



Anton Johnson, retired building contractor, died June 1, 2010, at the age of 94. Anton served all his life as a carpenter and building contractor. Known by many of his co-workers and customers as "Tony," he worked on many large and small projects in the Gallatin Valley, leaving behind a legacy of buildings and remodeling projects that will last for generations. One of his first construction jobs was working on the Willson School building. In the late 1930s, he helped install a clock on the front of the building that is still there today. Family lore has it that the woman he would one day marry watched him work on the clock.

Like many others in the 1940's, Anton's career was interrupted by World War II. As a member of the 163rd Infantry unit of the Montana National Guard, he was stationed in New Guinea and elsewhere. His duties included motor maintenance. One of Anton's most memorable carpentry projects was building the steeple, pews, and pulpit of the Soldier's Chapel near Big Sky, honoring members of the Guard who lost their lives serving their country.

Anton came from a large family of six boys and four girls. After the death of his first wife in childbirth, Olaf, Anton's immigrant father, returned to his native Norway, leaving their two children – Alfred and Hilda – in Montana with friends, and married his deceased wife's cousin, Abelona Andersen. With her he had eight additional children: Anton, Anders, Martha, Edward, Agnes, Ruth, Ole, and Reidar. Anton was born September 10, 1915, south of Whitehall in a railroad section house. He spent several of his childhood years in Norway before the family returned to Montana, settling in Martinsdale where his father worked for the Milwaukee Railroad. The family moved to Bozeman after husband and father Olaf was killed in a 1930 railroad accident. Anton graduated from Gallatin County High School.

Although he did not have a lot of formal education, Anton had an active mind. Even as he was in the hospital struggling to stay alive following a serious heart attack, he talked about how he had an idea for mastering the current oil spill crisis in the Gulf of Mexico. He was very good at licking repair problems that stumped others in the family. Believing that one should solve a problem right the first time, he was careful to think things through before doing the hands-on work. With the exception of a few accordion lessons, he had no musical training yet was able to pick out tunes on his violin and harmonica, as well as the accordion. He enjoyed making model ships, birdhouses and fishing. Just before his final illness, Anton was planning maintenance work on his home, including painting fences. He loved to be busy, and when he wasn't, he loved to watch wrestling on TV.

In 1939, Anton and Shirley Hoy of Bozeman eloped to Butte, beginning a 65-year marriage that ended with her death in 2004. They had two children, Dan A. Johnson and Debbie D. Johnson, both of Bozeman. Anton and Shirley had one granddaughter, Laura Joan Johnson and one great-granddaughter, Zoe, Bozeman. Except for a couple of years in Roseberg, Oregon in the early fifties, the family lived in Bozeman. Anton built the family home on Sourdough Road and lived there for more than fifty years with his wife and daughter.

Survivors include his daughter and son; daughter-in-law, Lonnie Johnson; granddaughter, Laura J. Johnson; 8-year-old great-granddaughter, Zoe Johnson; and sister, Ruth (Paul) Schofield – all of Bozeman. Other surviving sisters and brothers include Martha Russell, Newberg, Oregon; Agnes Klemme Bergstrom, Phoenix, Oregon; Olaf, Helena; and Reidar (Marga), White Sulphur Springs; and sisters-in-law, Phyllis Hoy Stoneback, Redmond, Washington, and Charlene Hoy, Laguna Woods, California. He is also survived by numerous nieces and nephews.

Anton's late wife's 12-year-old miniature poodle, Becky, which brought much happiness and companionship to both over the years, also survives.