

George "G.G." Johnson, Jr.

1938-2014



George Johnson Jr., affectionately known to most as "GG", was the second of six children raised by George Johnson Sr. and Johnnie M. Johnson. GG was born on December 8, 1938 in Columbus, Georgia. Under the guidance of his father, a pastor, and mother, an avid and active church member, GG confessed his faith in Christ at an early age. He was educated in the Columbus Ga. Public school system and graduated from William H. Spencer High School in 1957.

While still in high school at the young age of 15 George sparked his lifelong love of golf when he became a caddy at a segregated golf course in Columbus, GA. After graduating from high school GG moved to Atlanta, Georgia and began his adult golfing career playing on an African American tour, where he won many golf matches. GG's love for golf and incredible skillset led to him being accepted into the training program for the Professional Golfers Association (PGA). After excelling at each level and completing the PGA training program George obtained his players certificate and PGA membership in 1968, allowing him to become one of the first African Americans to receive PGA membership. GG played on the PGA tour for many years, playing in numerous tournaments, receiving multiple accolades, and blazing a trail by traveling across the US playing professional golf at a time when "Blacks" were not typically allowed to even step foot on most golf courses due to segregation. After years of touring on the regular PGA tour George joined the Senior PGA League and toured with the Senior League for five years. Following his time on the Senior Tour George decided to retire and became an Associate member of the PGA; however his love for golf would not allow him to stay away from the game. In 1997 George became the Head Golf Professional at Bobby Nichols Golf Course in Louisville, Kentucky, still blazing trails as he was the first African American to head a golf course in the state of Kentucky. While in his position at Bobby Nichols Golf Course GG participated in celebrity golf scrambles and in 1999 started the Annual George "GG" Johnson Golf Scramble in conjunction with the Urban Youth Golf Program to benefit youth interested in learning the game of golf. George was highly involved in community service, loved working with youth, and giving back wherever and whenever he could. George remained the Head Professional at Bobby Nichols Golf Course and a Lifetime Member of the PGA until his passing.

While touring with the PGA George met the love of his life Ms. LaJune Ponder and on September 9, 1972 the two were married and to that union a daughter, Kristi Georgina Johnson, was born joining two older brothers, Lenwick A. Ponder and Marcus A. Ponder. Family was always a priority for George and although touring caused him to be away from home frequently he would rush back to Atlanta every chance he got to be with his family and would often send for them to come join him during the PGA tours. George never met a person that he considered a stranger as he would frequently spark up a conversation with just about anyone as if they had known each other for years and were old friends. George was loved by both family and friends and was known for his loud voice, boisterous laughter, infectious smile, and quick wit; he loved to laugh and loved to make others laugh as well. He could be quite a jokester and continued in that fashion throughout his days as he even joked with the nursing staff while he was at Atlanta Hospice.

George "GG" Johnson was peacefully called home to be with his Heavenly Father on March 29, 2014. He was preceded in death by his parents and two brothers Harold Anderson and Richard Johnson. Left behind to cherish his memories and embrace the wonderful examples that he set are his wife Mrs. LaJune Johnson, daughter Ms. Kristi G Johnson (Atlanta, Georgia) and sons Lenwick A. Ponder (Selena) (Amsterdam, Holland), and Marcus A. Ponder I (Atlanta, Georgia). He also leaves behind six grandchildren; Taiesha M. Perry (Darryl), Marcus A. Ponder II, Shante' L. Ponder, LeQuan H. Ponder, Simone L. Ponder, and Julian A. Ponder, a sister Gwendolyn "Lois" Williams (Lee) (Columbus, Georgia), two brothers; Johnny L. Johnson (Mattie) (Bradley, Arkansas), Charlie W. Johnson (Louisville, Kentucky) and a host of nieces, nephews, great nieces, great nephews, cousins, extended family and loving friends. He will forever be missed but his love and legacy will always live on.