

*Darryl Norman Johnson*, 80, American diplomat, lifelong musician, and friend to anyone he met with Pacific Northwest ties, died Sunday (June 24, 2018) after a long battle with Parkinson's Disease and Lewy Body Dementia. He was surrounded by his beloved family: his wife of 26 years Kathleen Dessa Forance Johnson, his daughter Darawan (Johnson) Gideos, and his twin sons, Gregory and Loren Johnson. He is also survived by David, Clarissa and Emmett Gideos of Rockville MD, Ellen Richards and Kate Johnson of Austin TX, Eim and Zoe Johnson of Portland OR, his brother Brian Johnson of Beverly MA, his first wife Lee Ware of Arlington VA, and his best friend David Hughes of Woodinville WA, as well as countless additional friends and family members. In his better days, he would have been able to tell you stories about each of them, and found commonalities among strangers. He was pre-deceased by his brother Linn Valen Johnson of the Seattle area.

Darryl was the second of three sons born to Norman Boyd Johnson and Eugenia Laurell (Nelson) Johnson. Born on June 7, 1938 in Chicago, IL he soon made the first of many moves, to Des Moines, WA, with his family. Norm was a pilot for United Airlines, and Darryl loved to watch the planes departing from and arriving to SeaTac airport, and playing baseball with his brothers and friends in the vacant lot next door. He was an accomplished trumpet player and considered becoming a professional musician. Instead, he heeded President Kennedy's call and joined the Peace Corps after two years at the University of Puget Sound, completing his BA in English at the University of Washington, then doing graduate work at the University of Minnesota and Princeton University.

Darryl met his first wife, the former Carol Lee Franz of Allegan, MI in Peace Corps training and they went off to Thailand together in 1963. Their daughter Darawan was born there the following year. Darryl soon joined the State Department and served his first post in Bombay, India, where the twins were born. From there, the family moved to Taiwan, Hong Kong, Washington DC, Moscow, and then back to DC. He went on to posts in Beijing and Warsaw, taking jobs of ever increasing responsibility along the way, before being appointed the first US ambassador to Lithuania upon the breakup of the Soviet Union. He then returned to Taiwan, this time as chief of mission, and then went back to DC, serving as Under Secretary of State for East Asian and Pacific Affairs. Finally, he completed a circle by returning to Thailand as US Ambassador, enjoying several opportunities to play his trumpet with the king, an accomplished jazz musician.

Darryl's boundless thirst to explore the world and try to help solve its problems was never quenched. He had the opportunity to work on US-China relations right after Nixon opened China; to work on Cold War diplomacy during the last decade of Soviet power; and to witness both the Tiananmen Square protests and the fall of the Berlin Wall in 1989. His facility with languages allowed him to get closer to the people of the countries where he served, so he could understand the concerns of the general population and get beyond the official position. He was just as thrilled to be invited into a traditional Chinese home for a family dinner as he was to enjoy a multi course

banquet in Bangkok or a summer solstice festival in Lithuania.

But he also never forgot his roots in the Seattle area, which he loved most of all. When he retired to Burien, WA, he taught a class at the Scoop Jackson School of International Relations at the University of Washington and was active on several boards. Since 2016, he resided at the Grove memory care unit at Judson Park, less than a five-minute walk from his childhood home in Zenith, WA. A service to celebrate his life will be held in the Seattle area at the end of the summer. If you wish to know more about this please contact Dara at [dgideos@gmail.com](mailto:dgideos@gmail.com).

In lieu of flowers, we would be so honored by any contributions to the following non-profit organizations: Friends of

Thailand: <http://friendsofthailand.org/join/main.html> <<http://friendsofthailand.org/join/main.html>> ; the Michael J. Fox Foundation for Parkinson's

Research: <https://www.michaeljfox.org/get-involved/donation2.php?pg=6&>; and the Lewy Body Dementia Association: <https://www.lbda.org/donate>

Obituary Provided by Dara Gideos