

‘The Heart and Soul of Utica College’

Professor and Provost John Johnsen 1948-2020

To understand the impact of John Johnsen’s 41-year career at Utica College, look no further than the comments beneath the announcement of his passing on UC’s social media.

Johnson, who passed away on July 24, 2020, retired in 2018 after one of the longest and most extraordinary tenures in Utica College’s history.

Starting at UC as an Instructor of Anthropology in 1977, Johnsen’s career was marked by a distinguished record of publications and service, including as a member of the administration, where he served as Dean of what is now the School of Business and Justice Studies, Dean of the School of Arts and Sciences, and Provost and Senior Vice President for Academic Affairs.

Throughout his tenure, Dr. Johnsen was a tireless advocate for justice and equality, serving as a champion for the College’s diversity efforts, helping to build the Young Scholars Liberty Partnerships Program, forging strong relationships with the Oneida Indian Nation, and participating in community activities designed to raise awareness for underrepresented individuals.

The number of people whom Dr. Johnsen positively

influenced is beyond count—and many of those people took to Facebook in July to honor and remember their teacher, colleague, and friend:

“John will forever be in our hearts and in the heart and soul of Utica College. John, we miss you.”

—Former Utica College President Todd Hutton

“A wonderful person to agree with, and an even more wonderful person to argue with. I will have a Basil Hayden’s in your honor, John.”

—UC Professor of Biology Adam Pack

“Always advocating. Never settling. RIP, Dr. Johnsen.”

—Alexia Herbowy Conrad ’94

“John never failed to make people around him feel like they mattered. He spent the time to talk and listen.”

—UC Director of Academic Business Development Elizabeth Nassar

“John was such an important part in building the Utica College of today. He will be missed, but the legacy of his contributions will live on.”

—Former UC Trustee Frank Mondt ’62

“Rest in Power, John.” —Marcus Recile ’18