Owen Wallace Johnson

March 31, 1931 ~ June 19, 2015

Owen Wallace Johnson, son of Owen Woodruff Johnson and Faun Bunnell, died of heart and kidney failure at the Intermountain Medical Center in Salt Lake City. He was eighty-four.

Owen Johnson was born and raised in Provo, Utah. He attended Provo high school where he was editor of the school newspaper. He thought of becoming a jounalist, but decided that accounting would be more lucrative, and so enrolled at the University of Utah to study accounting.

A year later when the Korean War broke out, he enlisted in the Air Force with the intention of becoming a pilot. It turned out however, that the Air Force had little use for pilots who were too tall to fit into the cockpit, and blind in one eye. They did have use for accountants though, and Owen finished his four year tour in the Air Force stationed in Japan, managing the group that handled the bookkeeping for the entire Pacific Theater of Operations.

He came back to Utah having learned one very important lesson in the Air Force: that he didn\t want to be an accountant. Thus when he returned to the University of Utah on the Gl bill, he switched his major to \"the hardest subject I could find.\" While an undergraduate in physics, he met a medical student, Joyce Dunn, who would become his wife tor 58 years. He went on to recieve his Bachelors\s Degree in 1957, and his PH.D. in 1961.

He spent his entire career at the University Of Utah, doing experimental research on the properties of semiconductors, and teaching thermodynamics, statistical mechanics and solid state physics. He retired a full professor in 1998. In later years, no longer able to hunt, fish, or play tennis, he spent his time on his other hobby, trading options in the stock market; a pursuit in which he made substantially more money than he had in his many years as a physicist.

He had a caustic wit, and was honest to a fault; qualities which were usually, but not quite always, appreciated by his friends and family. Yet his absolute integrity, his objectivity, and his unfailingly sound advice, will be greatly missed.

He is survived by his wife Joyce Johnson, his children Cindy Robinson and Jeff Johnson, his grandchildren Hannah and Sam Robinson, and Grace and Ella Johnson, and by his sister Lynette Jarrell. He was preceded in death by his sister Claudia Bendorf, in 2007, and by his daughter Becky Irvin, in 2009.

The memorial service will be held at the Schwab-Mathews Mortuary in Montpelier, Idaho, on Saturday, July 18 at 1:00. Interment will be at the Montpelier City Cemetery.