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Gary Johnson ~ 1940-2008

Deacon 'fought the good fight'

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Pastor Matthew Black references a favorite Scripture when remembering his long-time friend and colleague Gary Johnson.

"I have fought the good fight, I have finished my course, I have kept the faith," said Black, reciting 2 Timothy 4:7. "That was him all the way. He finished everything he started."

Johnson, a deacon at the Tabernacle Baptist Church of Hanover Park, died early Christmas Eve. He was 68.

His family believes a hip injury he sustained in September on a missionary trip caused a blood clot, triggering a heart attack on Dec. 23. Loved ones were at the hospital singing hymns to Johnson, who woke from his coma and lifted his hands seconds before he passed away.

The Kansas native and long-time Hanover Park resident worked as a financial consultant and used his background

Life story



Judy and Gary Johnson

to assist members of his church.

"He helped many families get out of debt and helped us be wise enough with our finances that we bought land to hopefully build new facilities," said Black.

Always one to volunteer, Johnson used to host a local

TV show as part of the village's community relations committee.

Johnson was also treasurer of the Hanover Park Progress Party, formed in July by a small group of residents to fight what they call a "culture of no."

"He felt much of the leadership was never in agreement on a number of issues," said Black. "He thought the party would strive for compromise to move forward."

Hanover Park Mayor Rod Craig said Johnson was widely respected. "He didn't want to run for office but still wanted to contribute," said Craig. "He always found the time to reach out to his neighbors."

In the fall, Johnson and his wife, Judy, celebrated their 46th anniversary on a mission trip in Spain, where they helped convert a 300-year-old Basque farmhouse to a Christian camp and conference center. He's also survived by children Jim Johnson and Lisa Antonucci and seven grandchildren.

In lieu of flowers, donations can be made to the Tabernacle Baptist Church Library Fund. Call (847) 882-5580 for details.