

Lonnie Johnson

Mr. Lonnie Johnson born in Mobile, Alabama on October 6, 1949. As a kid, Johnson had a love for making things with items by taking them apart. During his youth, he built a go kart out of junkyard scraps and a lawnmower engine. Being curious, he took apart his sister's doll to see how the doll's eyes closed and opened. He attended Williamson High School and Tuskegee University. I have heard many of my family members speak of this University as it is one of the most popular HBCU Universities around. Mr. Johnson is an engineer and entrepreneur and I am going to tell you about his amazing invention called the Super Soaker and Nerf gun.

Johnson's career started as a nuclear engineer as a researcher for Oak Ridge National Laboratory. Then, he decided to join the U.S Air Force being in charge of the Space Nuclear Power Safety Section. After giving his service he left to work at Galileo for a short time then returned to the Air Force to serve in Space Systems at Strategic Air Command. During this time he was the first flight test engineer assigned by SAC to the Stealth Bomber (B2). Mr. Johnson always had a passion for being curious as to how things worked. He always was trying to take things apart and tell them how they all work.

Where did Mr. Johnson's idea come from for his invention of the Super Soaker? Well, I have the answer to this question. His inspiration came to life while he was at home working in his bathroom. He was working on an eco-friendly heat pump. Now if you know your history these pumps run on water alone. Mr. Johnson accidentally shot a stream of water across the bathroom while doing the experiment and he had a light bulb moment, "this would make a great gun," he thought.

Mr. Johnson formed his own engineering firm and licensed his most famous invention, the Super Soaker water gun, to Larami Corporation. That idea generated \$200 million in retail sales and became the number one toy in america. The Larami Corporation was purchased by Hasbro Corporation, which is the second largest toy company in the world. When you go and purchase a Super Soaker or Nerf gun in any store, take a look at the brand name. You will see that it is Hasbro\Johnson on the toy box and honestly when I saw that, I was truly impressed; to see a African American man name on an actual product that was invented with the mind, and created with the hands.

Mr. Johnson is the president and founder of Johnson Research and Development Co. He is a phenomenal man in his own right; to hold over 100 patents, with over 20 more pending. He is an author of several publications on spacecraft power systems. What's coming in the future from Mr. Johnson He is working on introducing a new generation of rechargeable battery with the potential to revolutionize the battery industry.

Today Mr. Johnson is still a busy man, he is the board and chairman of the Georgia Alliance for Children and a member of the 100 Black Men of Atlanta, an organization that mentors high school and college students. Mr. Johnson is living peacefully in Atlanta with his wife Linda Moore and one child.