

# They Call Me *Mister* Johnson!

by  
Don Neal

Comedian Bill Saluga had a bit that he did on TV variety shows. If you watched television in the late 70s you'll remember it. A zoot-suited character named Raymond J. Johnson, Jr. would appear. If you called him "Johnson," he launched into a tirade: "Ahh, ya doesn't has to call me Johnson! You can call me Ray, or you can call me Jay, or you can call me Johnny, or you can call me Sonny, or you can call me Junie, or you can call me Ray Jay, or you can call me RJ, or you can call me RJJ, or you can call me RJJ, Jr.... but ya doesn't hasta call me Johnson!" Twelve people with the surname Johnson have been honored on a U.S. stamp; six of them are African Americans.

(1993) A master of the blues, Robert Johnson's singing, guitar skills, and songwriting talent have influenced later generations of musicians including Chuck Berry, Bob Dylan, and the Rolling Stones.



(1988) James Weldon Johnson was known during the Harlem Renaissance for his poems, novel, and anthologies collecting both poems and spirituals of Black culture. He wrote the lyrics for "Lift Every Voice and Sing."



(2012) John H. Johnson was the trailblazing publisher of *Ebony* and *Jet* who overcame poverty and racism to build a business empire embracing magazines, radio stations, cosmetics, and more.



(2012) A major figure in 20th-century American art, William H. Johnson is recognized on the 11th issuance in the American Treasures series with a still-life painting entitled *Flowers*.



(1998) In his painting, *The Westwood Children* (now in the National Gallery of Art), Joshua Johnson depicts the male children of Margaret and John Westwood, who was a successful Baltimore stagecoach manufacturer.



(1995) One of America's most noted jazz artists, James P. Johnson was known as the King of the Stride Piano during the 1920s.