

William A. Johnson, Jr.

Distinguished Professor Public Policy
Department of Science, Technology, and Society/Public Policy
Rochester Institute of Technology
92 Lomb Memorial Drive
Rochester, NY 14623

William A. Johnson, Jr. completed three terms as Rochester's 64th Mayor on December 31, 2005. He is the first African American mayor of any major Upstate New York city, first elected in 1993. He chose not to seek re-election to a fourth term.

On January 1, 2006, he assumed the position of Distinguished Professor of Public Policy at the Rochester Institute of Technology, with tenure. Previously he had been a tenured political science professor at the Mott Community College in Flint, Michigan (1967-71).

For 23 years, Mr. Johnson worked in the Urban League movement, first as Deputy Executive Director of the Urban League of Flint; and for 21 years as the President and CEO of the Urban League of Rochester. He held this position until he was elected Mayor in November 1993.

During his Mayoral tenure, Rochester initiated many innovative programs, in the areas of citizen empowerment, community policing, neighborhood residential and commercial revitalization, youth leadership development, and waterfront revitalization. More than 1500 new and rehabilitated homes replaced dilapidated structures, and new market rate housing was built in downtown and along the waterfront. Five new supermarkets were built in the inner city, marking a reversal in the flight of grocery stores from the urban core. Neighborhood Empowerment Teams were located throughout the city to provide a rapid response to "quality of life" issues. Youth leadership teams were established at each recreation center. The Port of Rochester was re-built around a new ferry service to Toronto, two major music festivals were inaugurated, and three major sports arenas were constructed in the downtown area. All of these developments resulted in an increase in the city's property valuation for the first time in 14 years.

Rochester was consistently recognized as the best fiscally managed city in New York State by bonding agencies, and the city ended each year of his tenure with surpluses. It was proclaimed one of America's Most Livable Cities. In 1999, Governing Magazine named Mayor Johnson one of its 10 Top Public Officials in America.

Despite all of these accomplishments, Rochester has not been able to escape the decline that has devastated the entire Upstate region. Mayor Johnson witnessed the debilitating effects of disinvestment in urban areas. Combining his experience as Mayor with his Urban League background, he is an outspoken

advocate of smart growth policies and an equally outspoken critic of urban sprawl. He has written and spoken widely on these subjects and is invited to lecture at universities and professional associations several times a year.

At RIT, he will be able to focus more attention on these issues through an applied research institute that is in the process of raising start-up funds.

A native of Lynchburg, Virginia, he is the oldest of three children born to Roberta Davis Johnson and the late William A. Johnson, Sr. He is a graduate of Howard University in Washington, D.C. with two degrees in political science (B.A., 1965, M.A., 1967). In 2003, Howard honored him with an Alumni Award for Distinguished Post-Graduate Achievement in Public Service. In 2006, he was recognized for outstanding public service by Rockefeller College of the State University of New York at Albany.

Mr. Johnson has also been honored as the Distinguished Minnett Professor at R.I.T (1993-94), and is the recipient of four honorary doctorates: Keuka College (1990); St. John Fisher College (1998); R.I.T (1999); and the University of Rochester (2006). He has received over 200 awards and citations during his long career, and has served on the boards of more than 30 organizations. Currently he serves as a Trustee of the Colgate Rochester Crozer Divinity School and the National Industries for the Blind.

He is the father of three daughters and the grandfather of four. He has also put his musical training to use as an organist and choir director at several churches in three states and the District of Columbia over the past 53 years.

He is a member of the Mt. Olivet Baptist Church; Gamma Iota Boule of Sigma Pi Phi Fraternity; and Eureka Lodge No. 36, Prince Hall Free and Accepted Masons.