



Bob and Bonnie Johnson Tree Dedication May 21, 2023

Today we are happy to honor Bob and Bonnie Johnson by dedicating a tree on their behalf at the Sons of Norway Park! This is a tradition that began in 1989 and has continued each year since that time. A new photo of the park, indicating the location of each tree, was recently completed. The list of people honored is available on the program for today's event.

Bob and Bonnie moved to Bismarck from Grand Forks in 1970. Bob had been teaching at UND and earned his doctorate degree. When they moved to Bismarck, he taught at the University of Mary for many years. He then became Executive Director for the North Dakota League of Cities and served in that position for 12 years. Next, he was hired by the ND Association of Counties, a position he held for 4 years.

Before moving to Bismarck Bonnie worked at Lake Region Community College in Devils Lake and taught at Aakers Business College in Grand Forks. After their move to Bismarck, as the family got larger, her time was filled as a full-time mom. Bob and Bonnie have three children, 2 daughters and one son. They have 10 grandchildren and 4 great grandchildren. None of them live in North Dakota.

They joined our Sverdrup 4-107 lodge in 1990 and Bob was elected lodge president in 2002. During his reign as president the lodge grew to a membership of 500 people. He explained to me that there was a membership committee of 6 members. They met every month to determine ways to increase the lodge membership. They discussed how to approach potential members and identify those who would be likely new members. There was a lot of follow-up with people and encouragement for those folks to join. Others within the lodge were also on board with the process and it worked!

The Lutfisk Suppers were an important part of memories of things both Bob and Bonnie participated in each year. They regularly attend social meetings as well.

Yes, they have also been to Norway! While in Norway they visited with many of their relatives. Bob's grandparents were from Sigdal, Venstre, Grue and Hol. Bonnie's grandparents were from Sondre, Nordfjord, Ålesund and Hamar. When they were in Norway, they visited family as well as taking the Norway in a Nutshell tour and the Hurtigruten coastline cruise, an ocean voyage which stops at many small villages along the way ending at Bergen.

They had the great opportunity to spend the 17th of May in Norway. They remembered meeting at the church for services på Norsk, then watched the parade as it went from the church to the school, the Norwegians were in full Norwegian attire for their special holiday. The food was abundant, and they particularly remembered the rommegrøt served that day!

While in Norway they were able to meet many relatives (on both sides) and spend time visiting family. Many of them have been here to visit them as well. How fun to visit with these relatives who live so far away. Congratulations Bob and Bonnie on being honored with a tree in your name.