

# TALLAHASSEE DEMOCRAT

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## Apalachicola native breaks ground as the city's first black mayor

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Apalachicola native Van Johnson remembers his parents and other black people marching for their rights in his hometown.

Now people in Franklin County are going to remember the 50-year-old Johnson for making history as the city's first black Johnson mayor.



Johnson may have broken ground in Apalachicola, but he said his election is about more than just the color of his skin.

"I didn't look at it like I'm the first black mayor," he said. "I was just glad to be elected."

The mayor has been the

### BLACK HISTORY MONTH

director of the Franklin County Solid Waste and Recycling Department for 17 years. He served on the City Commission for more than 20 years and was the mayor pro-tem for four years.

Although Johnson has accomplished many things in his political career, it didn't come easy. Growing up in a small city where his parents fought for their rights, he said having a strong drive is important.

"Giving up is not an option," he said. "If you hold true to yourself and God, you can accomplish anything."