



B. Jack Johnson

January 22, 1933 - December 19, 2025

B. Jack Johnson's work for the golf course and turfgrass industry is legendary. Even in recent years, long after his 1997 retirement as Professor of Crop and Soil Sciences at the University of Georgia Experiment Station where he worked for 41 years, just a mention of his name in public has evoked quick recognition and adulation, especially among golf course and related professionals who know the history of turfgrass research, including how to control weeds. When he started his work, there was no weed control information for Georgia and very little throughout the Southeast. B. Jack Johnson changed all that.

Professional recognition, however, has long stood second behind Jack's reputation as a kind, generous, and loving presence in the Griffin community where he and his wife, Mavis, who predeceased him last April after 70 years of marriage, started their careers in 1954. You would not be around Jack long without wanting to know his secret for being so magnetic. During the childhood of their daughter, Celindy, born in 1958, the Johnson house was where all the neighborhood children wanted to be. When dinner bells rang, it was a struggle to leave because Jack (and Mavis) made them feel so beautifully seen and loved.

Earlier this fall, at age 92, Jack moved to be near Celindy in Lawrenceville. It was there where he died peacefully in a senior living home on December 19. Despite new health challenges over the two months before his passing, Jack's last days were often full of joy, brought to life by UGA football. Indeed, almost

more than family or church, the Bulldogs were a source of life for Jack. Even before his move near Celindy, their daily phone calls were dominated by talk of who was playing whom and where UGA might stand in the rankings. In recent weeks, sounds ringing from Jack's room were either Bulldog announcers on TV loudly describing plays or Jack and Celindy together yelling (politely) at the referees.

Jack was the son of the late Harry Johnson and Bonnie Johnson. Born on January 22, 1933, on a cotton farm in Heard County, at Roopville, Georgia, Jack was the oldest of three boys. After his graduation from Centralhatchee High School in 1950, he attended Berry College where he received his BS in animal science in 1954. Soon thereafter, he and Mavis, whom he met at Berry, were married and moved to Griffin for Jack's job at the Experiment Station. Six weeks after their marriage, Jack was drafted into the US Army and served two years, including eighteen months in Germany. After his discharge, Jack resumed work at the Experiment Station, later leaving temporarily to earn his MS in plant science at Texas A&M.

Jack and Mavis joined Griffin First United Methodist Church in 1958. They loved the church. Jack served various times on different church committees, including the church council, finance, beautification and grounds, and the memorial garden committee. Additionally, he served as church trustee, annual conference delegate, Sunday School superintendent, and president of the Joy Sunday School Class. Until his health prevented it, attending church was a highlight of the week for Jack. Earlier this year, on Sunday morning, he would dress smartly and sit eagerly at the front door for his ride (volunteers from the Men's Bible Class who loved Jack) long before the appointed hour. "I want to make sure I don't miss church."

During his early research career at the Experiment Station, Jack focused on row crops such as sorghum, soybeans, and sunflowers. His research efforts, however, turned to weed problems in turfgrass and development of practical solutions to many of those problems. His findings excited the industry and created enduring impact. For many years, Jack was the most published weed

scientist in the industry. His beloved friend and colleague, Bob Carrow, Professor Emeritus, UGA Crop and Soil Sciences, recently said, "Jack was the top weed scientist in the world." Among professional awards and honors, Jack was named American Society of Agronomy Fellow and Crop Science Society of America Fellow, both of which are the world's top accolades for weed scientists. He was also recipient of the Distinguished Service Award from the Southern Turfgrass Association and the first Outstanding Service Award by the Georgia Golf Course Superintendents Association.

Jack is survived by his brothers Frank (Kathy) and Harold (Sandi) and their children, as well as his daughter, Celindy, and his son-in-law, Glenn Kellum. The funeral service for B. Jack Johnson will be held Monday, December 22, 2025, at 11:00 AM in the chapel at Griffin First United Methodist Church, 1401 Maple Drive, preceded at 10:00 AM by visitation in the church parlor.

Officiating will be Rev. Andrew Covington. A graveside service will be held immediately afterward at Oak Hill Cemetery, Griffin.

In lieu of flowers, gifts may be made to Griffin First United Methodist Church or Berry College.

For online condolences please visit www.haistenmcculloughfuneralhome.com. Haisten McCullough Funeral Home, 1155 Everee Inn Road, Griffin is in charge of arrangements.

Cemetery Details

Oak Hill Cemetery

Memorial Dr.
Griffin, GA 30223

Previous Events

Visitation

DEC **22**. 10:00 AM - 11:00 AM (ET)

First United Methodist Church
1401 Maple Drive
Griffin, GA 30224

Service

DEC **22**. 11:00 AM (ET)

First United Methodist Church
1401 Maple Drive
Griffin, GA 30224

Tribute Wall

PJ

“ Jack came to the Golf Course I worked on several times to help establish test plots for weed control on my location. He also helped set weed control materials to be used on southern grasses. Jack is a dear friend. Palmer Maples Jr

Palmer Maples Jr - December 21, 2025 at 03:11 PM

JA

“ Celindy, I'm so sorry to hear about your daddy. I am praying for your peace and comfort.

Julie Avery - December 20, 2025 at 10:29 PM

FS

I met BJ while working for Charlie Underwood at Northwood CC, Lawrenceville GA, circa 1972. He became a friend and mentor because of his vast knowledge in weed science. Rest in the arms of Jesus my friend.

Psalms 116:15

Frank Siple-Flowery Branch, GA

Frank Siple - December 21, 2025 at 02:19 PM

JS

“ Celindy I am so sorry about your dad. He and your mom are back together again. May God wrap his loving arms around you and your family during this difficult time.

Jenny Cowan Smith - December 20, 2025 at 09:57 PM

OM

“ Jack was one nice gentleman and wonderful neighbor. We all are going to miss Jack Johnson. Q3

Oliver Quimby Melton - December 20, 2025 at 04:43 PM