Biographical Sketch of Ron Johnson

Born in Gary, Indiana on Christmas Eve of Scottish parents, Ron, and a twin sister who died at age five days, were adopted by Carl M. and Mary D. Johnson.

Mary D. Johnson (Welker) was from Clinton, Indiana and Carl Martin Johnson from a German farm family in Woodford County, near Benson, Illinois. Carl began his Northwest Indiana employment as a streetcar motorman for the Gary Transit Company, later switching to the Chicago and Calumet District Transit (Shore Line) Bus Company of Hammond, Indiana. Carl often drove the bus route to Munster where he had moved his family in 1940. Carl Johnson drove city buses for twenty seven years until his accidental death in the family garage in Munster when Ron was 17.

Ron grew up in the family home at 8956 West Delaware Parkway in the Independence Park neighborhood of Munster. He has enjoyed residing in Munster homes on West Delaware Parkway, Holly Lane, Ridge Road, and now, Hohman Avenue. His parents were active in the Independence Park Community Club, later the White Oak Association, and in Boy Scouting in support to their son. Ron’s dad, Carl, was also involved with his Bus Drivers Union. Mary, Ron’s mother, operated a Beauty Shop in one room of their home on West Delaware Parkway to help with family finances. She died of cancer in 1987.

Ron was stricken with polio at the age of nine and his parents were told he would never walk again. Though he missed a year of school, faith, physical therapy, the March of Dimes, pioneering muscle transplant surgery, and a lot of intestinal fortitude enabled Ron to walk with only a limp, but recently, Post-Polio Syndrome, Arthritis, Chronic Venous Insufficiency and PAD, require Ron to use a cane to aid with his mobility.

Unable to participate in athletics other than swimming, Ron was active in Boy Scouting and became the first to complete the requirements for Eagle Scout in Munster. He earned the Gold Palm on his Eagle Badge having completed the requirements for 37 Merit Badges in that process. In spite of the crippling effects of polio, Ron became a pretty good swimmer. He earned the American Red Cross Junior and Senior Life Guard certificates and also the American Red Cross Water Safety Instructor Certification. He worked as a Life Guard in Hammond and was Assistant Waterfront Director at the local Pokagon Trails Council Boy Scout summer Camp Betz in Berrien Springs, Michigan where he taught swimming, lifesaving, rowing and canoeing.

At Hammond High School Ron had the lead in two school drama productions, was a Manager for the baseball team, and involved in Student Government.

As a student at Indiana University Ron was elected President of his Tau Kappa Epsilon (TKE) social fraternity pledge class, and elected president of the I.U. Boy Scout Service Fraternity Alpha Phi Omega. While at IU, Ron worked an average of 30 hours per week to help finance his education as a Campus Policeman. Ron graduated with a BS in Education and completed all required thirty hours of graduate work toward a Masters in Government at IU.

Johnson began teaching social studies in Hammond, Indiana at George Rogers Clark High School; after a year there, he accepted a teaching position in Highland where he, his wife and three children lived. Ron continued his teaching career in Highland. At the time of his resignation from teaching at Highland High School, Ron was Chairman of the Social Studies Department where he taught the senior course in American
Government and an honors elective course he named “Totalitarianism in the 20th Century”. Johnson was honored at national meetings of the National Council for the Social Studies in Philadelphia and in St. Louis for creating this innovative new course that was approved by Indiana curricula authorities. Ron served as Chairman of the Highland Teachers Organization Welfare Committee and was elected President of that organization. He was also an active member of National Council for the Social Studies and the American Political Science Association.

Johnson continued his interest in teaching young people to swim, serving as Assistant Manager of the Scherwood Club Swimming Pool in Schererville (with Manager Carl Sanders) where he taught swimming and lifesaving and as Assistant Manager at Munster Pool (with Manager Mike Niksic) where he also taught swimming.

While living in Highland, Johnson began writing a column on local government entitled “Civic Sense” for a local weekly newspaper (The Calumet Press) and he later became Editor of that publication.

Then Ron moved back to his native Munster from Highland and became a Staff Writer for The Northwest Indiana Times newspaper of Hammond (now Munster) and a Correspondent for the Associated Press.

Next Ron accepted a position as an Agent with the Equitable Life Assurance Society of the United States (now AXA - Equitable). He led his Woody Agency trainee sales force and was promoted to Assistant District Manager. Soon thereafter he was appointed District Manager in the Carlton Agency in Chicago. He continued to sell at significant levels and earned the Equitable National Citation Award for Management in Chicago.

After Johnson was promoted to District Manager for all of Southern Colorado, in Colorado Springs where he lived for three years, his District won State, Regional, and National Awards for sales success and they pioneered the development of “Option 65”, Equi-Surance, and EquiSurPlus salary allotment marketing. Ron returned to his native Northwest Indiana where he was the first to mass market Variable Life Insurance, EquiSurPlus and Tax Sheltered Annuities in a combined program (The Unique Benefit). “Ron Johnson & Associates” wrote over 10 million dollars worth of joint work. He served as an Equitable District Manager at River Oaks (Calumet City) and in Merrillville, Indiana.

After Ron resigned as District Manager in Merrillville and reentered personal sales production, he became the company’s then all time highest producer in Northwest Indiana leading his Agency’s sales force for several years winning the Gold Production Growth Award and qualifying several years for the Million Dollar Round table.

Ron is particularly proud of his involvement with the Equitable National Agent Forum. He was elected from among his peers in his Agency to represent them at the Regional Agent Forum for six years. He was elected Chairman of the Midwest Region and later National Chairman (President) of the N.A.F. where he and his committee brought concerns of the over 9,000 fellow agents to the attention of The Equitable President, CEO, Chairman of the Board and other officers at semi annual meetings in New York City.

Ron has been a long time auto enthusiast. He was founding President of the Highland, Indiana Region of the Model A Ford Restorer’s Club. He has owned several Model A Ford automobiles and other “collectible” cars at times in his life. He is looking
for a WW II Ford Jeep to combine his long time interest in WW II history with the “vehicle thing” and currently owns a “made in Indiana” Toyota Minivan.

Active in community affairs as well as professional associations, Ron, a charter member, was elected to leadership positions in the Highland Jaycees, named an Outstanding Young Man of America and was elected Speaker of the House in the first ever Jaycees Indiana Mock Legislature. He was Institutional Representative of his church sponsored Boy Scout Troop in Munster. Ron was also President of the once active Munster Human Relations Council.

Ron’s interest in government has been life long. He was elected a Precinct Committeeman in Munster; twice led his party’s ticket for Munster Town Trustee, and was elected his party’s nominee for State Representative and State Senator. He garnered more votes as a candidate of his party in those efforts than any predecessor.

In his two attempts to serve citizens representing them in the Indiana General Assembly (State Legislature) Johnson was endorsed by both local daily newspapers, the Times of Northwest Indiana and the Post Tribune.

Ron has done consulting work in public relations and enthusiastically supports the Lake Court House Foundation. He is a member of the Munster and Griffith Historical Societies.

An avid card player, Johnson is founding president of the Northwest Indiana Pinochle Club and founded, and is Director of the club’s Monday and Thursday pinochle play at the Wicker Park Club House in North Township’s Wicker Memorial Park at Indianapolis Boulevard and Ridge Road in Highland, Indiana.

Mr. Johnson is past Panel Chairman of the Planning and Allocation Committee of the Lake Area United Way. He was President of the Board of Directors of Service and Employment for the Elderly, Inc. Ron was a member of the Northern Indiana Health Systems Agency Board of Directors and the Northwest Indiana Advisory Council, a member of the NIHSA Planning Committee, a member of the NIHSA Health/Economics Cost Containment Task Force, a member of the NIHSA Alcohol/Drug Abuse Criteria and Standards Panel and a member of the NIHSA Computer Tomography Criteria and Standards Panel.

Ron served as Chairman of the Lake Area Health Data Planning Committee of the Northwest Indiana Association of Commerce and Industry. He was also active in the Northwest Indiana Business Group on Health.

Ron is a long time resident of Northwest Indiana and has lived in Gary, Hammond, Highland, Crown Point and Munster. He also lived three years in Colorado Springs, Colorado and in Bloomington, Indiana while at the University there as an undergraduate and as a graduate student. He is a member of the Westminster Presbyterian Church of Munster. Ron is a member of the Executive Committee of the Lake County Community Development Committee (now the LCAC, Lake County Advancement Committee).

A long time member of the Lake County Agricultural Society, Ron served as a North County Township Director and was an elected member of the Lake County Fair Executive Board in 2010.

Mr. Johnson has been involved as co-owner or owner of several business ventures in his life, some successful and one not. He is a licensed, but now inactive, Realtor.

Mr. Johnson was, until Dec 15, 2006, Associate/News Editor and Reporter for
The Calumet Press newspaper with offices at the WJOB studio in Hammond, Indiana. He earlier served as a reporter and was the Editor of The Calumet Press when it was owned by Wayne and Helen Kletzing in Highland, Indiana.

Ron is currently developing and growing his Northwest Indiana News Bureau (NINB) POST and owns its web site, www.NINBNews.com, for which he serves as Bureau Chief.

Mr. Johnson is President and CEO of Brrr Ltd., dba, as a concession and consulting company that, among other things has since 2000 operated a mobile soft serve ice cream concession (Brrr On Wheels) at about a dozen different local summer fairs and festivals in Lake and Porter Counties, Indiana (www.BrrrIceCream.com) and BrrrWick, a summer seasonal Brrr Ice Cream and food concession at the west end of the Breezeway Building in North Township’s Wicker Memorial Park which is at the intersection of US 41 (Indianapolis Boulevard) and Ridge Road in Highland, Indiana. Ron’s company added a 2nd mobile unit in 2014 (BOW Jr.) that sells Draft Root Beer Floats and Mexican Ice Cream Novelties. Johnson said this new division is available year round, indoors or outdoors with or without electricity.

Ron had a son and two daughters who lived in Colorado Springs, Colorado and has six grandchildren. Only his youngest daughter and the grandchildren survive. Ron resides in Munster, Indiana, USA.

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