

## **Rudolf Williver “Rudy” Retzell Johnson**

**April 4, 1927 - July 18, 2013**

I was born the eighth of nine children to Jacob and Charlotte Prisk Retzell in New Richmond, Wis. I was given the name Williver Evans Retzell. My birth mother died 17 days before my third birthday. When I was three and a half I was adopted by Edward and Christina Johnson of Superior, WI and given the name Rudolf Williver Johnson.

At 16 I was employed by the Great Northern Railroad as a clerk checker working the night shift, and going to school days. At 17 I left high school and enlisted in the United States Marine Corps. I spent 21 months in the Pacific Theatre with the first Marine Division and the Third Provisional Armored Amphibian Battalion. During the war, my sisters made contact with my adoptive parents and I received many letters from them. On my discharge and return to Superior in June 1946, I spent most of the year looking up my birth family. It really was a fulfilling experience.

Once again working for the railroad, I went back to school and got my GED. At this time I met a wonderful girl, Doris E. Dahlberg. We married on August 30, 1947 and made our home in Superior where we raised five fine boys.

In 1964 I attended Superior State College and obtained my Bachelor of Science and then Masters Degree in Science Teaching in Geography and Geology and thus taught two years in the Geology Department. Obtaining tenure required a Doctor of Philosophy degree which was impossible for me so I stayed on the railroad and retired as an Assistant General Yardmaster in June 1993 from the Burlington Northern Railroad with 50 years of service.

I died July 18, 2013, leaving a sister, Elvina McCabe (Retzell) of Golden Valley, Minn. and four sons, Lance B. (Jane) and their two sons Andrew B. and Nathaniel R. of St. Anthony, Minn., Wilder R. (Lori) and their two sons Stephen T. and Aaron J. of Eau Claire, Wis., Randall E. of Blaine, Minn., and Rolfe C. of Superior, Wis. I also leave behind a daughter-in-law, Marianne R. (Mitchell) and their children Hayley M., Phillip A., Kyle E., and their lovely granddaughter Lilly N.

I was preceded in death by my wife of 59 years, Doris E. Johnson (nee Dahlberg); my son, Mitchell A.; my birth and adoptive parents; and my sisters and brothers.

There will be no funeral or memorial service. I will be interred along with my wife at Highland Cemetery in Monticello, Wis., about 60 feet from my birth parents and oldest sister, surrounded by the graves of relatives going way back to the 1830's.

To you the people of the present, and those of the past - I thank you for the companionship, friendship, and for all the memories.

All is well.