



NICHOLAS JOHNSON

JOHNSON, NICHOLAS

Sept. 23, 1934- United States government official; lawyer

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Within a year of his appointment in June 1966 as one of seven members of the Federal Communications Commission, Nicholas Johnson had "established a record for yeasty dissent that clearly makes him the most controversial figure in the regulatory agency," as Jack Gould reported in the *New York Times* (March 26, 1967). Johnson's reform-mindedness has been stimulated by his conviction that the FCC has become outmoded and needs restructuring to cope with the impact of space age communications. On one occasion of disagreement with the FCC majority he accused his fellow commissioners of having adopted a "complacent and comfortable hear-no-evil, see-no-evil slouch in front of the radio and TV sets of America." With much the same crusading spirit Johnson had tried to shake up the sluggish maritime industry during his two years (1964-66) as federal Maritime Administrator. Johnson is a lawyer and former law professor who became the youngest man ever appointed Maritime Administrator, just as he is the youngest to serve on the FCC.

Nicholas Johnson was born on September 23, 1934 in Iowa City, Iowa, the son of Wendell A. L. and Edna (Bockwoldt) Johnson. His father was a speech educator at the University of Iowa. As a boy Nicholas Johnson built his own crystal receivers and wired his neighborhood for telegraph. He attended University High School in Iowa City, and then, advised to go to college in the South-

west because of a sinus condition, he entered the University of Texas in Austin. During his undergraduate years he was elected to Phi Eta Sigma, Pi Sigma Alpha, and Phi Beta Kappa. Upon obtaining his B.A. degree in 1956 he enrolled in the University of Texas Law School, where he became an editor of the *Texas Law Review* and also a member of the Order of the Coif. He was awarded the LL.B. degree with honors in 1958. Some years later at the Senate hearings on Johnson's appointment as Maritime Administrator, Senator Ralph W. Yarborough of Texas said of Johnson as a student: "He distinguished himself both in the law department there, while working his way through school, and at the same time was taking an active part in public affairs in the city of Austin. He was called the shirt-sleeve student down there because he was working so hard."

Johnson's first job, after his admission to the Texas bar in 1948, was as law clerk for Judge John R. Brown of the United States Court of Appeals for the Fifth Circuit (South). The following year he became clerk for Supreme Court Justice Hugo L. Black. Leaving that position in 1960, he joined the University of California Law School faculty, where, as acting associate professor at Berkeley, he taught courses in administrative law and oil and gas regulation. While at the university, he served as a member of the chancellor's committee on natural resources and as a consultant and associate to the Center for the Study of Law and Society, and also conducted research pertaining to California's administrative agencies and natural gas industry regulation by the United States Federal Power Commission.

In February 1963 Johnson took a leave of absence from the University of California to join the prestigious Washington (D.C.) law firm of Covington & Burling, which included the former Secretary of State Dean Acheson. Johnson engaged in law practice related to government administrative agencies, the Federal Communications Commission among them. He was admitted to both the District of Columbia bar and the Supreme Court bar.

In Washington, as in Texas and California, Johnson's legal experience had no connection with shipping. His lack of knowledge of the subject, however, did not hinder his nomination by President Lyndon B. Johnson in February 1964 for one of the stormier offices in the federal government—that of Maritime Administrator. Later in the month, in remarks to the press about his appointment, Nicholas Johnson said that the President had wanted someone for the post with a fresh point of view and no preconceived notions. Both the President and the members of the Senate Commerce Committee, who approved Johnson's nomination on February 28, commented on the energy and youth of the new Maritime Administrator. On March 2, 1964 Johnson was sworn in as head of the Maritime Administration, a unit within the Department of Commerce, replacing Robert E. Giles, who had been acting administrator since the resignation of Administrator Donald Alexander in October 1963.

"The appointment of this apple-cheeked, twenty-nine-year-old landlubber jolted hard-bitten old-timers in the industry," Frank C. Porter observed in the *Washington Post* (November 28, 1965). "They were to be jolted even more after he had gotten his sea legs." When Johnson took office, MARAD, as the agency is often called, was receiving much publicity over its subsidy programs and such other controversies as the shipping of wheat sold to Russia. With candid and refreshing criticism, Johnson attacked MARAD's \$600-million program of ship construction and operating subsidies. He complained that more than half of the subsidy money was spent on seamen's wages, which were two to three times greater than those of foreign seamen. Johnson protested the lack of incentive programs to keep shipping costs down, and in August 1964 he shocked the owners of the major passenger liners by suggesting that subsidies should possibly be discontinued for passenger ships.

In October 1964 Johnson announced that the Maritime Subsidy Board, of which he was chairman, had given unprecedented approval to two subsidized steamship companies (Moore-McCormack Lines and American Export Isbrandtsen Lines) to conduct business activities other than shipping. Allowing companies to engage in non-maritime programs, Johnson believed, would improve financial conditions and increase dividends for their stockholders.

New proposals for granting subsidies were announced by Johnson in June 1965 and a few months later were officially published in the Federal Register. Under the new policy, allocation for shipbuilding was to be guided by proposals that offered the greatest shipping productivity, as determined by maximum carrying capacity. Other criteria for allocation included the number of ships proposed, speed of proposed ships, estimated cost of construction and operating costs, manning schedules, nature of cargo gear, and cargo-transfer methods.

The construction of larger and different kinds of ships was among the innovations that Johnson encouraged. Atomic-powered ships, such as the *Savannah* and the hovercraft and hydrofoil vessels should, he was convinced, replace the country's

cargo ships, which had become "obsolescent and wornout." In August 1965 he announced a six-year subsidy to American Export Isbrandtsen Lines for conversion costs of two bulk carriers to container-ships, terming the deal a "pioneer venture" that would reduce construction costs but at the same time increase shipping capability.

During 1965 Johnson also called for allowing subsidized ship lines to build ships abroad to save labor costs, cargo-preference legislation to be phased out in favor of direct operating subsidy to transport-ship owners, and the elimination of the rigidities of scheduled sailings and authorized ports of call. Labor leaders became angry when Johnson insisted on smaller crew sizes to fit the realities of new, automated ships. He was accused of aspiring to be "the czar over manning scales for the maritime industry" and charged with "arrogant offensiveness" in interfering with collective bargaining.

As a member of the Interagency Maritime Task Force, Johnson assumed the role of champion of its Report on Merchant Marine Policy, issued on October 7, 1965. The report spelled out Johnson's already well-known and controversial views, recommending, for example, emphasis on the construction of bulk carriers and reduction in passenger fleet subsidies. The President's Maritime Advisory Committee, a group of industry, labor, and public representatives, immediately rejected the report, which Johnson maintained "had been discussed and criticized far more than it had been read." Ralph E. Casey, president of the American Merchant Marine Institute, had earlier called some of the suggestions included in the report "a prescription that could kill rather than cure the patient."

Generally unreceptive to Johnson's proposals for change, shipowners and shipbuilders as well as union seamen welcomed the departure from MARAD of the industry's "pet devil." On June 18, 1966 President Johnson named Nicholas Johnson a member of the Federal Communications Commission to fill a vacancy created by the resignation of E. William Henry. Johnson took his oath of office on June 30 for a term expiring on July 1, 1973. Before the end of his first year, as reported by Louise Sweeney, television critic of the *Christian Science Monitor* (June 12, 1967), he was regarded in the trade press as the "Mr. Clean" of broadcasting, "busy scrubbing up, dusting off, and airing out the Federal Communications Commission."

The Federal Communications Commission, whose chairman is Rosel H. Hyde, is empowered under the Communications Act of 1934 to regulate interstate and foreign commerce in communication by wire and radio to make available nationwide a service at reasonable charge. Since his appointment to the FCC, Johnson has argued that problems in communication should be treated not as isolated items but as parts of a whole that includes standards of program performance, UHF television, AM and FM separation, satellite communication, the impact of cable on television, educational TV, and the escalating profits of commercial TV. Rougher on the FCC than on the industry itself,

Johnson has charged the commissioners with lack of organization and long-range planning, with engaging in "broadcasting brinkmanship."

In a speech to the Federal Communications Bar Association in December 1966, Johnson objected to the FCC's laborious "case-by-case method" in regulating communications and complained that the commission's time was taken up mostly with broadcast licensing. He also deplored the lack of a national library for radio and television and for government research. He has on other occasions advocated a "single national clearinghouse of communications research" of about 15,000 men to concern itself with problems of technological and institutional change, including questions about CATV, satellite communications, funding public TV, electronic eavesdropping, and wiretrapping. He has indicated that the FCC was the logical agency to assume such a task.

On a very large percentage of the decisions reached by FCC members, Johnson has voted with the majority. His relatively few dissents, however, have been nationally headlined. In late 1966 he voted against an FCC approved merger that would result in the acquisition of the American Broadcasting Corporation by the International Telephone and Telegraph Corporation. Johnson declared that the majority's treatment of the case made "a mockery of the public responsibility of a regulatory commission that is perhaps unparalleled in the history of American administrative processes." The seventy-two-page dissent, described by Bill Greeley (*Variety*, January 18, 1967) as the industry's "most amazing white paper" in some time, presented in simple language the economic truths of the merger and pointed out the vagaries and ambiguities in its financial figures and jargon. The merger case was later reopened, and on January 1, 1968 IT&T announced its decision to drop its plan to merge with ABC.

Just as vehemently as he had denounced the merger, in March 1967 Johnson censured five of his fellow FCC members for renewing a large number of radio station licenses without adequate study of programming performance. An FCC decision later in the year to lighten the investigation workload of its field engineering bureau by relying upon public complaints brought another blast from Johnson. He termed the situation "ludicrous" and scored the commission for returning "to the people the responsibility to investigate and report violations of FCC regulations."

At a meeting of the National Association of Broadcasters on November 21, 1967 Johnson accused the broadcasters of building "more walls than bridges between the white and black communities of our cities." He urged them to take the initiative in promoting racial understanding and called their attention to the fact that nearly two-thirds of Negro slum homes had television and all had radio while only 14 percent received daily or weekly newspapers.

Nicholas Johnson is a member of the American, Federal, and Texas bar associations. He has been chairman of the Junior Bar Conference Committee on Continuing Legal Education, a director and member of the board of editors of the International

Society for General Semantics, and a member of the jurismetrics committee of the Association of American Law Schools, which is concerned in part with the use of computers in legal research. His other memberships include those in the Federal Power Bar Association, the American Judicature Society, the National Lawyers Club in Washington, and the Commonwealth Club in San Francisco. He is a Unitarian and a Democrat. The National Junior Chamber of Commerce named him among the ten outstanding young men of 1967.

One of Johnson's fellow students at the University of Texas was his wife, the former Karen Mary Chapman of Iowa City, whom he had married in 1952. They have three children, Julie, Sherman, and Gregory. A personable, athletic-looking man, Johnson stands six feet five inches tall, weighs about 205 pounds, and has dark hair and blue eyes. He is dynamic and highly articulate. Something of his own vigor and freedom from affectation permeates his FCC office, which he himself decorated. Louise Sweeney pictured it in the *Christian Science Monitor* as being "like a large, modern living room, with a curved, brown tweed sofa, a rocking chair in which he likes to drape his lanky frame, and apricot tweed chairs. Bold contemporary paintings adorn the wall." Johnson told Miss Sweeney that he did not intend to remain in the government, but that if he were going to make a career in the federal service he would choose the FCC "because a mass communications system is the most fundamental part of a free society."

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P R E F A C E

The aim of CURRENT BIOGRAPHY YEARBOOK 1968, like that of the preceding volumes in this series of annual dictionaries of contemporary biography, is to provide the reference librarian, the student, or any researcher with brief, objective, accurate, and well-documented biographical articles about living leaders in all fields of human accomplishment the world over.

CURRENT BIOGRAPHY YEARBOOK 1968 carries on the policy of including new and updated biographical sketches that supersede earlier, outdated articles. Sketches have been made as accurate and objective as possible through careful researching by CURRENT BIOGRAPHY writers in newspapers, magazines, authoritative reference books, and news releases of both government and private agencies. Immediately after they are published in the eleven monthly issues, articles are submitted to biographees to give them an opportunity to suggest corrections in time for CURRENT BIOGRAPHY YEARBOOK. To take account of major changes in the careers of biographees, sketches have also been revised before they are included in the yearbook. With the exception of occasional interviews, the questionnaire filled out by the biographee remains the main source of direct information.

In the back of the volume under *Organizations* can be found the names of men and women who head organizations. Persons who are not professional authors but who have written books are listed under *Nonfiction* or *Literature* in addition to their vocational fields. The annual bestowal of Nobel Prizes and other significant awards has added articles about their winners to the volume.

The pages immediately following contain: *Explanations*; *Key to Reference Abbreviations*; *Key to Pronunciation*; and *Key to Abbreviations*. The indexes at the end of the volume are *Biographical References*; *Periodicals and Newspapers Consulted*; *Classification by Profession*; and *Cumulated Index, 1961-1968*. The 1940-1950 index can be found in the 1950 yearbook, and the 1951-1960 index, in the 1960 yearbook. A *Necrology* of persons whose biographies have appeared in previous volumes can be found at the back of the book.

For their assistance in preparing CURRENT BIOGRAPHY YEARBOOK 1968 I should again like to thank the associate editors.

CHARLES MORITZ

Explanations

Authorities for biographees' full names, with some exceptions, are the bibliographical publications of The Wilson Company. When a biographee prefers a certain name form, that is indicated in the heading of the article: for example, Niemöller, (Friedrich Gustav Emil) Martin means that he is usually referred to as Martin Niemöller. When a professional name is used in the heading, as for example, Anne Bancroft, the real name (in this case Annemarie Italiano) appears in the article itself.

The heading of each article includes the pronunciation of the name if it is unusual, date of birth (if obtainable), and occupation. The article is supplemented by a list of references to sources of biographical information, in two alphabets: (1) newspapers and periodicals and (2) books. (See the section *Biographical References*, found in the rear of this volume.)

Key to Reference Abbreviations

References to newspapers and periodicals are listed in abbreviated form; for example, "Sat Eve Post 217:14 S 30 '44 por" means *Saturday Evening Post*, volume 217, page 14, September 30, 1944, with portrait. (For full names, see the section *Periodicals and Newspapers Consulted*, found in the rear of this volume.)

January—Ja
February—F
March—Mr
April—Ap
May—My
June—Je

July—Jl
August—Ag
September—S
October—O
November—N
December—D

Journal—J
Magazine—Mag
Monthly—Mo
Weekly—W
Portrait—por
Review—R

Key to Pronunciation

ā āle
â câre
a add
ä ärm
ē eve
e end

g go
ī ice
i ill

κ German ch as in
ich (ik)

ñ Not pronounced, but
indicates the nasal
tone of the preceding
vowel, as in *the*
French *bon* (bôn).

ō ōld
ô ôrb
o odd
oi oil
ōō ōoze
ōō fōot
ou out

th then
th thin

ū cūbe
û ūrn; French eu, as in
jeu (zhû), German ö,
oe, as in *schön*
(shûn), *Goethe*
(gû'te)
u tub

ü Pronounced approxi-
mately as ē, with
rounded lips: French
u, as in *menu*
(mê-nû); German ü,
as in *grün*

ə the schwa, an un-
stressed vowel repre-
senting the sound that
is spelled
a as in *sofa*
e as in *fitted*
i as in *edible*
o as in *melon*
u as in *circus*

zh. azure

' = main accent

" = secondary accent

KEY TO ABBREVIATIONS

AAAA	Amateur Athletic Association of America	EDC	European Defense Community
A.A.U.	Amateur Athletic Union	ERP	European Recovery Program
ABA	American Bar Association	ESA	Economic Stabilization Administration
ABC	American Broadcasting Company	FAO	Food and Agriculture Organization
A.C.L.U.	American Civil Liberties Union	FBI	Federal Bureau of Investigation
ADA	Americans for Democratic Action	FCC	Federal Communications Commission
AEC	Atomic Energy Commission	FEPC	Fair Employment Practice Committee
AEF	American Expeditionary Force	FHA	Federal Housing Administration
AFL	American Federation of Labor	FOA	Foreign Operations Administration
AFL-CIO	American Federation of Labor and Congress of Industrial Organizations	FPC	Federal Power Commission
ALA	American Library Association	FSA	Federal Security Agency
AMA	American Medical Association	FTC	Federal Trade Commission
A.P.	Associated Press	GATT	General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade
ASCAP	American Society of Composers, Authors and Publishers	G.B.E.	Knight or Dame, Grand Cross Order of the British Empire
ASNE	American Society of Newspaper Editors	G.C.B.	Knight Grand Cross of the Bath
		G.O.P.	Grand Old Party
B.A.	Bachelor of Arts	H.M.	His Majesty; Her Majesty
BBC	British Broadcasting Corporation	ICA	International Cooperation Administration
B.D.	Bachelor of Divinity	ICBM	Intercontinental Ballistic Missile
B.L.S.	Bachelor of Library Science	ICC	Interstate Commerce Commission
B.S.	Bachelor of Science	I.C.F.T.U.	International Confederation of Free Trade Unions
CAA	Civil Aeronautics Administration	IGY	International Geophysical Year
CAB	Civil Aeronautics Board	I.L.A.	International Longshoremen's Association
C.B.	Companion of the Bath	I.L.G.W.U.	International Ladies' Garment Workers' Union
C.B.E.	Commander of (the Order of) the British Empire	I.L.O.	International Labor Organization
CBS	Columbia Broadcasting System	INS	International News Service
C.E.	Civil Engineer	IRO	International Refugee Organization
CEA	Council of Economic Advisers		
C.E.D.	Committee for Economic Development	J.D.	Doctor of Jurisprudence
CENTO	Central Treaty Organization	K.B.E.	Knight of (the Order of) the British Empire
CIA	Central Intelligence Agency	K.C.	King's Counsel
CIO	Congress of Industrial Organizations	K.C.B.	Knight Commander of the Bath
C.M.G.	Companion of (the Order of) St. Michael and St. George	L.H.D.	Doctor of Humanities
Com.	Commodore	Litt.D.	Doctor of Letters
CORE	Congress of Racial Equality	LL.B.	Bachelor of Laws
		LL.D.	Doctor of Laws
D.A.R.	Daughters of the American Revolution	M.A.	Master of Arts
D.C.L.	Doctor of Civil Law	M.B.A.	Master of Business Administration
D.D.	Doctor of Divinity	MBS	Mutual Broadcasting System
D.Eng.	Doctor of Engineering	M.C.E.	Master of Civil Engineering
DEW	Distant Early Warning Line	M.D.	Doctor of Medicine
D.F.C.	Distinguished Flying Cross	M.E.	Master of Engineering
D.J.	Doctor of Jurisprudence	METO	Middle East Treaty Organization
D.Lit.	Doctor of Literature	MGM	Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer
D.Mus.	Doctor of Music	M.Lit.	Master of Literature
DP	Displaced Person	M.P.	Member of Parliament
D.Pol.Sc.	Doctor of Political Science	M.P.P.D.A.	Motion Picture Producers and Distributors of America
D.Sc.	Doctor of Science	MRP	Mouvement Républicain Populaire
D.S.C.	Distinguished Service Cross		
D.S.M.	Distinguished Service Medal		
D.S.O.	Distinguished Service Order		
ECA	Economic Cooperation Administration		
ECOSOC	Economic and Social Council		

MSA Mutual Security Agency
M.Sc. Master of Science
Msgr. Monsignor, Monseigneur

NAACP National Association for the
Advancement of Colored People
NAB National Association of Broadcasters
NAM National Association of Manufacturers
NASA National Aeronautics and Space
Administration
NATO North Atlantic Treaty Organization
NBC National Broadcasting Company
NEA National Education Association
NLRB National Labor Relations Board
N.M.U. National Maritime Union
NRA National Recovery Administration
NRPB National Resources Planning Board
NYA National Youth Administration

O.A.S. Organization of American States
O.B.E. Officer of (the Order of) the British
Empire
OCD Office of Civilian Defense
OEEC Organization for European Economic
Cooperation
OPA Office of Price Administration
OPM Office of Production Management
OWI Office of War Information

P.E.N. Poets, Playwrights, Editors, Essayists
and Novelists (International
Association)
Ph.B. Bachelor of Philosophy
Ph.D. Doctor of Philosophy
PWA Public Works Administration

Q.C. Queen's Counsel

RAF Royal Air Force
RCA Radio Corporation of America
REA Rural Electrification Administration
RFC Reconstruction Finance Corporation
RKO Radio-Keith-Orpheum
ROTC Reserve Officers' Training Corps

SAC Strategic Air Command
SCAP Supreme Command for the Allied
Powers
SEATO Southeast Asia Treaty Organization
SEC Securities and Exchange Commission
SHAEF Supreme Headquarters, Allied
Expeditionary Force
SHAPE Supreme Headquarters, Allied Powers
Europe
S.J.D. Doctor of Juridical Science
SLA Special Libraries Association
S.T.B. Bachelor of Sacred Theology
S.T.D. Doctor of Sacred Theology

TVA Tennessee Valley Authority
T.W.U.A. Textile Workers Union of America

UAR United Arab Republic
U.A.W. United Automobile, Aircraft, and
Agricultural Implement Workers of
America
UMT Universal Military Training
U.M.W.A. United Mine Workers of America
U.N. United Nations
UNESCO United Nations Educational, Scientific,
and Cultural Organization
UNICEF United Nations Children's Fund
UNRRA United Nations Relief and Rehabilita-
tion Administration
U.P.I. United Press and International News
Service
USO United Service Organizations
U.S.S.R. Union of Soviet Socialist Republics
U.S.W.A. United Steel Workers of America

VA Veterans Administration
V.F.W. Veterans of Foreign Wars

W.F.T.U. World Federation of Trade Unions
WHO World Health Organization
WMC War Manpower Commission
WPA Work Projects Administration
WPB War Production Board

YMCA Young Men's Christian Association
YMHA Young Men's Hebrew Association
YWCA Young Women's Christian Association