

Ed Johnson Memorial Scholarship Fund

A fund of the Community Foundation of Greater Chattanooga, Inc.

The history and purpose of the Ed Johnson Memorial Scholarship

The story of Ed Johnson and his attorneys changed the course of justice in America forever with a series of historic precedents and legal firsts. Ed Johnson was the first African American awarded a stay of execution by the US Supreme Court. Noah Parden, a local African American attorney appeared before the US Supreme Court. For the first time, the US Supreme Court got involved in a state criminal case and halted an execution. After local Chattanoogaans ignored the stay of execution and lynched Ed Johnson, the Supreme Court, the country and President Teddy Roosevelt reacted swiftly and with outrage. They investigated the lynching, and the High Court held their one and only criminal trial to find a handful of the perpetrators guilty.

On March 19, 1906, Ed Johnson, was mob-lynched from the second span of the Walnut Street Bridge in Chattanooga. After a trial devoid of incriminating facts and with a clearly biased jury, Johnson was sentenced to death for the rape of a white woman. When the US Supreme Court granted a stay of his execution, a mob stormed the jail. Johnson was the second man to be lynched on the bridge, after Alfred Blount was hung from the first span in 1893. Johnson and Blount were two of the approximately 4,000 African Americans who were lynched from reconstruction to the civil rights era. Johnson's last words, spoken from the bridge before he was killed, were, "God bless you all, I am a innocent man."

Nearly 100 years after his murder, Johnson was formally cleared of his crime. In May 2016, the state Legislature-led by Rep. JoAnne Favors-passed a resolution on the memory of Johnson and the events surrounding this tragic, but heroic Chattanooga story.

This scholarship was established in 2009 with proceeds from "Dead Innocent-The Ed Johnson Story" a play written by LaFrederick Thirkill to honor the memory of 24 year old Ed Johnson.

The ideal scholarship recipient is committed to **truth** and **justice**.
This one year scholarship is in the amount of \$1,000 (\$500Fall/\$500 Spring).

Scholarship Criteria

- Applications are accepted from sophomores, juniors and seniors attending an accredited four year college or university with a **cumulative** GPA of at least a **2.5**
- Applicant must be actively pursuing a degree in Criminal Justice
- Applicant must be a graduate from Chattanooga/Hamilton County, TN high school

In order to be considered for this scholarship, applicant must submit the application along with the following supplemental information:

- An official college transcript which includes your cumulative GPA
- A two page typed essay (Essay details below)

Applicant's Full Name:		
Street Address:	Apartment:	
City:	State:	Zip:
Phone # (including area code)		
Date of Birth:	Student ID Number:	
Name of High School you graduated from?	Year of High School Graduation:	
Name of College/University you currently attend?	What is your anticipated graduation date?	
College Major	Concentration (if applicable)	

Student Essay

Research the Ed Johnson story and share in essay form 1) what you learned about Ed Johnson, his case, attorneys and/or etc. 2) what information resonated with you most? And 3) how does this case make you think differently about issues of race and justice in your own life and community?

To be considered for the scholarship, complete this application in its entirety and submit it to the following address: The **Community Foundation of Greater Chattanooga, Att: Rebecca Suttles, 1270 Market St., Chattanooga, TN 37402.**

This application packet must be received in the Community Foundation office no later than 4:00 p.m. EST Friday, March 16, 2018

Faxed, emailed, late and/or incomplete applications will not be considered.

If you have any questions, consult with your School Counselor or contact Rebecca Suttles, Director of Scholarships, Community Foundation, at 423.265.0586, ext. 11