



Donald Robert Johnstad Jr

November 6, 1947 - March 19, 2025

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Donald Robert Johnstad, Jr., also known as Don or Rob, of Wilson Creek, Washington, was a father, brother, uncle and friend to many. He passed away on March 19, 2025 in Ephrata, Washington after a long, courageous battle with Parkinson's disease.

He was born on November 6, 1947, in Port Angeles, Washington, the first child of Donald and Patricia Johnstad. He had fond memories of growing up on "the farm" near Yelm, WA where he recalled living a quintessential country life with his family, often packing a lunch and roaming the woods outside his back door with his brother on countless adventures.

He moved multiple times throughout his childhood, following his father's career movements with Chrysler. He graduated from Federal Way High School in 1965 then studied at Central Washington University. Throughout his life, Don called many places home, living in various towns and cities in Washington and Alaska, traveling frequently, and ultimately settling in Wilson Creek in 1997.

He was a man of many talents and he brought a deep sense of craftsmanship to all of his creative pursuits. Music was by far his greatest passion; it was his religion. He got his first paying gig at the age of 14, playing both in bands and as a solo act throughout his life, mastering countless instruments, singing, writing songs, and most notably excelling as a drummer. He was very proud of

his decades-long friendship and music mentorship with country music singer, Bonnie Guitar. He was a fixture on stage at the Soap Lake Businessman's Club from the 1970s until its close. Whether on stage or at home, music filled his world and brought much joy to those around him.

Don's professional journey reflected his diverse skills and interests. He was truly a jack of all trades. Like his father, he worked as a service manager for Chrysler, was a skilled and talented carpenter throughout his life, enjoyed being a farm & ranch hand for several local friends, worked as a maintenance manager at McKay Healthcare, and was also a gifted massage therapist. Most recently, he dedicated himself to teaching at Ephrata High School, where he spent 14 years working in the special needs department and proudly supporting the school's annual Cabaret production until his retirement in 2020.

He enjoyed the opportunity to share his love of music with the local youth. An adventurous spirit, Don loved spending time outdoors, especially in the mountains. He found peace in hiking, kayaking, snowmobiling and riding his motorcycles. He had a lifelong love for boats and delighted in taking drives with no destination in mind, letting his curiosity guide his way, simply enjoying the freedom and unknown of a new road.

He was also an avid reader: always hungry for knowledge of a wide variety of topics! Even in his later years when he could no longer turn the pages of a book, he devoured TV documentaries, always sharing his latest fascination with anyone who would lend an ear.

Don's warm and gentle nature made him a friend to all. He never struggled to strike up a conversation, connecting effortlessly with people of all ages and backgrounds. Always willing to lend a hand, he had a kind heart with a unique gift for lifting others up, offering humble wisdom, and maintaining unconditional belief in the people he loved. Though not associated with any particular religion, his spirituality was profound. He faced life with an ever-optimistic outlook, even in the depths of his illness; he was certain that the future looked bright.

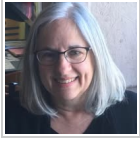
Above all, Don adored his family – especially his grandchildren who brought

him pure joy. He is survived by his daughter Julia Hubbard, son-in-law Dustin, his beloved grandchildren Natalie, Jackson, and Colton, brother Gary, and many relatives and friends. He was preceded in death by his parents, Donald and Patricia, and his brother Randy.

Don's vibrant spirit, his love of music, and his gentle soul will be cherished always. Don will be remembered not only for what he did, but for how he made people feel—valued, seen, and capable of anything. He will be deeply missed by all who knew him. In our hearts, we'll always hear him say "Right On!"

A celebration of Don's life will be held on Saturday, October 4th from 1-4pm in Ephrata: contact Julia for details @ 509-398-7727.

Tribute Wall



“ I treasure our quiet conversations, his willingness to tackle hard home repairs for us, and oh so many special holiday meals shared. We enjoyed going to EMP with Don, Margo, and Julia and hearing him tell us about bands that he played with that were featured there. And seeing photos of musical instruments that he bought or sold from various musicians. We miss Don and know that the world is a better place because he walked among us.

Lisa Knight - October 01, 2025 at 08:15 PM