

In memory of my dear friend Dennis Johnson.
They say a man's dog, is the reflection of the man himself...

Yesterday, I had the privilege of running an old dog who belonged to a very dear friend of mine. Humility can be taught to us in many ways. But sometimes it is best taught by an old soul.

His age prevented him from participating in the entire hunt test. His muzzle was all grey. He huffed and made noises sometimes while he breathed. People were always petting him, asking how old he was. He didn't know why. Eric, the nice man he was traveling with, would just say, "Thor? That dog has one of the biggest hearts, I've ever seen!" Thor had no idea what all the fuss was about.

I was quite nervous about it, as I had never handled him before and had no idea what to expect. While waiting in the holding blind, "Thor" continually tried to peak out and move to the line. He wouldn't sit or heel. He just stood there and trembled. I had very little, if any, control over him and was getting quite worried about what laid ahead.

As the crowd of handlers and gallery began to amass, my frailties continued to emerge. Would Thor heal, would he sit? Would he recognize a whistle he had never heard from a guy he'd never met?

Finally, the judge said "test dog to the line." The old grey dog paid no attention to me and walked straight to the line sitting down, saying "I'm ready." As I stood next to him, I shifted and stepped to the right, looking at the first station. Upon looking down, Thor had shifted right, without a word being said. He stared intently at the willows. His ears up, barely breathing, just waiting. I raised my hand, signaling to begin. The notebook went up.

A call, a shot, and a duck landing in the water. Thor trembling, I swung the handlers gun to the left, he moved left, his tail never leaving the ground. Another bird, landing on a small point, a channel of water on either side. Swinging again to left, a flyer this time, quacking all the way up, yelling at Thor, "come get me, come get me now! Don't wait for him! Break!"

Thor was now shaking, the old grey dog was no longer, the younger dog from years many years before had replaced him. The old grey man, no longer limped, his hips no longer hurt, his eyes were clear, and his deaf old ears were waiting for one word, "Thor"! As I spoke his name, the water in front of us exploded. He was at last doing what Dennis had taught him as a puppy so many years ago. The flyer was his! Warm feathers, a soft feel in his mouth, and hundreds of duck hunts filled his thoughts. The young dog quickly returned, healing perfectly and, once again, waiting for the stranger to say his name. No trembling, no breathing, just an intent stare at the point. He knew he knew points, and he knew channels. The old dog was telling the younger one, he'd no longer be fooled. In the distance of thought, he heard his name again. The young dog once again hit the water like a freight train, only this time, the old dog was guiding him. Swim straight to the point, ignore both channels, look in the deep grass, it's there!

Back at the man's side, I know there's one more. It landed out there, in the pond, but where? I saw it land, but that was so long ago, the old man had returned, his memory clouded, I know it's there. His name is being said again, he must go. The young dog charges forward, the water parts, in a huge splash, and now where? As he swims straight, no duck appears, it must be further. Suddenly he hears a sharp single whistle. The stranger! He's going to help me. What to the left? I don't see it, another whistle, once again to the left. The young dog is swimming hard while the old eyes make out a small lump, it's only a couple of inches high, partially sunk. No wonder it doesn't float like the Northern's my dad shoots. Damn pen raised duck! Back to the stranger, maybe there's more! Yes, there must be a blind. The old dog lines up again. This guy will tell me where the line is. I know they've hidden another bird. I'm ready. I hope he hurries, the young dog is starting to get tired. Wait, he's taking me over to a says sit? I don't want too! There's still some young dog left!

I don't understand, the handlers are cheering, the gallery clapping, one of the judges is crying, and the other older one is looking at me, shaking his head. The stranger is crying, too. Don't they know there still ducks to get? Dad would let me get another, can't they see there's still a little younger dog here? The limp will go away! I promise my hips won't hurt! Please! Just say my name! "Thor!" dog here? The limp will go away! I promise my hips won't hurt! Please! Just say my name! "Thor!"

In Loving Memory



Dennis Earl Johnson

1960 ~ 2025

Dennis Earl Johnson

BORN

September 6, 1960
Burley, Idaho

DIED

June 7, 2025
Heyburn, Idaho

SON OF

Earl Thomas & Betty (Wright) Johnson

MARRIED

Shelly Martindale
July 21, 1984

FATHER OF

Madison Johnson (Toby Allen)

BROTHER OF

Debbie Severe, Diane (Mark) Baker



FUNERAL SERVICE

1:00 p.m. Tuesday, June 17, 2025
Rasmussen-Wilson Funeral Home
1350 E. 16th St. ~ Burley, Idaho



Conducting..... Bishop Dan Lloyd
Family Prayer Larry Johnson, *cousin*
Musical Selection..... *Seasons in the Sun*

Recording of Terry Jacks

Opening Prayer..... Monte Dayley, *friend*
Life Sketch..... Jeremy Baker, *nephew*
Remarks Donna Burch, *aunt*; Madison Johnson, *daughter*
Video Tribute..... Special Memory Video
Poem Mark Baker, *brother-in-law*
Closing Remarks..... Bishop Dan Lloyd
Musical Selection..... *Everything I Own*

Recording of Bread

Closing Prayer..... Chris Brower, *friend*



HONORARY BEARERS

Mike Martindale
Toby Allen
Monte Dayley
Rick Martindale
Larry Hill
Mike Turner

Mark Baker
Paden "Spud" Baker
Hunter Martindale
Sawyer Ames
Lawrence Burch
Kelton Martindale

Jeremy Baker
Darrell Scott
Brogan Martindale
Billy Winskowski
Dan Hellewell

FLORAL ATTENDANTS

Paiyzli Baker
Marka Baker
Sandy Gillette

Preszliy Baker
Chantell Baker
Julie Brower

Swae Baker
Jenny Cottom
Oaklee Baker

A luncheon for family & friends will be held at the Emerson LDS Church
following the funeral located at 127 South 950 West in Paul, Idaho.