

# News from Nan

FAMILY, FRIENDS, GENEALOGY, FAMILY HISTORY

## BIRTHDAY TRIBUTE: HAROLD JOHNSON (DICK'S DAD, JUNE 21)

JUNE 21, 2025 | DICK

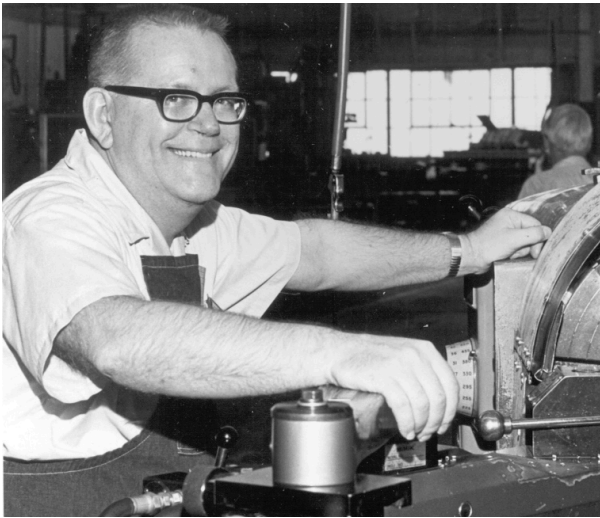


June 21st is my father's birthday. Happy birthday, Dad!

My father, Harold Richard Johnson, was born in 1919 in North Tonawanda, NY, a few months after the end of World War I. In the early 20th century, his family lived near Buffalo, NY except for a brief time in 1920, when they moved to a farm near Elgin, Ontario, Canada. As a young adult he lived through the post World War I era, the Great Depression, and World War II. "Interesting" times, indeed!

Dad graduated from North Tonawanda High School in 1936. He did well in school, and could have gone to college, but because of the economic depression, going to college was not an option.

After high school he worked in Tonawanda at Spaulding Fibre, one of the biggest employers in the area. He worked his way up to become a machinist and master tool and die maker. He used to brag that he "could operate any machine on the floor!"



*Harold operating a machine at Rohr Aircraft in San Diego*

Harold married my mother, Lillian Moseley, in 1939 at end of the Great Depression. They were high school sweethearts. When they were first married, they lived in a room with my grandparents, Alfred and Eva Johnson, on Kiel Street in NorthTonawanda.



*Harold and Lillian as an engaged couple or newlyweds*

Harold became a Grand Master of the Masonic Lodge in Tonawanda in the 1940s. He was also the Fire Chief of the Brighton Volunteer Fire Company of Tonawanda.



*Volunteer firemen and their wives (Harold and Lillian on the right)*

In 1951 my family moved from New York to San Diego, California. Harold found work as a tool and die maker. Later, he worked at Ryan Aeronautical in San Diego where he became a shop foreman and a building superintendent.



*Harold Johnson family in San Diego (1961)*

In 1981, Dad passed away. he was living in Spring Valley, California, at the time.

Dad used to read a lot when I was a kid, mostly historical novels. I can remember listening to the Zenith radio with my father and mother in their bedroom. Once television came along in the early 50s, he pretty much gave up reading and radio for TV. He used to watch sports, such as wrestling and football and on Sunday night, it was the Ed Sullivan Show. He collected newspaper sports clippings when he was a kid, mostly about boxing and wrestling. I remember looking through a his scrapbook full of old newspaper clippings about boxers Primo Carnera and Joe Louis.

On visits to Spring Valley to see Mom and Dad, Anna and I sometimes played games and shot pool with my parents.



*Harold and Dick playing pool*

◀ 1919   ◀ 2025   ◀ HAROLD JOHNSON