

Finding Aid to The HistoryMakers® Video Oral History with Ben Johnson

Overview of the Collection

Repository:	The HistoryMakers®1900 S. Michigan Avenue Chicago, Illinois 60616 info@thehistorymakers.com www.thehistorymakers.com
Creator:	Johnson, R. Benjamin
Title:	The HistoryMakers® Video Oral History Interview with Ben Johnson,
Dates:	March 19, 2014 and May 21, 2014
Bulk Dates:	2014
Physical Description:	13 uncompressed MOV digital video files (6:07:55).
Abstract:	Presidential aide Ben Johnson (1944 -) served in both the Carter and Clinton White House Administrations. He was appointed by President Bill Clinton as assistant to the president and director of the White House Office on the President's Initiative for One America. Johnson was interviewed by The HistoryMakers® on March 19, 2014 and May 21, 2014, in Washington, District of Columbia. This collection is comprised of the original video footage of the interview.
Identification:	A2014_085
Language:	The interview and records are in English.

Biographical Note by The HistoryMakers®

Government official Robert Benjamin (Ben) Johnson was born on July 14, 1944 in Marion, Arkansas to Robert and Willie Johnson. Johnson was raised in South Bend, Indiana, where he graduated from high school. He went on to attend the Indiana Military Academy and was commissioned into the U.S. Army as a 2nd Lieutenant in 1967.

From 1967 to 1968, Johnson worked for WSBT-TV, where he became the first black television news reporter in South Bend, Indiana. Johnson then served as director of employment services for ACTION Inc., the St. Joseph County anti-poverty agency, and as managing director of the St. Joseph County Community Federal Credit Union. In 1975, he was the first African American to mount a serious campaign for mayor of South Bend, but was not elected. Two years later, in 1977, Johnson left South Bend for Washington, D.C., where he became director of the National Center for Urban Ethnic Affairs Credit Union Institute, and served as special assistant to the chairman of the board of the National Credit Union Administration.

In 1979, Johnson joined President Jimmy Carter's Administration as director of consumer programs and special assistant to Esther Peterson. From 1983 to 1987, he worked as the administrator of the Business Regulation Administration, where he oversaw the governing of corporations that conducted business in the District of Columbia. In 1988, Johnson was appointed administrator of the Housing and Environmental Administration and directed enforcement and compliance of housing and environmental laws in Washington, D.C. He was then named director of the District of Columbia's Department of Public Assisted Housing, where he worked until 1993, when he joined President Bill Clinton's White House staff as an associate director in the Office of Public Liaison. Johnson then served as special assistant to the President, and was responsible for all areas of outreach to the African American community. He later served as deputy assistant to the President; and, in 1999, was appointed assistant to the president and director of the White House Office on the President's Initiative for One America, where he oversaw the first free-standing White House office in history to help close the opportunity gaps that exist

for minorities in the United States.

Johnson has also served as senior counselor to Porter Novelli, Ogilvy, the National Cancer Institute and Spectrum Sciences, among others. He has spoken at many institutions and organizations including Harvard University, the Brookings Institute, the U.S. Chamber of Commerce, and the Aspen Institute. Johnson chaired the board of the One America Foundation, and served on the board of directors of the AFLAC Corporation. He was also a deputy chairman of the Democratic National Committee, and served on the DNC's Rules and the Bylaws Committee. His many awards include an honorary doctorate degree from Morgan State University and the Washington, D.C. Distinguished Government Service Award.

Johnson lives in Upper Marlboro, Maryland with his wife, Jacqueline. They have five children and eleven grandchildren.

Ben Johnson was interviewed by *The HistoryMakers* on March 19, 2014.

Scope and Content

This life oral history interview with Ben Johnson was conducted by Larry Crowe on March 19, 2014 and May 21, 2014, in Washington, District of Columbia, and was recorded on 13 uncompressed MOV digital video files. Presidential aide Ben Johnson (1944 -) served in both the Carter and Clinton White House Administrations. He was appointed by President Bill Clinton as assistant to the president and director of the White House Office on the President's Initiative for One America.

Restrictions

Restrictions on Access

Restrictions may be applied on a case-by-case basis at the discretion of The HistoryMakers®.

Restrictions on Use

All use of materials and use credits must be pre-approved by The HistoryMakers®. Appropriate credit must be given. Copyright is held by The HistoryMakers®.

Related Material

Information about the administrative functions involved in scheduling, researching, and producing the interview, as well as correspondence with the interview subject is stored electronically both on The HistoryMakers® server and in two databases maintained by The HistoryMakers®, though this information is not included in this finding aid.

Controlled Access Terms

This interview collection is indexed under the following controlled access subject terms.

Persons:

Johnson, R. Benjamin

Crowe, Larry (Interviewer)

Hickey, Matthew (Videographer)

Subjects:

African Americans--Interviews
Johnson, R. Benjamin--Interviews

Organizations:

HistoryMakers® (Video oral history collection)

The HistoryMakers® African American Video Oral History Collection

Occupations:

Presidential Aide

HistoryMakers® Category:

PoliticalMakers

Administrative Information

Custodial History

Interview footage was recorded by The HistoryMakers®. All rights to the interview have been transferred to The HistoryMakers® by the interview subject through a signed interview release form. Signed interview release forms have been deposited with Jenner & Block, LLP, Chicago.

Preferred Citation

The HistoryMakers® Video Oral History Interview with Ben Johnson, March 19, 2014 and May 21, 2014.
The HistoryMakers® African American Video Oral History Collection, 1900 S. Michigan Avenue, Chicago, Illinois.

Processing Information

This interview collection was processed and encoded on 5/30/2023 by The HistoryMakers® staff. The finding aid was created adhering to the following standards: DACS, AACR2, and the Oral History Cataloging Manual (Matters 1995).

Other Finding Aid

A Microsoft Access contact database and a FileMaker Pro tracking database, both maintained by The

HistoryMakers®, keep track of the administrative functions involved in scheduling, researching, and producing the interview.

Detailed Description of the Collection

Series I: Original Interview Footage

Video Oral History Interview with Ben Johnson, Section A2014_085_001_001, TRT: 1:28:31 ?
Video Oral History Interview with Ben Johnson, Section A2014_085_001_002, TRT: 2:29:26 ?
Video Oral History Interview with Ben Johnson, Section A2014_085_001_003, TRT: 3:30:15 ?
Video Oral History Interview with Ben Johnson, Section A2014_085_001_004, TRT: 4:29:46 ?
Video Oral History Interview with Ben Johnson, Section A2014_085_001_005, TRT: 5:29:37 ?
Video Oral History Interview with Ben Johnson, Section A2014_085_001_006, TRT: 6:30:11 ?
Video Oral History Interview with Ben Johnson, Section A2014_085_002_007, TRT: 7:29:30 ?
Video Oral History Interview with Ben Johnson, Section A2014_085_002_008, TRT: 8:30:36 ?
Video Oral History Interview with Ben Johnson, Section A2014_085_002_009, TRT: 9:29:43 ?
Video Oral History Interview with Ben Johnson, Section A2014_085_002_010, TRT: 10:28:19 ?
Video Oral History Interview with Ben Johnson, Section A2014_085_002_011, TRT: 11:31:06 ?
Video Oral History Interview with Ben Johnson, Section A2014_085_002_012, TRT: 12:29:27 ?
Video Oral History Interview with Ben Johnson, Section A2014_085_002_013, TRT: 13:11:28 ?