



Nomination for 2019 Selection

Application deadline: **Friday, March 29 by 5 p.m.**

DELIVER TO: City Hall, 101 N. Main St., Winston-Salem,
Marketing & Communications Department, Suite 336

OR MAIL TO: City of Winston-Salem
Marketing & Communications Department
P.O. Box 2511
Winston-Salem, NC 27102

Nominee's Stage Name: Norman Johnson Given Name: Norman Johnson

Address at Time of Death: 190 Idlewild Drive Winston Salem, State: NC

Winston-Salem Resident: Beginning: 1968 (year only) To: 1996 (year only)

Category: Music Visual Arts Dance Motion Pictures
 Theater Television Writing Radio

Criteria:

- The nominee(s) exhibited sustained excellence in his or her field for at least five years.
- The nominee(s) made distinguished contributions to the community and civic-oriented participation.
- The nominee(s) is deceased (must provide copy of death certificate).
- The nominee(s) was a resident of Winston-Salem for at least five years.
- The nominee(s) made a significant contribution to the arts or entertainment industry in one or more of the following areas: music, dance, theater, writing, visual arts, motion pictures, television, or radio. A "significant" contribution would be iconic in terms of renown and the impact on the artistic disciplines or popular culture.
- Application must include nominee's performance/accomplishment biography.
- Attach nominee's biography with dates which must include at least 5 years of accomplishments in the arts, culture, or entertainment field.
- Attach a list of nominee's civic/community involvement.
- Attach a copy of nominee's death certificate.


Sponsor: James Allbritten / Piedmont Opera

Address: 636 Holly Avenue

City: Winston Salem State: NC Zip Code: 27101

Email: jallbritten@piedmontopera.org

Phone: Home: (336) 723-0505 Cell: (336) 408-8713

Signature:  Date: _____

NOT A CERTIFIED COPY

NORTH CAROLINA DEPARTMENT OF ENVIRONMENT, HEALTH, AND NATURAL RESOURCES
STATE CENTER FOR HEALTH AND ENVIRONMENTAL STATISTICS - VITAL RECORDS SECTION
CERTIFICATE OF DEATH

Registration District No. **0345** Local No. **7025**

03 746

1. NORMAN KENNETH JOHNSON		SEX 2. M	DATE OF DEATH (Month, Day, Year) 3. SEPTEMBER 10, 1996
SOCIAL SECURITY NUMBER 4. 524-38-481	AGE - Last Birthday 5. 67	UNDER 1 YEAR Months Days Hours Minutes	DATE OF BIRTH (Month, Day, Year) 6. 11/12/28
WAS DECEDENT EVER IN U.S. ARMED FORCES? (Yes or No) 8. NO		7. SYRACUSE, N.Y.	
FACILITY NAME (If not institution, give street and number) 9a. FORSYTH MEMORIAL HOSPITAL			
CITY, TOWN, OR LOCATION OF DEATH 9b. WINSTON-SALEM		INSIDE CITY LIMITS? (Yes or No) 9c. YES	COUNTY OF DEATH 9d. FORSYTH
MARRIAGE STATUS - Married, Never Married, Widowed, Divorced (Specify) 10. MARRIED		11. MATILDA NICKEL	
SURVIVING SPOUSE (If wife, give maiden name)		DECEDENT'S USUAL OCCUPATION (Give kind of work done during part of working life. Do not use retired) 12a. GENERAL DIRECTOR	
RESIDENCE - STATE 13a. N.C.		12b. OPERA COMPANY	
COUNTY 13b. FORSYTH	CITY, TOWN, OR LOCATION 13c. WINSTON-SALEM	STREET AND NUMBER 13d. 190 IDLEWILD DRIVE	
INSIDE CITY LIMITS? (Yes or No) 14a. YES	ZIP CODE 14b. 27106	DECEDENT'S EDUCATION (Specify only highest grade completed) Elementary/Secondary (0-12) College (13-17+) 15. WHITE 16. 20	
FATHER'S NAME (First, Middle, Last) 17. KENNETH JOHNSON		MOTHER'S NAME (First, Middle, Maiden Surname) 18. MILDRED SEVY	
INFORMANT'S NAME (Type/Print) 19a. MATILDA N. JOHNSON		MAILING ADDRESS (Street and Number or Rural Route Number, City or Town, State, Zip Code) 19b. 190 IDLEWILD DR., WINSTON-SALEM, NC 27106	
DATE AMENDED 19c.		APPROXIMATE INTERVAL BETWEEN ONSET AND DEATH 19d. Unknown	
PART I. IMMEDIATE CAUSE (Final disease or condition resulting in death) a. Arteriosclerotic heart disease DUE TO (OR AS A CONSEQUENCE OF)			
b. Separately list conditions, if any, leading to immediate cause. Enter UNDERLYING CAUSE (Disease or injury that initiated events resulting in death) LAST. DUE TO (OR AS A CONSEQUENCE OF)			
c. Other significant conditions contributing to death but not resulting in the underlying cause given in Part I, such as tobacco, alcohol, or drug use, diabetes, etc. DUE TO (OR AS A CONSEQUENCE OF)			
d.			
AUTOPSY? (Yes or No) If yes, were findings considered in determining cause of death? 21a. NO		Was case referred to Medical Examiner? (Yes or No) 21c. NO	
TIME OF DEATH 21b. 22:25 a. m.		NOTICE: STATE LAW REQUIRES THAT ALL DEATHS DUE TO TRAUMA, ACCIDENT, HOMICIDE, SUICIDE, OR OTHER SUSPICIOUS, UNUSUAL, OR UNNATURAL CIRCUMSTANCE BE REPORTED TO, AND CERTIFIED BY A MEDICAL EXAMINER ON A MEDICAL EXAMINER'S CERTIFICATE OF DEATH. ANY DEATH FALLING INTO THESE CATEGORIES IS WITH THE MEDICAL EXAMINER'S JURISDICTION REGARDLESS OF THE LENGTH OF SURVIVAL FOLLOWING THE UNDERLYING INJURY.	
SIGNATURE AND TITLE OF CERTIFIER 22. <i>[Signature]</i>		DATE SIGNED (Month, Day, Year) 22b. 9/10/96	
NAME AND ADDRESS OF PERSON WHO COMPLETED CAUSE OF DEATH (ITEM 20) (Type or Print) 23. STEPHEN L. LELIGER MD, 3983 Old Greeneboro Rd, Winston-Salem NC			
METHOD OF DISPOSITION 24. <input type="checkbox"/> Burial <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Cremation <input type="checkbox"/> Removal <input type="checkbox"/> Donation <input type="checkbox"/> Other		PLACE OF DISPOSITION (Name of cemetery, crematory, or other place) 24b. VOGLER'S CLEMONS CREMATORY	
LOCATION - City or Town, State, Zip Code 24c. CLEMONS, N.C. 27012		SIGNATURE OF FUNERAL DIRECTOR 25. <i>[Signature]</i>	
NAME AND ADDRESS OF FUNERAL HOME 26. VOGLER & SONS FUNERAL HOME, 2991 REYNOLDA RD., WINSTON-SALEM, NC 27106		SIGNATURE OF EMBALMER 26a. <i>[Signature]</i>	
NEAREST RELATIVE SIGNATURE 27. <i>[Signature]</i>		DATE FILED (Month, Day, Year) 27. 9-12-96	
28. Not embalmed		LICENSE NUMBER 28a. 3119 FD	
28b.		LICENSE NUMBER 28c.	

DEH-1072 (revised 8/84) (revised 2/87) VITAL RECORDS

Norman Johnson, founder of opera group, dies at 67



NORMAN JOHNSON

By Gordon Sparber
JOURNAL ARTS REPORTER

Norman Johnson, the founder and general director of Piedmont Opera Theatre, died yesterday morning of a heart attack. He was 67.

Clyde Fitzgerald, a past president of Piedmont Opera's board and a longtime friend of Johnson's, said that Johnson was at home at the time of the heart attack.

"We have suffered a tremendous leadership and artistic loss," Fitzgerald said.

Johnson came to Winston-Salem in 1968 to become the head of opera and choral studies at the N.C. School of the Arts. At the time of his death, he was the head of the school's opera department.

In 1975, he became the conductor of the Winston-Salem Symphony Chorale, a post he held until 1980. Johnson founded the Piedmont Opera in 1978. From 1982 to 1994, he also administered the North Carolina regional auditions of the Metropolitan Opera National Council at the arts school.

Born in Oneida, N.Y., Johnson received bachelor's and master's degrees in music from the Juilliard School. In 1955, he became an associate conductor of the Oratorio Society of New York. From 1962 to 1970, he was a conductor for the Central City Opera Festival in Colorado, and in 1967, he was named the artistic director of the Denver Lyric Opera. From 1964 to 1968, Johnson taught conducting at the Peabody Conservatory in Baltimore.

OVER THE YEARS, Johnson also performed as a pianist for such singers as Rise Stevens and Mack Harrell and conducted opera productions for such companies as the Cincinnati Summer Opera and the Augusta Opera.

He was a vocal coach for the touring Metropolitan Opera National Company in 1965.

Johnson almost singlehandedly developed an opera audience in Winston-Salem. One member of the audience at an early Piedmont Opera performance said that the company's first performances played to only 50 to 100 people. Last season, the company sold 3,000 to 4,000 tickets for each of its two productions, said Brenda Hubbard, a Piedmont Opera official.

AS PIEDMONT OPERA'S only conductor and chief administrator, Johnson handled all aspects of the productions, from hiring the casts to procuring the sets and costumes to rehearsing the chorus. He was also the company's principal fund-raiser.

Fitzgerald said: "Due to Norman's guidance and leadership, Piedmont Opera is financially sound. Norman was a unique individual who was able to combine artistic greatness with a positive leadership of our board. He had a very clear vision of what Piedmont Opera needs to be, and knew how to surround himself with folks who shared that vision.

"To us, Norman is irreplaceable."

Alex Ewing, the chancellor of the arts school, said: "Norman Johnson was one of the most beloved and respected members of our faculty. For years, he was the voice of opera at the School of the Arts. I'm sure I speak for hundreds and thousands of students and members of the audience when I express thanks for all that he was and did for us."

Johnson is survived by his wife, Matilda Nickel, who has requested that donations be made to the Piedmont Opera's endowment fund, which is being administered by the Winston-Salem Foundation. A memorial service has not yet been scheduled.

Norman Johnson: Performance/accomplishment biography

Norman Johnson came to Winston Salem in 1968 to join the faculty of the North Carolina School of the Arts. At the fledgling institution, he was responsible for guiding the growth of the choral and opera programs. In 1976, he founded Piedmont Opera Theatre (now Piedmont Opera). He worked for both institutions until his death in 1994.

Norman Johnson received his bachelor's and master's degrees in piano from the Juilliard School in New York. In 1955, became an associate conductor of the Oratorio Society of New York, working under William Strickland. During this time, he was one of the most sought-after accompanists in New York, playing for Metropolitan Opera Artists Mack Harrell, Rise Stevens, Robert McFerrin and Judith Raskin among others. He would go on to become a coach for the Metropolitan Opera National Touring Company.

In 1962, he made his professional conducting debut with Colorado's Central City Opera Festival. His work there would lead him to be named Artistic Director of the Denver Lyric Opera in 1967. A high point of his work with Denver Lyric, he conducted the world premiere of Pulitzer Prize winner Dominick Argento's *Colonel Jonathan the Saint*.

Johnson was still working both in Denver when he was brought to Winston Salem in 1968. By the 70's he had begun to invest in the city. The voice and opera program were growing at the School of the Arts, and in 1975, he became the Chorus Master of the Winston Salem Symphony, a post he would hold until 1980. Between his work with the Symphony and his work at NCSA, Johnson wisely recognized that in Winston Salem, there were all the ingredients to create a first-class opera company. What's more, opera is the one art form that combines all art forms into one whole. IF Winston Salem was going to call itself the City of the Arts, it needed that cohesive art form, in which the whole is greater than the sum of its parts. In 1976, Johnson, along with two enthusiastic supporters, signed the incorporation papers to create Piedmont Opera. The company produced it's first opera, Verdi's *Rigoletto*, in 1978.

The company quickly grew, and by its fourth season, it was providing the city with two operatic productions annually. In 1994, as Johnson was in the midst of preparations for the first opera of the company's 19th season, he died unexpectedly. It is a credit to him that, nearly 25 years after his death, the company he started is still thriving, attracting opera fans from across the triad, and far beyond.

Norman Johnson: List of community/civic involvement

Faculty Member, North Carolina School of the Arts: 1968-1994

Conductor, Winston Salem Symphony Chorale: 1975-1980

Founder, General Director and Principal Conductor, Piedmont Opera: 1978-1994