



Fred W. Johnson, anyone who met Fred was immediately impressed by his quiet friendliness and warm smile. He truly embodied what it was to be “The Salt of the Earth.” The kind and gentle man was born January 16, 1928, in Kaleva, Michigan to Victor and Mabel (Gauthier) Johnson.

He worked on the farm with his mom and dad, five sisters, and one brother. When he was old enough, he would walk along 8 Mile Road to the corner of Chief Road to get to a one-room Schoolhouse. When he was 17 years old, he went to work for the U.S. Steel Corporation, sailing the Great Lakes aboard several different iron ore carriers. He enlisted in the U.S. Army and served at Fort Ord, California, and Edwards Airforce Base from 1954 through 1956. After he received his honorable discharge from the service in 1956, he went back to U.S. Steel and sailed the Great Lakes until 1981. He proposed to Annabelle Lipski in 1973 while onboard a U.S. Steel ore carrier as the boat was passing in the Soo locks. His bride-to-be stood on the edge of the locks (they were about 15 feet from each other) as the ship was moving through. She accepted and they were married on January 19, 1974.

Fred was preceded in death by his wife Annabelle in 2007, his parents Victor and Mabel (Gauthier) Johnson, his brother Victor (Carol) Johnson, his sisters Mary (Bill) Pearce, Betty (Harry) Townsend, Joyce (Jack) Ackerman, and Rose (Bob) Harrigan.

Fred is survived by his sister Loretta (Jerry) Sleeman, his daughter Diane (Bob) Arnold, granddaughters Julie (Steve) Smith and Debbie Lummis, two great-grandchildren Lauren Lummis and Jordan (Shelby) Lummis, and many, many cousins, nephews and nieces. Fred’s favorite charity was the Homeward Bound Animal Shelter on M-55 in Manistee.

Private family graveside services were held, at Mount Carmel Cemetery in Manistee, on Thursday, August 6, 2026 at 2:00 p.m. with the Manistee County United Veterans Council Ritual Squad presenting Military Honors.

The Herbert Funeral Home of Manistee was in charge of funeral arrangements.