

William A. Johnson, Jr.

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. 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.

Mayor Johnson has also recognized the devastating effects of disinvestment on urban areas, combining his experiences as Mayor with his Urban League background. He has become 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.

A native of Lynchburg, Virginia, he is the oldest of three children born to Roberta Davis Johnson and the late William A. Johnson, Sr. Mayor Johnson is a political scientist by training, earning B.A. and M.A. degrees from Howard University in Washington, D.C. in 1965 and 1967 respectively. He has received over 200 awards and citations during his long career, and has served on the boards of more than 30 organizations.