

Collection #
M 0879
DVD 0113–0118

**RICHARD R. JOHNSON
LETTERS AND PHOTOS, 1954–1989**

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Processed by

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July 2007

Revised by

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October 2018

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COLLECTION INFORMATION

VOLUME OF COLLECTION: Manuscript Materials: 1 document case
Visual Materials: 1 folder photographs, 1 folder of cold storage color photographs, 6 DVDs

COLLECTION DATES: 1954–1989; bulk 1966

PROVENANCE: Phyllis M. Johnson, Speedway, IN, September 2005, and March 2006

RESTRICTIONS: Items listed as being in Cold Storage need at least four hours to acclimate, so patrons are advised to call ahead of their visit if they wish to view those items to allow for thawing time.

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ALTERNATE FORMATS:

RELATED HOLDINGS:

ACCESSION NUMBER: 2005.0224, 2006.0005

NOTES: Formerly processed under the title “Hoosiers in Vietnam”
Collection 1966–1989

BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH

Richard Johnson, born 22 January 1935, spent over twenty years working at newspapers ranging from 5,000 to 40,000 circulations. He started his career as an investigative and general assignment reporter at *The County Courier*, in Brownsburg, Indiana. He also worked as a feature writer, editing and editorial writer, did photography, and assisted with layout and design during his tenure there. He then went to *The Indianapolis Times*, in Indianapolis Indiana, where he worked as the sports writer, copy editor, and police reporter. From there he moved to *The Indianapolis Star* where he worked as assistant editor of general special assignments, feature writer, and rewrite specialist.

During his career he was nominated for a Pulitzer Prize on two occasions: once for an investigation of jail brutality, which led to major changes in the handling of prisoners and mental patients; and again, for articles about a prison inmate who, for thirty-seven years, had been unable to appeal his murder conviction because trial records were gone. Because of Johnson's story, the inmate was paroled. He won the Lester Hunt Investigative Reporting Award from the *Indianapolis Star* on three occasions. He also received the Golden Gavel Award from the Indianapolis Bar Association, the Community Achievement Award, and several awards from the Indianapolis Press Club for reporting, sports writing, and photography. Johnson died on 5 March 2002 at the age of 67.

Sources:

<http://search.ancestrylibrary.com/searchRichardR.Johnson>. 07/10/2007.

Materials in collection

SCOPE AND CONTENT NOTE

The bulk of the collection consists of the articles written by Johnson between October and November 1966, when he spent thirty days in Vietnam. He was sent there to talk with servicemen from Indiana and gather views and comments from them. From these interviews he wrote over thirty articles about his experiences, and what he saw and heard during his stay. His articles appeared regularly in the *Indianapolis Star*. There are five folders with the original column Johnson typed and the newspaper columns, cut from the paper. Two folders contain the columns re-typed, probably to be reprinted in a new format. There are three file folders that consist of miscellaneous letters, news-clippings of his stories, documents, and greeting cards all relating to the work of Johnson. The collection also contains photographs taken in the U.S. and Vietnam. Most of the Vietnam images are on 6 CD rom discs. These are stored in DVD storage and must be viewed using a library-provided computer.

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| “Hoosiers in Vietnam,” <i>Indianapolis Star</i> columns, 25–31 Oct. 1966 | Box 1, Folder 4 |
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| Johnson Papers, 1957-1974 | Box 1, Folder 11 |
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| Johnson working on stories, at crime and accident scenes in Indiana, in Viet Nam, and receiving awards, ca. 1958–65 | Photographs: Folder 1 |
| Johnson as a teen with his dog 1954, Sitting on a bed with a typewriter on his lap, ca. 1965 | Cold Storage Color Photographs: Folder 1 |
| Vietnam 1966, Disk 1, 70 black and white photographs 5 x 7 inches, 600 dpi TIFF documents | DVD 0113 |

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