

Miss Me - But Let Me Go

When I come to the end of the road And the sun has set for me,
I want no rites in a gloom-filled room, Why cry for a soul set free.
Miss me a little, but not too long, And not with your head bowed low.
Remember the love that we once shared, Miss me, but let me go.
For this journey that we all must take, And each must go alone.
It's all a part of the Master's plan, a step on the road to home.
When we are lonely and sick at heart, Go to the friends we know,
And bury your sorrows in doing good deeds, Miss me, but let me go.

*Perhaps you sent a lovely card,
Or sat quietly in a chair.
Perhaps you sent flowers,
if so, we saw them there.
Perhaps you spoke the kindest words,
as any friend could say.
Perhaps you were not there at all,
just thought of us each day.
Whatever you did to console our hearts,
We thank you, whatever the part*



Clifford L. Johnson

May 28, 1920 - April 16, 2010
Saturday, May 15, 2010

From a very early age, Clifford Lugene Johnson showed signs of being extraordinary. He left no stone unturned, no desire unfulfilled, and no path untraveled. His favorite expression was, "It is done to you as you believe," and his life embodied this edict. Without a doubt, he lived life on his terms, and what a life it was!

Clifford was born in Los Angeles on May 28, 1920 to parents Clifford Rebecca Robinson and Arthur Lugene Johnson. When Clifford spoke, people listened. He had a commanding presence and a head for business. He attended Jefferson High School, where he graduated with honors before attending college at UCLA. Better job opportunities lured Clifford to San Diego where he met Alva Clark, his future wife. While Clifford was working fulltime and attending school at San Diego State University, Pearl Harbor was bombed. He went into the Army in the first draft. He later sent for Alva, and they were married in Fayetteville, North Carolina, where Clifford was stationed at Fort Bragg. Their union lasted for 67 years, and from it a son and daughter were born.

He served five years as a lieutenant in the Quartermaster Division in World War II, during which time he discovered that he had a strong aversion to being told what to do. Upon returning to Los Angeles, he took a job at the post office, but he had a different plan for his life. His greatest desire was to be self-employed; he wanted to be the master of his own destiny. To this end, he started Carol's Dairy, a milk delivery company. Every night after leaving the post office, he would go home, change his clothes, and then go out again to deliver milk to his clients. Though he didn't know it then, greater things were in store for Clifford.

At the request of a friend, Clifford attended a service at a little known church in Beverly Hills. He was hooked instantly. He became a member of the Church of Religious Science, where he worshiped continuously for over sixty years. The message he received in church gave him the encouragement he needed: all things are possible if you believe. With this in mind, he quit the post office and never looked back. He became a full-time real estate broker, ultimately focusing on buying multi-unit properties and holding onto them. His real estate philosophy proved to be sound and successful, but the road wasn't always smooth. At times, he risked big and lost big, but he often repeated that he wouldn't have it any other way.

Much of his success in finding desirable properties came as result of his association with the Consolidated Board of Realists. Every Wednesday for fifty-nine years, Clifford would attend the morning meetings to hear brokers talk about the properties that they were selling. He had a personal motto: "Bring me a deal!"

He entered real estate at a time when segregation in housing was legal, and actively worked to put an end to this practice. He would knock on doors in neighborhoods outside of the African American community, asking home owners if they were interested in selling their house. More often than not, he would be met with a negative response. Undaunted, he would come back and do it all again the next day.

Clifford Johnson became the first African American asked to become a member of the Los Angeles Rotary Club Number 5, one of the most prestigious Rotary chapters in the world. He attended Rotary meetings worldwide, which afforded him the opportunity to meet many foreign dignitaries.

Being self-employed gave Clifford the opportunity to indulge his great love of travel. Along with his wife Alva, Clifford visited more than 50 countries, sometimes staying for months at a time. His favorite journey was a trip to South Africa before the end of Apartheid. He enjoyed looking the Afrikaners in the eye, showing them what African American people could accomplish with an end to separations based on race. He also loved attending the summer Olympics, and made certain that he never missed a single one so long as he was able. He is survived by his wife Alva Johnson, son Clifford Johnson II, daughter Carol Dixon, and their spouses, many grandchildren, great-grandchildren, and one great-great-grandchild. He lived an extraordinary life that had a profound impact on those who knew him.