



John L. Olson

May 18, 1919 - September 27, 2016

John L. Olson, 97, of Richland Center, originally of Bear Valley, died at the Richland Hospital after a brief illness on Tuesday, September 27th, 2016.

John was born into the tight-knit farming community of Bear Valley on Sunday, May 18, 1919, the son of Anna (Schmitz) and Samuel Olson.

He is survived by his daughters, Pat Olson (Jim Botting) of West Bend and Lisa Olson (Tim Hoffman) of Sebastopol, CA; granddaughters Sarah and Leah Botting, and grandson John Hoffman. He is also survived by two sisters, Lala (Ron) Radloff of Mesa, AZ and Jean Walsh of Richland Center, and brother Leo (Elaine) Olson of Reedsburg; brothers-in-law Don (Shirley) Goplin of Richland Center and Roger (Lynn) Farrell of La Crosse; sister-in-law Leola Farrell of Richland Center, and many other Farrell relatives. He is further survived by his large extended family, including many nieces and nephews.

He was preceded in death by his wife, Joan (Farrell) Olson, his parents, sisters Dorothy Wiedenfeld and Mary Fleming, and brother Cyril Olson.

John was born into a family that created its own fun through the love of baseball and music. His dad transformed a cornfield into a baseball diamond where neighbors gathered to play ball. Cheered on by his vocal mother, John

established himself as a strong athlete (usually playing shortstop) and was recruited to try out for the Chicago Cubs in 1937. Though he didn't make the cut, he continued to play for farm leagues and St. Kilian's church league until he was in his 50s.

As a young adult during the big band area, John danced to the music of Glenn Miller, Tommy Dorsey, Duke Ellington, Woody Herman, and others at Rainbow Gardens and Riverview. He was known as the best dancer in Richland County. Singing and dancing gave him joy throughout his life.

A 1938 graduate of Lone Rock High School, John attended the agriculture short course at UW-Madison for two years, then farmed on the home place with his parents until his marriage to Joan on February 14, 1955. He gave up farming in 1969, when he was appointed County Executive Director for the ASCS office in Richland Center. Following his retirement in 1987, he became a nationally recognized greeter at Wal-Mart for 14 years.

John was a joy and a blessing to all with whom he came in contact. He exuded light, love, and humor, which became even more apparent during his three plus years as a widower living at Schmitt Woodlands Hills. His strong faith, love, and pride in his family uplifted him. He touched many lives with his singing and sense of fun. He was regularly known to say, "We have a hell of a lot of fun over nothing."

We are grateful to Dr. Thomas Richardson, the wonderful staff at Westview/Schmitt Woodland Hills, and the Walsh family for creating a secure and loving haven for John in his final years.

A visitation will be held on Saturday, October 8th, 2 to 5 p.m., at Clary Memorial Funeral Home in Richland Center. A private Mass will be held for family. Memorials may be made to St. Kilian Cemetery Association, c/o Erwin

Schmitz, 27038 State Hwy. 130, Hillpoint, WI 53937.

Previous Events

Memorial Visitation

OCT 8. 2:00 PM - 5:00 PM (CT)

Clary Memorial Funeral & Cremation Service, LLC

26777 Jelland Drive

Richland Center, WI 53581

(608) 647-6390

josh@clarymemorial.com

<https://clarymemorialfuneralhome.com/>

Tribute Wall

AD

“ Lisa,
I'm so sorry to hear that your dad died. I so enjoyed the many stories that you shared throughout the years and was honored to meet him at your and Tim's wedding. You are in my heart this holiday season.

XXXOOO

Ann DuBay (ann.dubay@scwa.ca.gov)

Ann DuBay - November 30, 2016 at 07:05 PM

LO

Dear Ann, Thank you so much for your kind thoughts. My dad was one heck of a person and I feel so grateful that I had so much time with him. It never would have been enough. I appreciate your writing. Love, Lisa

LISA OLSON - December 21, 2016 at 07:48 PM



“ *I met John and Joan at the airport diner a few years ago and will miss the great times and laughter we shared. A truly delightful man.*

Mike Peterson - October 08, 2016 at 11:21 AM

PO

Thank you, Mike.

Pat Olson - October 12, 2016 at 01:14 PM



“ Pat and Lisa, Your dad always had a smile his face. My dad had many great memories with your dad, we will never know what entirely went on with them and Don Goplin in Boaz. I enjoyed the very nice posted pictures of the family. You had a very nice program at SWC today and the cake! Nice seeing you and sorry for your loss, you are very lucky to have such a great dad!!!
Jon Mohrmann

Jon Mohrmann - October 07, 2016 at 05:02 PM



“ Pat, Lisa and family, we are so sorry for your loss. If anyone lived their life to the fullest, it was your father. I have fond memories of growing up in Bear Valley with your family as our neighbor. My dad (Donald Moore) and John go a long ways back. Your Dad was best man in my parents wedding 66 years ago!!!!!! I remember them playing church league softball together and helping each other out on their farms. I was also blessed to work with John when he became the famous Walmart greeter! I can still hear him welcoming people to Walmart. People came not only to shop, but to talk to your Dad. He was an inspiration to us all and he will be deeply missed. Blessings to all!!!!!!

Tom and Marcia (Moore) Layton

Marcia Layton - October 07, 2016 at 08:52 AM



“ Sapphire Skies Bouquet was purchased for the family of John L. Olson.



October 06, 2016 at 07:15 PM

LF

“ *Leola Farrell and Family purchased the Sentimental Dreams for the family of John L. Olson.*



Leola Farrell and Family - October 06, 2016 at 12:31 PM

SF

“ *Pat and Lisa, we are so sorry for your loss. Your father was an amazing person. He added fun to every event. We'll always remember him. Love, Rick and Susan (P.S. I know my mother and brothers feel the same, but they aren't very much internet people, so they probably won't leave any messages!)*

Susan Farrell - October 06, 2016 at 11:35 AM

PO

Thank you, Susan and Rick.

Pat Olson - October 07, 2016 at 05:22 AM

EE

“ Ed and I would like to extend our sincere sympathy. We have many happy memories of John. We would often visit with John when we would go to Schmitt to see Ed's sister, Mary Stadele. He would always have a big smile and usually a little joke to tell. He was a good friend to Mary and always brought a smile to her face. I remember one time when Mary was at our house for Sunday dinner and we decided to go for a ride in the car before taking her home. She asked me if we could call John and see if he could go with us and take us by his farm in Bear Valley as he was always talking about it and she wanted to see where it was. We called and not only John, but Jean went with us and we had a grand time. We wanted to come to the visitation, but our son-in-law's father passed away and we will be going to the funeral in Bloomer on Saturday. I am sure you know this, but you were very blessed to have such a wonderful father.

Ed and Kathy Ehorn

Ed and Kathy Ehorn - October 06, 2016 at 08:25 AM

PO

Thank you, Ed and Kathy.

Pat Olson - October 07, 2016 at 05:22 AM



“ 179 files added to the album *LifeTributes*



Clary Memorial Funeral Home - October 04, 2016 at 11:57 AM

TF

“ *John was a treasure to all of his extended family. We will hold dear memories of John and the joy and smiles he always brought to us. He was our sunshine - and will be greatly missed by all.*

Tom & Linda Fleming

Tom & Linda Fleming - October 03, 2016 at 04:16 PM

PO

Thank you, Tom and Linda.

Pat Olson - October 03, 2016 at 04:39 PM

DS

“ Many years ago I was a reading teacher in Richland Center. I was bringing in guest readers for the K-3 students at Lincoln Elementary. I scheduled the superintendent, police chief and other local "celebrities" to read in specific classrooms. The event was going well until students saw "THE WAL-MART GUY!" in the building. Teachers came running and pleaded to have John stop in for just a few moments to greet the kids. He went to every classroom grinning from ear to ear and handed out stickers, gave high fives and made every student feel like they were the special guest.

After things settled down, John was able to read his story, *Pigs*, to the second grade class. His laughter set off the kids and they barely made it through the book. I don't know who had more fun!

What a blessing to have known your dad.

Dee

Dee Swenson - October 03, 2016 at 12:02 PM

PO

Thank you, Dee.

Pat Olson - October 03, 2016 at 03:22 PM

SH

“ Dear Pat and Lisa,

I will always hold in my heart the warmth and kindness your family showed me as a young adult, but one memory that comes to mind every time I think of John is from Walmart when it was the small store on Bohmann Drive. Only John could get away with picking up the PA and singing "Happy Birthday" when it was someone's special day. Every so often he would sing "If You Knew Susie," and I would dissolve into giggles every time! I am thankful to have known your dad. Love to you--

Susie Hauri

Susie Hauri - October 03, 2016 at 10:52 AM

PO

Thank you, Susie.

Pat Olson - October 03, 2016 at 03:22 PM

SH

“ Lisa & Pat and family, so sorry for your lost, WOW what a guy. We were so lucky to have known him and enjoyed the Olson music. What great memories from Bear Valley. Sorry we can't be there for you as we are leaving for Florida before the funeral.

Deepest Sympathies.

Sue & Herb Hanson

Sue Hanson - October 03, 2016 at 10:02 AM

PO

Thank you, Sue and Herb.

Pat Olson - October 03, 2016 at 10:12 AM

BB

“ *Pat and Lisa...We are so sorry to hear of the passing of your dad. He was so loved by his Walmart family and such a joy to work with. May your memories comfort you in this difficult time. We will keep you both and your families in our thoughts and prayers.*

Willis and Barb Burns

Barb Burns - October 03, 2016 at 07:38 AM

PO

Thank you, Willis and Barb.

Pat Olson - October 03, 2016 at 10:13 AM

SM

“ *So much fun we had with this family when we were younger. We will miss your smile, laughter, singing and jokes. Thanks for the good times John. We love you! Sue Ann and family.*

Sue Ann (Greenheck) Moore - October 02, 2016 at 10:00 PM

PO

Thank you, Sue Ann.

Pat Olson - October 03, 2016 at 07:05 AM

TV

“ *Pat & Lisa- Condolences to you and yours for the passing of your father. Nancy and I are keeping you all in our prayers at this difficult time.*

Tom & Nancy Vodak

Tom Vodak - October 02, 2016 at 10:07 AM

PO

Thank you, Tom and Nancy.

Pat Olson - October 02, 2016 at 01:14 PM

HS

“ *John was an awesome ,man. So full of wit. I enjoyed knowing him, and will miss him .. Sympathy to all the family. HUGS.*

Helen Sheafor - October 01, 2016 at 10:15 PM

PO

Helen, thank you for your care for him in the hospital: you were great. We were fortunate to have you there. The entire staff was wonderful.

Pat Olson - October 02, 2016 at 06:07 AM

MP

“ *Loved having John greet me at Walmart. Always a smile and a laugh. God bless you all.*

Mary McCauley pastormj1@hotmail.com - October 01, 2016 at 04:31 PM

PO

Thank you, Mary.

Pat Olson - October 02, 2016 at 06:07 AM

RK

“ *Robin, Joe, Rachel & Jordan Edmunds, Manhattan, KS purchased the Beautiful in Blue for the family of John L. Olson.*



Robin, Joe, Rachel & Jordan Edmunds, Manhattan, KS -
October 01, 2016 at 02:53 PM

MW

“ 1 file added to the album *New Album Name*



Michael Walsh - October 01, 2016 at 10:27 AM

PO

Thank you, Michael. He loved the sing and dance.

Pat Olson - October 02, 2016 at 06:08 AM

DM

“ *John was a wonderful caring person and has a loving family. What a joy it was to go to work in the government buildings to clean when he was working with the Ascs. He would work late many evenings and he would have fun pulling tricks on me with my vacuume cleaner. John would hide beside something and unplug my vacuume cleaner. Of course I think he just liked to hear me cus. It took me a while to figure out what was going on. But I finally caught him! Miss that so much.*

I also remember how we use to sing a little duet together in the entry way of Walmart.

John, you will truly be missed by many. God had given us a wonderful gift. And that was, to know a wonderful you. Amen

Deb J. Mueller

Debra J. Mueller - October 01, 2016 at 10:20 AM

PO

Great story. Thank you, Deb.

Pat Olson - October 02, 2016 at 06:08 AM

KF

“ John was a special man to know,,, I worked with John for many years at Walmart he would make you laugh. If you had a bad day he would always find a way to make your day seem better. I can remember of the funny little saying he would say some not always so funny but serious that would get a person thinking.. John you were a true treasure and you will be truly missed by all. God bless you and your family.....

Kelly Feryance - October 01, 2016 at 07:03 AM

PO

Thank you, Kelly.

Pat Olson - October 02, 2016 at 06:09 AM

JC

“ He was a great guy I liked to meet him at Wal Mart as a greeter he was so pleasant the family has my deepest sympathy Joy Conway

Joy Conway - October 01, 2016 at 05:47 AM

PO

Thank you, Joy.

Pat Olson - October 02, 2016 at 02:10 PM

ES

“ Thinking of your family and extended family during this time. I'm going to miss you greatly Johnny! Enjoyed our road trips, or a quick pop-in visit on my way through and dinners whenever I got back to town. My favorite was just a few weeks ago and told you to order whatever you wanted on the menu for dinner. You ordered a large sundae (even though you gave the waitress a hard time asking her if it was proper to eat a sundae on a Wednesday!). Will miss all your humor, stories from your teenage years and your work with the government among many other stories! Everybody that knew you will smile when ever they hear You Are My Sunshine and Springtime In Bear Valley!



Eileen (Slaney) Stevens - September 30, 2016 at 11:46 PM

PO

Eileen, he loved your visits.

Pat Olson - October 02, 2016 at 06:10 AM

BP

“ I worked with John at Wal Mart. I loved seeing him every day! He was a joy to work with and he always made my day. I just saw him not too long ago and he asked me if I remembered him, of course I did! I was so glad he remembered me. It was great to see him and I will always have fond memories of him. Rest in peace, John.
Barb Makovec Pliner

Barb Makovec Pliner - September 30, 2016 at 10:37 PM



I will always remember John and his personality! As you said it best, "See ya around like a donut!" Until we meet again!!RIP

Janel Errthum - September 30, 2016 at 11:41 PM

LB

We are so sorry for your loss. What a nice man he was. I remember him best from The Post House when he came in every Friday night with Joan and the Greenheck's. I was a bus girl and I loved his wit and laughs. We will keep your family in our prayers and thoughts. -Lucy & Randy Bindl

Lucy & Randy Bindl - October 01, 2016 at 09:06 PM

PO

Thank you, Janel, Lucy, and Randy.

Pat Olson - October 02, 2016 at 06:16 AM

PO

Thank you, Barb.

Pat Olson - October 02, 2016 at 02:11 PM

JD

Pat and Lisa: So sorry to hear about your Dad. Such a wonderful man and always a delight to talk to each time our paths crossed in the Walmart entryway. Thoughts and prayers to you and your families. Julie Schmid Drake

Julie Schmid Drake - October 02, 2016 at 11:11 PM

PO

Thank you, Julie.

Pat Olson - October 03, 2016 at 07:25 AM

JP

Your dad was a very special man. Such a vibrant personality--always a pleasure to see. You have a wonderful family and you have very wonderful memories of so many good times. Take care. John & Philomena Poole

John & Philomena Poole - October 03, 2016 at 09:38 AM

PO

Thank you, John & Philomena.

Pat Olson - October 04, 2016 at 05:38 AM

SB

“ 2 files added to the tribute wall



Sarah Botting - September 30, 2016 at 08:37 PM

JM

“ I will miss john's singing ,he would get Thelma to sing with him ,his favorite song he sing was you are my sunshine. JoEllen McAuliffe , dietary

JoEllen mcauliffe - September 30, 2016 at 07:06 PM

PO

Thank you, JoEllen.

Pat Olson - October 02, 2016 at 02:12 PM

NN

What a terrific guy...knew how to live and how to share joy and love...great example that he shared with so many in his special way...God bless you Johnny...

Nancy A Noble - October 03, 2016 at 02:59 PM

NN

additionally want to say thanks...so much fun with John and Jean singing Christmas carols thru the floors at Schmidt ...what traditional fun!!!

Nancy A Noble - October 03, 2016 at 04:05 PM

PO

Thank you, Nancy.

Pat Olson - October 04, 2016 at 05:39 AM

ME

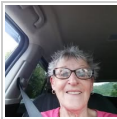
“ *Joh will be very missed by all who knew him. His smile could light a room and someone who was not having a good day. He was a joyful, friendly, humble man who made us laugh at ourselves. I will miss his spirit and love of music. My deepest sympathies to your family. Meg Gilligan(former caretaker at Schmitt Woodland Hills)*

Meg - September 30, 2016 at 06:30 PM

BD

I will personally miss John so much! He was such an incredible gentleman bursting with so much life! He was so much fun and always made me smile. Everything had a song. Wish I could have danced with him. I take comfort knowing he is now with his beloved wife whom he spoke of quite frequently. To his wonderful daughters, I'm so truly sorry for your loss. May God bless you both! To his siblings and nieces and nephews, may you also be comforted in Gods love. I know I am so great fun for getting to cross paths with John and I know whenever I hear "You are my sunshine" , I will think of him. Hugs, Brenda Draper RA SWH

Brenda Draper - September 30, 2016 at 10:25 PM



I have some great memories from when he worked at Wal-Mart . RIP John .

Marge Sherwin - October 01, 2016 at 07:56 AM



I am so sorry to hear of Johns passing--He was the one bright thing at Wal-Mart. He will be missed by anyone who knew him. My deepest condolences. Donna L. Rose

Donna Rose - October 01, 2016 at 02:54 PM

PO

Thank you all for your lovely comments.

Pat Olson - October 02, 2016 at 06:17 AM

PC

*Dear Pat and Lisa, so sorry to hear of your Dads passing , he was quite a man, my husband worked with him at the ASCS office and they had a lot fun plus work. You have my sympathy
And he will be missed by everyone that one knew him. Pat Clark*

Pat Clark - October 02, 2016 at 03:37 PM

PO

We remember Avery well, Pat. Thank you for your kind words.

Pat Olson - October 02, 2016 at 06:44 PM