



The Official Website of Apalachicola Mayor Van W. Johnson, Sr.



Van W. Johnson, Sr. Mayor of Apalachicola, Florida - Official Biography

Van William Johnson, Sr., (born November 7, 1959), is the current Mayor of the City of Apalachicola, Florida, preceding Boyd "Sandy" Howze, Jr., (2003-2007) as mayor.

He's the first African-American elected by the people of Apalachicola to hold the Office of Mayor. He's also the first Mayor in the history of Apalachicola to be elected to three consecutive terms (2007-2011), (2011-2015) and (2015-present).

Mayor Johnson first won election to public office in 1997, where he served 2 ½ terms as the Seat 3, City Commissioner on the Apalachicola Board of City Commissioners (1997-2001), (2001-2005) and (2005-2007), before his election as Mayor of Apalachicola in 2007.

He attended and graduated from Apalachicola High School in 1978. While in high school he lettered in both varsity football and basketball, and upon graduation was selected to the "All-Big Bend Conference" football team. Following high school he enrolled in Gulf Coast Community College in Panama City, Florida, but did not graduate. After leaving college he married his high school sweetheart and wife of 37-years, the former Gail "Teddy" Simmons in 1981. Their marriage produced five children and nine grandchildren.

In 1982 Johnson found employment with the Franklin County Board of County Commissioners, after briefly working in the local seafood industry and with a Young Adult Conservation Corps. He remained in the employment of Franklin County until his retirement in 2012.

While employed by Franklin County, Johnson oversaw three major departments of Public Works. In 1991, the County Commission appointed him director over the Department of Solid Waste and Recycling. In 1997, the Commission transferred the operation of the County Animal Control Department from under the control of the County Sheriff Office to Johnson. In 2001, they added the operation of the new County Parks & Recreation Department to his duties and responsibilities.

After completing 30-years of exemplary service, upon his retirement the Franklin County Board of County Commissioners passed a resolution declaring May 31, 2012, Van W. Johnson Day throughout the Franklin County community.

In early 2013 the Love & Worship Center Ministries, the largest African-American ministry in the county honored Johnson service as mayor during the annual Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., Day Birthday Celebration hosted by the church.

Later in 2013 his colleagues on the Apalachicola Board of City Commissioners honored his service to the community by unanimously voting to rename the former Apalachicola High School to Mayor Van W. Johnson, Sr., Recreation & Community Service Complex.

In 2014 he was awarded the Golden Rule International Award and the iChange Nations Global Leadership Award by Dr. Clyde Rivers, director of both organizations for living the golden rule in his everyday life and for his exemplified, extraordinary humanitarian efforts to effectively change his community for the better.

In 2016 the Pastor and congregation of St. Paul AME Church, the oldest African-American church in Apalachicola, also recognized and honor Johnson for his service as Mayor of Apalachicola.

In January 2018, Mayor Johnson attended the historic United States Supreme Court case Florida v. Georgia regarding the water rights litigation brought against Georgia by the State of Florida, with the City of Apalachicola as an participant.

Mayor Johnson is without a doubt one of the most effective and recognized political figures in the modern day history of Apalachicola and Franklin County, Florida.

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