

Obituary posted in "Connection," the local newsletter of Texas Dept. of Aging and Disabilities:

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### DADS' Lucinda Johnson Remembered for Helpfulness, Sunny Disposition

Lucinda Johnson, an administrative assistant who supported the Compliance and Oversight unit in DADS Regulatory Services, died unexpectedly Dec. 1. She was 46 and had 24 years of state service.

Supervisor Della Rainey described Johnson as someone who didn't wait to be asked to help, whether it was proactively handling dozens of details to make the hiring process run smoother for a supervisor, volunteering to be the office's new fire safety representative or being the coordinator for the unit's get-togethers.

And then there were her baking skills. "She was passionate about baking and could bake just about anything," Rainey said.

It was a gift she shared with co-workers on many occasions, Assistant Commissioner for Regulatory Services Veronda Durden said. "She was always ready to pitch in and help, whether it was baking a cake or making copies. She will be remembered for her smile and her sunny disposition."

Johnson is survived by her husband, James; a stepdaughter, Felicia Lynn Johnson; a stepson, Joshua Carlson; a sister, Tina; and a niece and nephew, Marlayna Schmidt and Kane Starrett.

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Patrick Haney

Poor Yorick member, now living in Rome

I love Cyndi Johnson. I love James Johnson. Both of them have touched my soul, not just my heart, not just my life, but my soul; that place of places. Cyndi's abrupt departure shocked me. It broke my heart. It fucked me up. My little four-year old daughter looked at me when I received the news and consoled me "anche tu piange?" (you cry too?). I told her why. I told her about Cyndi, I told her about James. She learned that crying wasn't a child's domain.

I can cook the fuck out of a pumpkin pie. You can't even imagine. Cyndi didn't even get to realize how killer her recipe was when she sent it to me. I live in old Europe, Italy to be exact, we don't "do" canned pumpkins. Che cazzo e una zucca nel latino (what the fuck is a pumpkin in a can)? Ever had Cyndi's pumpkin pie? Maybe, if you were fortunate enough. Ever had Cyndi's pumpkin pie with fresh pumpkin? I doubt it.

What about the hugs? I've never, never, never, never, never, never, never, never, never, had a hug so complete as a Cyndi hug. No bump and grind, no sexual innuendo, no poor poor pitiful me, no declarations of unending love, no self-conscious pats on the back to uncomfortably assure that "we're just friends". No, no, no, no, no, we're talking soul hugs here. And if you've never had the blessing of a Cyndi hug, it would only have been a matter of time. But if you have hugged Cyndi, well, then you know. And you've been blessed.

I love you Cyndi. I miss you. The thought of James without you makes me cry, even as I write. Please give Jesus one of those hugs. Tell Him, we expect one from both of you when we cross over.

Carla & David McCandless  
Old friends

Cyndi was the most beautiful person I have ever known. Her smile could light up the darkest room. I always knew if I needed anything, she would be there for me, and she was. Cyndi gave so much of herself to those around her. Her kindness touched so many, in so many ways.

I will never forget the day she, Christine and I spent driving to Fredericksburg and then stopping at the costume store. She found the most incredible green gown to wear to the Renaissance party. I cannot remember what I ended up with, but I still see her dancing in her green gown. We had so much fun that night.

Robert Woodruff (“Woody”)  
Poor Yorick member

The Cindy I know, Loved All. Cindy demonstrated her love for James, his family, her family and her friends through patience, kindness, and humility. Cindy was loyal to her family and friends and she would help in any way within her power. If she could not help, then she would get James to help. Because she knew James Loves as well.....  
Woody

John Lewis  
Old friend

"The best time to plant a tree is 20 years ago. The second best time to plant a tree is today." --African Proverb

I recognized shortly after meeting Cyndi that she had a gift for making the people around her feel special and loved. When Cyndi hugged you, she hugged you with her entire heart and soul. She took me under her wing when I was fifteen years old. To me, she was the friend who'd known me longer and knew me better than any other. Sometimes we wouldn't speak for months at a time, but even when I lived thousands of miles away, she instinctively knew to call when I needed a friend most. Cindy was the person I could open up and tell anything to. She was the greatest listener. For twenty two years she listened to my joys, sorrows, fears and everything in between. Many people pay therapists a heap of money to sit, listen, and give counsel like Cyndi did for me. I learned a lot from listening to her as well. Seeing how Cyndi dealt with loss and adversity in her life has always been an inspiration to me in mine.

She was an angel.

*Cheryl Craddock-Melchor*  
HCS and TxHmL Policy Specialist  
Texas Department of Aging and Disability Services

Cyndi was a special light in my life. She was so full of joy, love and optimism; she had a way of making you appreciate every day and a way of making you smile, no matter what. I used to work with Cyndi at the state school, and what I remember most is how welcome and accepted I felt by her from the minute I stepped onto Castner Estates. She became a friend to me quickly, and thanks to her we never lost touch, even after we went our separate ways to new jobs. In fact, in my mind one of Cyndi's most precious legacies is the gift of friendship she gave to a whole group of us--- her Saturday morning "post-state-school employee" breakfast club group. About every three months or so, Cyndi would insist the group of us come together to catch up over breakfast. I missed a couple of those breakfasts over the past few years, but I think I made it to more of them than I missed. We always had a great time, and it's been such a blessing to share my life with this group of exceptional women!

Friends like Cyndi are a rare treasure and I am so fortunate to have known her. She generously shared her heart, good humor and words of wisdom with others. I will remember her fondly, and will miss her terribly. May she now wear that beautiful purple she loved as often as she wants to, drink as many tequila shots as she wants to, and may she be forever free from all worry and pain.

Bobbie Nell Schmidt  
Aunt, sister of her Dad Robert Henry Schmidt

Who was Cindy to me....joyful, happy, wonderful sense of humor.

When I was still living in Dallas, I would often drop by my brother's house for a visit. There would be Cindy, sitting in the middle of the living room floor with a guitar on her lap. She was surrounded by friends of hers and friends of my brothers singing away, laughing delightfully all the while telling stories and jokes. There was my brother, her father, glowing with love and pride. A scene I will never forget.

Then there was the kind, thoughtful, gentle and sweet Cindy.....

She would call me often wanting to know how I was. What was I doing. Was I healthy and happy. What could she do for me? Seldom, if ever were there concerns that she may have. Mostly it was all about her love for me and her memories of times we had together...The happy time we had here in Taos. All the snow, etc. The happy times in Dallas, etc.... Only if I asked would she talk about herself, but even then it was her concerns about others who surrounded her in Austin.

Then there was as the deep sadness and life and death questions over the loss of her father.....

It is not necessary to go into all that other than to say she was certain he was near. I did not talk with her this way about her mother because I did not know Gail very well. I will add this however, I am certain when she arrived on Monday, they were both there to greet her with open arms and glowing with love.

Bobbie Nell

John Casner  
Poor Yorick member

Cyndi-

I first met Cyndi at the Austin State School about 1989. She quickly established herself as a person who got along with everyone. Not an easy task at the state school, in those days of ongoing change and perpetual crisis. She took the time to be kind to everyone. If someone was having a problem, be that office staff, professional staff, direct support staff, anyone... she would talk with others and discretely find a way to help that person. After Cyndi and James fell in love and committed their lives to each other, she was James' biggest supporter and promoter. Helping him establish his own consulting business and supporting his music and the band. I know she provided guidance and support to many family members and friends, and we are talking about a large, extended circle of family and friends. Her baking and culinary activities were her art and creative outlet. Making wonderful food made people smile and feel good. Cyndi liked that. I can't help but think about how many people have felt her caring, love, and support. And benefitted from her advice. Advice that may not have always been the advice people were looking for.... but it was the always the advice Cyndi thought they needed. And she was usually right. A true measure of her life is that large circle of people she has touched. And that large group of people who loved and cared for her. I will always remember her smile and those big hugs.

Debra Woodruff

Robert Woodruff's wife and her good friend and co-worker

In the last few years, I came to know Cyndi in a new light. We had been friends for about 15 years and recently became co-workers. Cyndi has always been a compassionate, thoughtful and most of all, generous person. She carried these traits into the work place and everyone was better for it.

Cyndi's unique spirit lifted my heart. In fact, I will never forget the day we walked throughout the house looking for orbs that were showing up in our pictures.

Cyndi, your memory is eternal!

James,

We love you and remember we are here for you.

Debra

Christine Fish  
Cyndi's best friend

Cyndi always approached situations with the attitude "how can I help?" It didn't matter if she knew you or not. She was there for you, even if you weren't behaving well or there for her. She was wise well beyond her years of experience and always listened with a heart filled with empathy and compassion. She could see into my soul and was always a source of comfort and laughter. We should all be so lucky as to have a Cyndi in our lives. She was my best friend. No words exist to describe how much I will miss her.

Christine

Ron Nottebart  
Poor Yorick member

Cyndi was tension. Struggle. She wrestled with things, but didn't always let you help. She made you look twice. She danced while we played. She was strength. She was hope. She was troubled. She was loved. She was a part of a whole...but a bastion of individualism. She was despair at times, and triumph only moments later. She could describe a problem and a solution in one breath. She was vulnerable and force of nature all at once. She could, and would, cook. And she made me smile. God, what pain...but what joy.