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OBITUARIES

Vada Mae Johnson



EULESS — Vada Mae Johnson, 84, a retired teacher, entered rest Tuesday, Nov. 9, 2010.

FUNERAL: 11 a.m. Saturday at St. John Missionary Baptist Church, 3324 House-Anderson Road. Pastor Sean Taylor will officiate.

Interment: Mosier Valley Cemetery. Visitation: 1 to 8 p.m. Friday at historic Baker Funeral Home

Vada was born Jan. 31, 1926, to Richard and Lottie Mae Nelson Johnson, descendants of one of the 14 founding families of the Mosier Valley community. Vada was a graduate of Paul Quinn College, and earned a master of education at Prairie View University; she did post graduate work at University of North Texas.

Ms. Johnson began her career in the Mosier Valley schools; after desegregation, she taught first-graders at Wilshire Elementary in the Hurst-Eules-Bedford district 36 years before her retirement.

Because of restrictive adoption laws in Texas, Vada traveled to Ohio in the 1970s to adopt a daughter, Yvette. Finding Yvette had been separated

from her siblings in foster care, Vada made the decision to adopt all three children. She was a loving single mother who provided a nurturing home and disciplined upbringing for her family.

She taught Sunday school, directed many programs and was a gifted speaker for the Missionary Society at her church. She loved working with her hands, especially landscaping, gardening and sewing.

Ms. Johnson was a member of Delta Kappa Gamma, TSTA, NEA, TCTA and HEB-Retired School Employees, state and local PTA organizations and DAV. She was a board member of the Mosier Valley Community Association and worked actively with the Eules Historical Preservation Committee and Mosier Valley Cemetery Association.

SURVIVORS: She is cherished in memory by her brother, Arthur Jerome Johnson; children, Yvette Michelle Johnson, Tyrone Lee Earl Johnson and Lachelle Cherise Mitchell; grandchildren, Jacob Johnson Filholm, Malcolm Xavier Smith, Jessica C.A. Smith and Exodus Johnson; loving niece, Audrey; nephew, Milo; several generations of cousins; other family members; and many friends.

Baker Funeral Home

301 E. Rosedale, 817-332-4468

View and sign guestbook at

www.star-telegram.com/obituaries

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A descendant of freed slaves, she sought to keep history alive

❏ Vada Johnson, who died Tuesday, was known for her historic preservation work and her decades of teaching.

By Chris Vaughn
cvaughn@star-telegram.com

FORT WORTH — There was never any doubt where Vada Johnson's heart lay.

It was in a long-overlooked sliver of Tarrant County

Online



Sign the guest book for Miss Johnson at star-telegram.com/obituaries

known as Mosier Valley, a pinch of land just south of Euless hardly remembered now except by a small group of African-Americans and history buffs.

Founded in the 1870s by her great-grandparents and other freed slaves, "Mosier Valley means my roots," Miss Johnson once told the *Star-Telegram*.

"She had a great love and responsibility she felt to protect everything that had been



Star-Telegram archives

Preserving Mosier Valley history and memories was a lifelong pursuit for Vada Johnson.



Vada Johnson at the grave of her great-grandparents at Mosier Valley Cemetery in 2001: "Mosier Valley means my roots."

Star-Telegram archives

worked for by the founding members of the community," said her youngest daughter, Lachelle Mitchell. "That's what I watched her do my whole life."

Miss Johnson always promised she'd be buried in Mosier Valley Cemetery, next to her ancestors. Now is that time.

She died Tuesday in a hospital from complications of Alzheimer's disease, which took a great toll on her in the last few years. She was 84.

Well-known to many people in Euless and Fort Worth, either through her historic preservation work or her decades of teaching, Miss Johnson was a proud woman, an elegant dresser with a tranquil but firm personality, who spoke only when she had something to say and meant it when she said it.

"She was such a neat lady," Euless Mayor Mary Lib Saleh said. "She was beautiful, quiet, knowledgeable and so smart."

Miss Johnson was born Jan. 31, 1926, to Richard and Lottie Mae Nelson Johnson, who were descendants of Mosier Valley's founders. She wanted to be a teacher before she even started school.

"I was lying on the floor watching my mother iron one day and I said, 'I can't do that,'" she told the *Star-Telegram* in 1991. "My mom asked me how I was going to become a teacher without the means to do it, and I said, 'By hook or crook, I'll do it.'"

She attended the segregated Mosier Valley schoolhouse through the seventh grade, then paid to ride a bus every day after that to attend I.M. Terrell High School in Fort Worth. Because of financial hardship, it took her six years to earn a degree from Paul Quinn College in Waco, receiving it in 1950.

Miss Johnson immediately started teaching at Mosier Valley and went to Prairie View A&M University during summers to earn her master's degree.

In 1965, she made history in the Hurst-Euless-Bedford school district by becoming the first black teacher, starting out with first-graders at Wilshire Elementary. She was named teacher of the year in 1976 and retired in 1986.

"People weren't hostile," she told the *Star-Telegram* years later. "Of course, I had a lot of people that watched me to see how I was doing. . . . I could always look at my classroom door and see somebody standing there, but it didn't matter. I was doing my job."

In the late 1960s, Betty Fuller, then the head of the local Texas State Teachers Association chapter and a fellow H-E-B teacher, invited Miss Johnson to an annual convention of the National Education Association in Minneapolis.

They drove and stayed together in motels along the route. After the convention, Fuller persuaded Miss Johnson to make a quick trip to Canada while they were so close.

"This was July in Thunder Bay, Canada, and she and I went into this motel together," Fuller said. "We asked for a room. They said they didn't have any. I

"She had a great love and responsibility she felt to protect everything that had been worked for by the founding members of the community."

Lachelle Mitchell, daughter

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knew they did because you could see the keys across the counter. I knew what it was. It was racism.

"I didn't talk to Vada about discrimination, but being on that trip made me aware that there are pockets of it everywhere."

Miss Johnson, who remained single all her life, traveled to Ohio in 1976 to adopt a girl, only to discover that the girl had been separated from her brother and sister in foster care. So Miss Johnson adopted all three, bringing them into a strict but loving home where the food was mouth-watering good and church an unbreakable habit.

"As a result of her influence, we all have at one point been a teacher or are a teacher," Mitchell said.

After retiring, Miss Johnson redoubled her efforts to preserve Mosier Valley history, donating many items and photographs to historical groups around the area and keeping pressure on Fort Worth city officials not to forget the oldest black settlement in Tarrant County. Saving the actual community proved more difficult; it is almost entirely an industrial area now.

"She was very proud of her heritage," said Fuller, who served with Miss Johnson on the Euless Historical Preservation Committee.

She is survived by three children, Yvette Michelle Johnson, Tyrone LeEarl Johnson and Lachelle Mitchell; a brother, Arthur Jerome Johnson; and four grandchildren.

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NORTHEAST CLICK

Eules holiday parade. You have until Monday to register your entry for the annual Eules Christmas Parade of Lights set for Dec. 4 at the Eules Family Life Center. "An Out of This World Christmas" is the theme, so the sky's the limit on imaginative entries. Call **Jerry Po-feet** at 817-685-1449 or check it out at www.eulesstx.gov/pacs/parade.htm.

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DATE DISTRIBUTED 11/23/10 DATE OF ARTICLE 11/23/10 NEWSPAPER Citybizlist

iT'Z Acquires the Assets of the Eules and Pasadena, Texas Lido Entertainment Locations

November 12, 2010

Citybizlist

PASADENA --(BUSINESS WIRE)-- iT'Z, the leader in family entertainment announced today the acquisition of the assets of the former Incredible Pizza locations in Eules and Pasadena, Texas from a former franchisee.

"We are very excited to expand our brand in these new locations. These acquisitions, along with planned new future store growth will provide great opportunities for our current and future team members," said iT'Z CEO W. Mark Moore.

The International Association of Amusement Parks and Attractions (IAAPA) recognized iT'Z Houston location as the Top Family Entertainment Center (FEC) in the World in 2009.

iT'Z Eules and Pasadena will offer a variety of favorites on their expansive all you care to eat buffet. In addition, guests will enjoy over 150 of the latest redemption and video games, bumper cars, mini-bowling and indoor go-karts. Guests may also enjoy eating in one of four themed dining rooms.

iT'Z will be making significant capital expenditures in new interior décor as well as new games and attractions over the next few months.

"These locations were a natural fit for our company," said Brian Cohen, Vice-President of Operations. "Our mission is to create a fun experience for families and we plan to do that in these locations while providing a great value to our guests."

For more information about iT'Z Family Food & Fun, visit www.itzusa.com.

About iT'Z Family Food & Fun

iT'Z is where families come to eat and play! iT'Z offers guests a full and balanced buffet with a variety of options including pizza, pasta, soup, salad and desserts. iT'Z provides high-quality food, themed dining rooms, video games, amusement rides, 10-pin string bowling and party facilities. The Colorado Springs Gazette recognized iT'Z as the number one place in Colorado Springs to host birthday parties, sports banquets, group events and award ceremonies. iT'Z Family Food and Fun in Houston, TX won the 2009 Top Family Entertainment Centers (FECs) of the World Award from IAAPA. The company currently operates locations in Albuquerque, NM, Houston, TX, Pasadena, TX, Eules, TX and Colorado Springs, CO and is evaluating sites all over the United States.

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AREA BRIEFS

'Turkey chase' will help needy families

EULESS - Area Lions Clubs are sponsoring a "turkey chase" to help needy families and the elderly with a Thanksgiving meal. The run/walk starts at 9 a.m. Nov. 20 at the Villages of Bear Creek Park. The entry fee is \$15 the day of the event. The Lions Clubs of Euless, Southlake and Handley Meadowbrook are promoting the fundraiser. - Staff report

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Eules considering tax zone to jump-start Glade Parks project

❶ The city is looking at \$12.1 million in infrastructure spending for the 193-acre mixed-use development near Texas 121 and Glade Road.

By Terry Evans

tevans@star-telegram.com

To jump-start an upscale commercial/residential development, Eules is considering about \$12.1 million in infrastructure projects on 193 acres along Texas 121 near Glade Road.

Money for the projects would come from a tax increment reinvestment zone, or TIRZ, that the city wants to create, with participation from Tarrant County and Tarrant County College, city officials said.

Mayor Mary Lib Saleh said the property is a prime retail spot and all the more attractive for its proximity to Texas 121. "I bet I have more questions about that particular piece of property than any other in Eules," Saleh said.

Deputy City Manager Loretta Getchell said the proposed zone is south of the Heritage Town Crossing Shopping Center, east of Heritage Avenue and north of Cheek Sparger Road.

The mixed-use development, Glade Parks, would include shops, restaurants, town homes and office space, blending pedestrian-oriented residential and commercial development with traditional destination retail and restaurants, she said. Rubloff Development Group, based in the Chicago area, has planned Glade Parks for several years.

Zone-funded work would include construction of Rio Grande Bridge, Rio Grande Boulevard, Brazos Boulevard and other public streets; improvements to portions of Heritage Avenue; construction of main entrances into the development; medians and landscaping, Getchell said. "By creation of the TIRZ, the city and other taxing entities can pledge a portion of new tax revenue generated from the development to pay for the necessary infrastructure costs," Getchell said.

If participation agreements can be reached with the county and college, construction on the infrastructure could begin in February, Getchell said.

This report includes material from Star-Telegram archives.

Terry Evans, 817-390-7620

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Asian culture and community events in the Dallas area

Thursday, November 18, 2010

Dallas Morning News

DEBORAH FLECK

Ikebana demonstration

Mary Lib Saleh stays busy as mayor of Euless. But she also finds time to be artistic. She's a fan of *ikebana*, the elegant and stylized Japanese art of floral arrangement. Not only is she a member of the Fort Worth and the Dallas chapters of Ikebana International, she is a master teacher in the Ohara School of Ikebana. Unshin Ohara, who died in 1916, explored fields and mountains to develop a style of *ikebana* that expresses the beauty of natural scenery.

Saleh will demonstrate her talent in an *ikebana* program at 10 a.m. today at the Euless Public Library, 201 N. Ector Drive. The focus of the free program will be on creating autumn arrangements in unique baskets. Reservations are requested. Call 214-535-4208 or visit www.ikebana-dfw.org.