and one great-granddaughter Reese Baldyga. Born in Burlington, NJ, Bill was a lifelong resident of Burlington County. On February 14th 1953, Bill and Bette married after his service in the U.S. Navy and Army. Their love took root on a farm at the corner of Church and Hartford Road in Medford, NJ that Valentine's Day. Once they sold their first ear of sweet corn from a roadside wagon, their business sprouted into the famous Johnson's Corner Farm, a staple for produce and summer picnics in the local area. Many people cannot imagine an autumn without a trip to Johnson's for a wagon ride out to the fields to pick pumpkins and apples.

Late in life Bill's greatest love became watching people enjoy the farm from his porch as he sat in one of his handmade chairs.

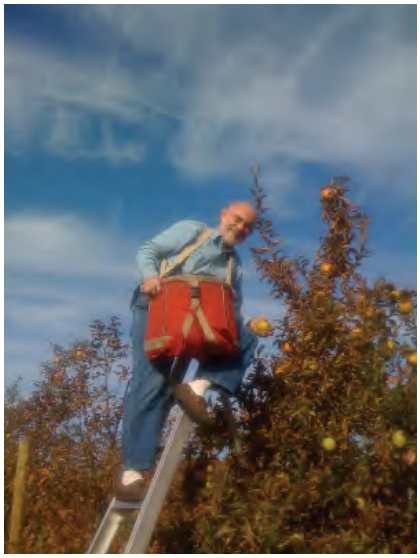
Bill proudly served as a member of a number of civic associations including the NJ State Agricultural Committee, the Burl Co. Board of Agriculture, the Medford-Vincentown Rotary Club, the South Park Deer Club, Saint Peter's Episcopal Church, the Medford Township Board of Education and the Masons. Bill attained a leadership role in each of these communities. Bill was a devoted member of the unofficial Medport Diner Breakfast Club, which fueled him for a hard day's work of tending crops and fixing tractors.

Farming is a tough career, but Bill enjoyed every grease stain and bead of sweat that came from his passion for painting the land with produce. Now he's busy paving heaven with golden ears of sweet corn.

In lieu of other expressions of sympathy the family requests memorial donations to the Medford-Vincentown Rotary Foundation, P.O. Box 365, Medford, NJ 08055.

Dave Johnson and His Master Gardener Fruit Team at Rutgers Snyder Farm Make a Difference

Win Cowgill
New Jersey Agricultural Experiment Station, Rutgers Cooperative Extension



At the Rutgers Snyder Research and Extension Farm, we have a large group of dedicated master gardener volunteers from the Rutgers Cooperative Extension programs of Hunterdon, Somerset, and Morris Counties. They have supported our research and extension programs for many years at the farm donating thousands of hours of service.

One group of these extraordinary volunteers is our Master Gardener Fruit Team, lead by Dr. Dave Johnson. Dave and his team have helped in all aspects of the establishment, maintenance, and harvest of my 14 acres of tree fruit research plots at Rutgers Sndyer Farm. We would be hard pressed to get all the chores completed without our MG Fruit Team support.

In 2010, one of my NC-140 apple rootstock blocks was discontinued, and we donated the block for use by our Master Gardener Fruit Team to produce apples for the many food banks that we support. Dave and his colleagues' pruned and trained this mature block of Gibson Golden Delicious. They hand thinned the fruit, and assisted in removing the perennial weeds. The team replanted the block with new trees to fill in where there was some tree loss. Synder Farm maintained the block with pesticides, PGRs, and irrigation as needed.

2011 Harvest for our Food Banks
Dave's Team Makes a Difference

This week, Dave and his team harvested 5,500 pounds (5 bins) of Gibson Golden Delicious. They were picked into cardboard vegetable bins and were off to the NORWESCAP organization for distribution to the needy the next day. The harvest team consisted of master gardeners Gail Brock, Delores Damiano-Szafran, Charles Rannells, Barbara Harris, Bruce Hoffmann, George Crofts, Kim Goodwin, and Mary

Bowers.

Others on the Fruit Team that have assisted at Snyder are Carl Lewis, John Moskway, Linda Cervino, Linda Lewis, Lisa Mann, Lynn Kocot, and Suzie Delaney.

Rutgers Snyder Farm has donated produce to various food banks and organizations for the past 12 plus years. Last year, Snyder Farm donated 6,000 pounds of apples, and with Dave Johnson's team, we should be able to double that to 12,000 lbs in 2011!

Ed Dager, Snyder Farm Supervisor, coordinates all of the donations to the various food banks.

Food Banks

The following are food banks and organizations to which Rutgers Snyder Farm donates annually. These organizations are always looking for additional donations and support to feed the hungry and help those in need.

NORWESCAP (http://www.norwescap.org). The NORWESCAP Food Bank aids in the relief of hunger by providing food and support to non-profit charitable organizations in Hunterdon, Sussex, and Warren Counties. They distribute over 2,000,000 pounds of food annually to over 120 pantries, shelters, soup kitchens, on-site feeding programs, childcare centers, senior centers, and programs for the disabled.

Giving Gardens at Wagner Arboretum Foundation (http://www.wfafnj.org/ggp.html). Volunteers supply food and produce to the needy in Somerset County through appropriate agencies.

Mercer Street Friends (http://www.mercerstreetfriends.org/). Opened in 1958 by Quakers and promulgating the values of tolerance, equality of all people, social justice, and nonviolent resolution of conflict, Mercer Street Friends works tirelessly to touch the lives of more than 30,000 people a year and help them overcome the debilitating effects of poverty, hunger, neglect, and health concerns. This is about two-thirds of the people in poverty in Mercer County.

The Quakertown United Methodist Church, (Route 579, Quakertown, New Jersey) and ***Frenchtown Presbyterian Church*** (22 4th Street Frenchtown, New Jersey, http://fpc.frenchtownpres.org/) distribute produce to needy individuals weekly.