



Rochelle Head Johnson

May 26, 2025

Rochelle Head Johnson, born Ouida Rochelle Head, passed away on May 26, 2025 at the age of 85. She was born in Conway, South Carolina, and moved with her parents to the Panama Canal Zone when she was 3 years old. A graduate of Balboa High School, she attended Canal Zone College before transferring to Rutgers in New Jersey. Finding that too cold for her to abide, she moved again, graduating from the University of Kentucky. She then attended Louisiana State University for her Masters in Library Science where she met Lee Warren Johnson. They married in Baton Rouge, moving next to East Lansing, Michigan where Rochelle worked at the Michigan State University library while Lee completed his PhD at the University. They then moved to Blacksburg in the summer of 1967, soon settling in on Knob Hill where they lived for the next 50+ years.

During this time, Rochelle raised two sons and worked as an elementary school librarian for Montgomery County schools, first at Prices Fork Elementary and then for a long stint at Gilbert Linkous Elementary. Entrepreneurial at heart, Rochelle was also known fondly as the “Sprout Lady” of Southwest Virginia, growing alfalfa sprouts in her basement hydroponic growing system. In supplying several grocery stores and restaurants in the New River Valley, she also employed many neighborhood kids in the washing, bagging and weighing of the sprouts.

Rochelle was active at Blacksburg Baptist Church, and served for some years as a Deacon. She was also active in the Faculty Women's Club at Virginia Tech, and enjoyed her bridge and gourmet groups, filling the house with laughter, delicious smells and plenty of folding card tables.

She was predeceased by her husband Lee Johnson. She is survived by son and daughter-in-law Eric and Ali Johnson of Palmyra, Virginia, son and daughter-in-law Mark Johnson and Hannah Wittman of Vancouver, British Columbia, and by her four grandsons: Quinn Johnson of Richmond, Virginia, Casey Johnson of Denver, Colorado, and Noah Johnson and Eli Johnson of Vancouver, British Columbia.

A memorial service will be held at a later date.

Tribute Wall

PR

“ Eric, Mark and families, Rochelle was a blessing to our family when we first moved to Blacksburg. She helped get our son caught up to other third graders in the program, reading library books and taking computer test for points. Then we realized she was a BBC member. She donated a desserts for the youth pie auctions. We bought her's our first year and it was delicious. We at least ran the price up on other years. She and Lee often sat in front of us at church. We found him to be the quieter one. Such a sweet lady! Heaven gained a gem!

Fondly, Phyllis and Dave Rettig

Phyllis Rettig - May 30, 2025 at 10:59 AM