



## James Joseph Johnson

May 23, 1933 - May 14, 2011

James Joseph Johnson, 77 year-old, life-long Scott Valley native, passed away on May 15th following an accident, just a few miles from his Cheeseville home.

Jim was loved and admired by young and old, family and friends. His wife, Cathy, was the love of his life; and his many grandchildren held a special place in his heart. Jim was born in Fort Jones on May 23, 1933. His parents, Joseph and Catherine Johnson, were strong Catholics and had four more children.

The family owned a cattle ranch in Cheeseville in the middle of Scott Valley. Amazingly, by the time Jim was five years old, he was riding horseback working cattle, driving teams of horses, working the Jackson Fork to fill the barn with hay and shoeing the big draft horses' feet. He always liked a horse that bucked and was one of three teens in 1947 to instigate a rodeo between the polo games played by local ranchers on Sundays. Thus began the tradition of the May Pleasure Park Rodeo in Etna.

In high school, he was involved in sports and after breaking his nose playing football, he engineered and welded a metal bar across the front of his leather helmet to protect his nose. He was also an active force in the Etna FFA Chapter and was proud of his sons and grandchildren following in his footsteps.

Jim graduated from Etna High School in 1951 and then attended Cal Poly, San Luis Obispo. The Korean War was looming, so he enlisted in the U.S.

Marine Corp and was sent to Korea serving as a tank commander.

In 1958, Jim met and fell in love with a city girl named Catherine Michael O'Brien. Just two months later, Jim asked Cathy to marry him. The couple was blessed with five sons: Matt, Jim, Mark, Bob and Tim.

Jim was always enterprising, inventive and known for his toughness. He worked the family ranch, logged, operated a bulldozer and drove hay truck. Favorite activities included helping other ranchers with their cattle in the Marble Mountains and buck hunting. During his life, he was involved in several life-threatening accidents, breaking his back, while falling a tree; and endured a long recovery from a car accident. In his later years, Jim enjoyed his garden; shook-off the stings from his bees, while gathering honey; and made more than one kind of sausage. Jim had scruples and was never afraid to take a stand on significant issues. He used his determination to study court documents and government regulations enabling him to deal with the state to initiate the Scott Valley Fire Protection District; expose incorrect funding practices at the high school; and back "good" candidates in local elections. Jim is famous in Klamath Falls for breaking open the headgate at the A Canal during the atrocious government turn-off of water to the Klamath Project in 2001. He was the second person to break-open the headgate and stated he was willing to "sit in jail," if arrested for the alleged offense. He was never arrested and even a song was written about the tenacious rancher from Scott Valley. His love of America's values and strong ethics caused Jim to stand against an oppressive government, even if it was his own.

Jim's parents and brother, Larry Johnson, preceded him in death. He is survived by his sisters Teresa Naylor, Kathy Hurlimann, and husband Joe Hurlimann, and Veronica Bolstadt, and husband Larry. He is also survived by his wife, Cathy, and sons: Matt, and wife Brenda; Jim, and wife Clara; Mark, and wife Shelly; Bob, and wife Wendy; and Tim, and wife Michele. His grandchildren include: Pat Johnson, and wife Renee, and great-granddaughter Bailey; Travis Earls, and wife Jesse, and great-grandson Owen; Kellie Coefield, husband Richie, and great-grandson, Chase; Frank

Johnson, Will Johnson, Gwen Johnson; Sarah Johnson, Roy Johnson, Hank Johnson, David Johnson, Clint Johnson, Kayla Johnson, Linda Johnson, Kent Johnson, Jaylee Johnson, Keith Johnson, James Johnson and Karl Johnson. A Rosary will be recited at 7:00 p.m. on Thursday, May 19th at the Sacred Heart Catholic Church in Fort Jones. The Mass of Christian Burial will be celebrated for Jim on Friday, May 20, 2011 at 10:00 a.m. in the Sacred Heart Catholic Church and internment will follow in the Fort Jones Catholic Cemetery with military honors. Following the services, friends and family are invited to a reception at the Catholic Hall on Main Street. Girdner Funeral Chapel is assisting the family.