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Robert "Bob" Vance Johnston, Sr.

March 3, 1949 - July 2, 2026

Robert Vance Johnston, Sr., lovingly known as "Bob," passed away unexpectedly on July 2, 2026, at his home in Morganton, North Carolina. He was 77 years old.

Born on March 3, 1949, in Lenoir, North Carolina, Bob was the son of the late James Hinton Johnston, Sr. and Irene Greene Johnston Sluder. He grew up in Hickory, North Carolina, where he graduated from Hickory High School in 1967.

Following graduation, Bob answered the call to serve his country by enlisting in the United States Navy. He faithfully served from January 1970 until February 1974, carrying with him the values of dedication, discipline, and service throughout his life.

After his military service, Bob built a successful career in the building supply industry, working in commercial sales at Lowe's Home Improvement where he spent more than 20 years as a Commercial/Pro Sales Associate, earning the respect of customers and coworkers alike through his knowledge, strong work ethic, and willingness to help others. He retired from Lowe's in 2016.

Bob's greatest joy in life was his family. He was a devoted husband, father, and grandfather who treasured every opportunity to spend time with those he loved. On July 7, 2001, he married Diane Wilson Johnston. Together they made their home in Morganton, where they built two homes and created countless memories filled with

Morganton, where they built two homes and created countless memories filled with love, laughter, and shared adventures.

He is survived by his beloved wife, Diane Wilson Johnston; his daughter, Virginia Johnston Nichols and husband, Chris Nichols, of Clemmons, North Carolina; his grandsons, Matthew Nichols and Ryan Nichols; and his son, Robert Vance Johnston,

Jr., of Pfafftown, North Carolina. He is also remembered by his former wife and mother of his children, Grace Williams Hartley. Bob is also survived by his brother, James "Jim" Johnston, Jr. and wife, Terri, of Mt. Ulla, North Carolina; and by his nephews, Jay Johnston and wife, Julie, Richard Johnston, Eric Johnston, and Christopher Johnston and wife, Erika.

A faithful follower of Christ, Bob was an active member of Mount Home Baptist Church in Morganton. His church family was an important part of his life, and he faithfully served in many capacities, including cooking Wednesday night suppers and leading or assisting the Maintenance, Parking, Cemetery, and Security Committees. He also drove the Wednesday night van for anyone who needed a ride to or from the church. Before joining Mount Home Baptist Church, he was a member of North Morganton United Methodist Church.

Bob found happiness in life's simple pleasures. He loved working outdoors, caring for his yard, and spending countless hours tinkering on projects in his garage and basement. Rarely was there a project that was ever truly finished, as he always found another improvement to make. He loved to drive and was happiest behind the wheel, whether on a family trip or riding motorcycles alongside his son, brother, and nephew.

He especially enjoyed racing go-karts with his son, Robert, including competing in Daytona in December 1995. Camping was another favorite pastime, whether with his brother and nephews, with his son and grandsons, with Diane in their travel trailer, or alongside his daughter and her family. Among his favorite destinations was the Amish country of Pennsylvania, a place he returned to often and always enjoyed.

Bob was immensely proud of his children and grandchildren. He faithfully attended countless marching band and concert performances directed by his son, Robert, always offering encouragement and support. He delighted in every opportunity to

celebrate the accomplishments of his family.

Those who knew Bob will remember his dependable nature, quiet strength, servant's heart, and willingness to lend a helping hand. He was happiest when caring for his family, serving his church, building something with his hands, or enjoying time with

the people he loved. His life was a testament to faith, hard work, humility, and unconditional love.

The family will receive friends from 12:30 to 2 p.m., Saturday, July 11, 2026 at Mt. Home Baptist Church. A celebration of Bob’s life will follow at 2 p.m. in the church with Rev. Ethan Cromer officiating.

In lieu of flowers, memorial contributions may be made to Mt. Home Baptist Church Building Fund, 2272 Mt. Home Church Road, Morganton, NC 28655 or to a charity of your choice.

Though he will be deeply missed, Bob leaves behind a legacy of love, faith, integrity, and service that will continue to inspire all who were blessed to know him.

Sossoman Funeral Home and Crematory Center is assisting the family with the arrangements.

Tribute Wall



Diane and family, We are truly missing Bob being out in the yard sprucing up whatever needed to be done. We're going to miss that beautiful smile and great conversations. Our deepest sympathy Dionne and Kathleen

—Dionne and Kathleen Curtis

I have met a lot of kind and dedicated men in my lifetime. Bob is the benchmark.

—Buddy Armour

I worked with Bob for decades at Lowe's. He taught me most of what I learned about building homes. But, more than that, he was my friend. I don't count many people who fit that bill. To Diane and Robert and Virginia, you are so lucky to have him as your loved one. I already miss him..

—Stephanie McKinney Jarrett