

In Remembrance of My Friend Herb Johnson:

Herb Johnson was my next door neighbor on Shrewsbury Road, not the fanciest part of Upper Arlington, but growing up we weren't so aware of that. For the record, he was Herbert Clifton Johnson III and he was proud of being "the third."

Growing up in the sixties as junior high school boys and next door neighbors, we spent a lot of time together. I have many great memories of Herb and me playing basketball in his driveway and playing wiffle golf around the yards in the neighborhood. We walked together to the corner of Nottingham and Riverside Drive every morning to catch the school bus to Hastings and we grew up a lot with each other.

My fondest memory is the lesson he taught me during the many homework sessions that we had at my house. You see, Herb had some home issues and he spent a lot of time at my house, especially in the evening, doing homework. It started out just as Herb and me; but with Herb you could expect him to include others. Many nights other students would arrive, unexpected to me, but not to him; he had invited them. Some nights the kitchen table session turned into a full house of kids doing homework together. It was a good time. When I asked him one night why he asked so many others to come over, he said (and I'm paraphrasing a little) "Bob, this stuff is hard to learn; many of the students are struggling to understand the material; maybe we can get it if we all try to learn it together." I thought that was pretty good for a junior high kid; I've remembered that, and Herb, all my life.

I was saddened when I heard of his sudden passing nearly 30 years ago. He's been gone such a long time that many of you may have forgotten about him and the many homework sessions that he organized. Perhaps as you read this, you will remember when you were a part of those evenings with Herb and you'll understand the thoughtfulness he showed to you when he invited you to participate.

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