

# Arthur L. Johnson

9/17/1947 - 3/28/2021



Arthur L. Johnson, beloved father, grandfather, brother, friend, and community lawyer, died peacefully at his home in Jamaica Plain, MA on March 28, 2021.

Born in Toledo, Ohio, on September 17, 1946, Arthur was the oldest of Edith Dooley Johnson and William Johnson's six sons. Arthur graduated in 1964 from St. Francis de Sales high school in Toledo, Ohio. He graduated in 1968 from the College of the Holy Cross in Worcester, where he was editor of the campus newspaper and participated on the varsity tennis team.

Arthur served in the United States Navy from 1968 to 1970 and was stationed on a destroyer off the coast of Vietnam. When he returned, Arthur was granted an honorable discharge from the Navy as a conscientious objector to the war in

Vietnam. Arthur then moved to Boston, where he helped form the Legal In-Service Project to assist other servicemen.

In 1971, Arthur co-founded the New England chapter of Vietnam Veterans Against the War (VVAW) and was a principal organizer of VVAW's May 1971 march on Concord, Lexington, and Boston; he also organized a VVAW protest in Washington, D.C. Long after the war ended, Art continued to help veterans connect with housing and other services.

Arthur earned his law degree from Northeastern University School of Law in 1974 and practiced law in Jamaica Plain for more than 40 years. In his legal practice, Arthur often chose to represent people who traditionally lacked equal access to legal services. His sharp intellect made him a strong advocate for his clients. Arthur served as legal clinic educator for more than 18 years, teaching community economic development and real estate law at the Legal Services Center of Harvard Law School, Northeastern Law School, Boston College Law School and Suffolk University Law School.

Arthur was a committed community activist in Jamaica Plain. In 1977, Arthur was an original member of the Board of Directors of the Neighborhood Development Corporation of Jamaica Plain (NDC), and he served on the NDC Board for almost forty years, including several long terms as Board president. Among several significant projects, Arthur was particularly proud of his work in leading the NDC's redevelopment of the former Haffenreffer Brewery complex into a nationally-recognized mixed-use historic preservation project. Arthur also served for many years on the board of the Commonwealth Land Trust, including as Chair.

Arthur was well-known to read three print newspapers every morning, and he was just as eager for a spirited exchange about the day's news as he was for a discussion of local sports. His characteristic wit was evident to all who knew him.