

INVENTOR

LONNIE JOHNSON

"INVENTING IS WHAT I DO. I COME TO WORK, I TRY TO INVENT AND DEVELOP NEW THINGS TO SOLVE PROBLEMS."



Pronunciation:

(lawn-knee jawn-son)

Life: 1949-present

Location: Atlanta, GA

Known for: Inventing toys, & Developing power systems for the US Air Force and NASA

MATH HERO

Inventors like Lonnie use math to:

- Create toys that launch items further and faster due to his knowledge of volume and density.
- Create batteries that use fewer natural resources but produce more energy.
- Create power sources so that rockets can explore the planet Jupiter.
- Inspire young people: "People saw my interest in engineering very early and they nurtured that...the earlier we can get kids interested and the more we can give positive feedback...the more likely we are to see kids grow up to be successful."

I HAVE A GREAT IDEA

- Lonnie Johnson is an inventor and an engineer. Engineers invent and modify things to improve the ways in which we work, live, and play.
- Lonnie, as a child, became interested in making toys and other objects. In high school, a robot of his design won a state competition.
- Lonnie earned multiple degrees from Tuskegee University, a historically black college/university known for its work in the fields of agriculture, aviation, and engineering. He has worked as a research engineer and nuclear engineer for the US Air Force and NASA.
- Lonnie used his knowledge of jet propulsion to create the Super Soaker® water gun as well as the popular N-Strike® Nerf toys.
- Lonnie was inducted into the National Inventors Hall of Fame in 2022. The Super Soaker® was inducted into the National Toy Hall of Fame in 2015. He holds over 100 US patents.

REFERENCES

- Gopal, T., & Shereshevsky, B. (2020, August 15). How a NASA scientist accidentally invented the Super Soaker. CNN. <https://www.cnn.com/2020/08/15/us/super-soaker-lonnie-johnson-great-big-story-trnd/index.html>
- National Inventors Hall of Fame. (2022). Lonnie Johnson. <https://www.invent.org/inductees/lonnie-johnson>