

Louise Murphy Johnson

Student – Citizen – Educator

Inducted into the Inaugural SC Hall of Fame October 30, 2009

Louise was born in Glendale, Arizona in 1935 to Norman & Eleanor (“Boots”) Murphy. They moved to Eloy in 1946. Norman worked for Anderson Clayton Cotton Company as a field man and also became Eloy’s Justice of the Peace. Louise and her siblings, Jane, Norma & Wiley all attended Eloy Elementary and Santa Cruz High School. As a child, Louise had perfect attendance from fourth grade through her senior year in high school and was Salutatorian of her eighth grade class at Eloy Elementary.

Louise played a significant role in molding Santa Cruz Union High School. She was part of the largest freshman class the year Santa Cruz opened. Her sister, Jane, was a senior and her sister, Norma, was a junior. Since Louise’s freshman class was the largest, they controlled the votes that chose cherry red and silver grey for the school colors. That class also controlled the votes for the school fight song, the school motto, as well as the Dust Devil theme. Louise remembers the school as beautiful, clean and new. The auditorium was completed for her class’ graduation in 1953. While at SC, she played the team sports of volleyball, basketball and softball. She was also a member of the National Honor Society, was a cheerleader and the Student Body Secretary. As a senior, Louise was elected Girl of the Year. Her father, Norman, was on the SCVUHS School Board throughout all four of his children’s tenure at the school and he presented each of them with their diplomas at graduation.

In 1957, Louise graduated from Northern Arizona University with a degree in Elementary Education. She has also done graduate work at all three Arizona Universities: ASU, NAU and UofA. After graduation from college, she taught her first two years in Flagstaff and the rest of her teaching years have been spent in Eloy. Louise held high expectations for her students and rejoiced in their accomplishments. She was determined to make her students the best and she loved to see them achieve! After retiring, Louise returned to Eloy to teach migrant children in the first, second and third grades. Romelda Rogers Meyer states that, “Louise has taught school in Eloy for the past 48 years. She has probably touched the lives of more Santa Cruz High School students than any other alumni of the school.”

Many years after high school and college, Louise married Larry Johnson, whom had refereed SC basketball games while she was a cheerleader there. Louise’s oldest three children, Roy, Colleen and Annette, also attended and were involved in SCVUHS activities. She loved that her oldest children attended school in Eloy while she taught there simultaneously. The Johnson’s were always members of the Santa Cruz Booster Club.

Louise has found memories about her time in Eloy. One of her favorite recollections is of visits from the Arizona Department of Education to Curiel School. Each time they would come to observe the children of Curiel, they would be in awe at how well the school functioned and how much the children achieved. That always made her very proud! Louise is now teaching her third generation of children. “It is special to teach the children and grandchildren of former students,” states Louise. “I have loved teaching so many of my friends’ children. It is a special joy to have grown students return and tell me that I made a difference in their lives, that I was their favorite teacher. It’s a great feeling to know that they’ve grown to be successful adults.”

Louise was honored by Santa Cruz Valley Union High School in 2006 by honoring her as Grand Marshall in the homecoming parade.