

## Terry V. Johnson

It is said that we build monuments to solemn asses but we remember in our hearts the people who made us laugh. Such a person was Terry V. Johnson, 62, who died in his Fort Smith home in January following a lengthy battle with cancer. Hearts belonging to Terry's extensive e-mail audience throughout the country are saddened because it's no longer possible to go to one's computer first thing in the morning and find a pithy comment, entertaining article or delightful illustration from Terry to help one cope with today's complicated culture. A man for all seasons, true to his conscience, Terry passionately supported people and causes he believed in and with equal fervor attacked those he thought to be hypocritical.

Terry was born Jan. 16, 1947, in San Antonio. He was the son of George and Lois (Edwards) Johnson. His father's military service took the family to several eastern seaboard states and France before they settled in Sikeston, Mo. Terry's career in the communication industry began with high school newspaper and debate programs. He was "TJ the DJ" on KSIM radio long before graduating from Sikeston High School. He worked his way through the University of Missouri School of Journalism, earning bachelor's and master's degrees, while managing broadcast production for a Columbia television station. An office in the Donald W. Reynolds Alumni Building at the University of Missouri is named for Terry.

A child of the '60s, Terry arrived in Fort Smith to begin his 30-year career with Donrey Media Group driving a funky Volkswagen bus covered with graffiti. When he died, he had a red Ferrari convertible in his garage.

Terry's first job at Donrey was with KFSA-TV Channel 5 (now KFSM-TV) as an intern. At KFSA-TV, among other duties, he created the character of Dr. Boo to host late night creature feature movies. Dr. Boo and his co-host, Melvin the Dummy Mummy, frequently appeared at Fort Smith events.

In the early 1970s, Terry became advertising and public relations director of Donrey. In that capacity he supervised a variety of activities, including corporate communications, advertising and marketing campaigns for the corporation and individual Donrey properties, community relations and, at one time, Donrey's Washington news bureau. He particularly enjoyed working on special events, including the opening of new and remodeled facilities at many of the Donrey locations. He preserved memorabilia of Donald W. Reynolds, founder of Donrey, and took special pride in producing Mr. Reynolds' elaborate 80th and 85th birthday parties in Las Vegas and Hawaii. Ill health and the sale of Donrey led to Terry's retirement in the early 1990s.

In retirement, Terry explored many interests, including military history and a fascination for aircraft of all types. As an ordained lay minister, Terry performed numerous Arkansas weddings. He also continued to develop his extraordinary writing ability and became a sailor capable of navigating in the open sea. After researching his father's service in the Pacific Theatre of World War II, Terry took his mother on a tour of each of the major battle sites, sometimes traveling by cargo plane to atolls off the routes of passenger service. Through the Internet, he collected an expansive circle of friends. Terry rescued many dogs from the SPCA and was known for his spontaneous generosity and random acts of kindness.

Terry is survived by two sisters, Rise Howard (Sikeston, Mo.) and Leslie Kelsay (Santa Clara, Calif.); two nephews, Ryan Howard (League City, Texas) and Kyle Howard (Springfield, Mo.); four maternal aunts; an assortment of cousins; two dogs and many friends. The family has privately marked his death.

Terry's friends are invited to attend an informal "Toast to Terry" gathering at 2 p.m. March 1, 2009, at the Sebastian County Humane Shelter, 3800 Kelley Hwy., in Fort Smith. The gathering will be in the pet cemetery located just behind the shelter building. In case of inclement weather, attendees will move to the education room at the shelter. Terry's two dogs, Lulu and New Dog, have been newly adopted and will be guests of honor.

Cremation was under the direction of Edwards Funeral Home.

Those wishing to honor Terry are encouraged to make a contribution to the Sebastian County Humane Society in his memory.

To send an online tribute, please visit [www.edwardsfuneralhome.com](http://www.edwardsfuneralhome.com).