

Inventory of the Harriet McBryde Johnson Papers, 1971-2010

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Descriptive Summary

Title: Harriet McBryde Johnson papers

Date(s) 1971-2010

Creator: Johnson, Harriet McBryde, 1957-2008

Abstract: Writings, working files, diplomas, awards, recognitions, memorials, and

audiovisual materials of Harriet McBryde Johnson. Materials document Johnson's disability and civil rights advocacy and activism, her career as an author and an attorney, and her participation in Charleston city and county politics. Disabled due to a congenital degenerative neuromuscular disease she came to prominence after debating Peter Singer concerning his views on disability-based infanticide and for her annual public demonstrations of the Jerry Lewis MDA Labor Day Telethon. As an author Johnson published two books, a memoir, *Too Late to Die Young: Nearly True Tales from a Life*, and a young adult novel, *Accidents of Nature*, as well as numerous articles for various disability press, newspaper, and legal periodicals on such topics as living with a disability, disability and civil rights advocacy,

Extent: 6.0 linear feet

(6 cartons, 1 oversize folder, 5 audiocassettes, 4 cds, 5 videocassettes)

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and accessibility issues.

URL: http://archives.library.cofc.edu

Call Number: Mss 0156

Language of Material: Materials in English

Biographical Note

Harriet McBryde Johnson (1957-2008) was a disability rights advocate and activist, attorney, and author. Disabled due to a congenital neuromuscular diease, she earned a B.S. in history from the Charleston Southern University in 1978, a Master's in Public Administration from the College of Charleston in 1981, and a law degree from the University of South Carolina in 1985. Shortly after graduating from the University of South Carolina she went into private practice, focusing on benefits and civil rights claims for poor and working people with disabilites. In 2002 she came to prominence after debating Peter Singer, Professor of Bioethics at Princeton University, concerning his views on disability-based infanticide. The encounter was chronicled in her New York Times Magazine cover story "Unspeakable Conversations or How I Spent One Day as a Token Cripple at Princeton University." She also drew national attention for her public protests of the Jerry Lewis MDA Labor Day Telethon. Prompted by Lewis' "If I Had Muscular Dystrophy" article for Parade Magazine in which he referred to disabled children as "half persons," Johnson criticized the telethons "pity-based tactics" and "charity mentality" and protested the telethon for nearly twenty years. She also wrote numerous articles for various disability press and legal and newspaper periodicals, and was the author of two books, a memoir, Too Late to Die Young: Nearly True Tales from a Life, published in 2005, and the young adult novel, Accidents of Nature, published in 2006. Politically active Johnson served in the City of Charelston Democratic Party for eleven years, first as secretary, then as chair. She was also a County Council candidate in 1994 and a national convention delegate in 1996. In addition she was a member of the board of directors of Protection and Advocacy for People with Disabilites and served on the steering committee of the National Lawyer's Guild.

Collection Overview

The collection consists of the papers of Harriet McBryde Johnson from 1971 to 2010 and document Johnson's disability rights advocacy and activism, her career as an author and an attorney, and her participation in Charleston city and county politics. The collection includes writings, working files, awards, memorials and tributes, photographs, and audiovisual materials. Writings include Johnson's typescript for her young adult novel Accidents of Nature, and published short stories, memoir excerpts, profiles, interviews, and articles for various disability press, legal, and newspaper periodicals on such topics as living with a disability, disability advocacy and civil rights, and accessibility issues. A large portion of the collection is made up of Johnson's working files comprised of correspondence, faxes, clippings, photocopies, printed materials, handwritten notes, and other ephemera relating to her accessibility lawsuit against the Ashley Hall Foundation, her political activities as the City Party Chair and Secretary of the City of Charleston Democratic Party, her county council campaign, and her annual Jerry Lewis MDA Labor Day Telethon demonstrations, including protest signage and a "Dump Jerry Lewis" button. Her working files also contain correspondence between Johnson and Joseph P. Riley, Strom Thurman, and Ernest F. Hollings regarding accessibility issues in downtown Charleston and her support or opposition to various bills and political nominations as well as other assorted professional correspondence, requests for article contributions for local and national journals and newspapers, and thank you letters and notes. Also included are files relating to Johnson's literary career, including speech notes, fan mail, and publicity materials, and scattered legal files. The arrangement scheme for Johnson's working files was imposed during processing. There are also diplomas, awards, and recogntions awarded to Johnson including her college diplomas from the Charleston Southern University and the University of South Carolina, certificates of appreciation, a city resolution for Harriet McBryde Johnson day, and Senate and House resolutions passed on her death. Also included are memorial materials and audiovisual materials including radio interviews on the topic of living with a disability and her memoir as well as videocassette recordings of her county council campaign commercial, professional training workshops, speeches, and conference presentations.

Collection Arrangement

- 1. Writings, 1971-2008
- 2. Working files, 1971-2008
- 3. Diplomas, awards, and recognition, 1985-2008
- 4. Memorials, 2008, 2010
- 5. Audiovisual materials, 1992-2010

Restrictions

Access Restrictions

This collection is open for research.

Copyright Notice

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Search Terms

The following terms have been used to index this collection in the Library's online catalog. They are grouped by name of person, family, or organization, by topical subject, by place, and by types of material.

Names

Johnson, Harriet McBryde Lewis, Jerry, 1926-Singer, Peter, 1946-

Subjects

People with disabilities -- South Carolina -- Charleston Authors with disabilities -- South Carolina -- Charleston Lawyers -- South Carolina -- Charleston People with disabilities -- Civil rights -- United States People with disabilities -- Legal status, laws, etc. -- United States Disability awareness -- South Carolina -- Charleston

Types of Material

Files (document groupings)

Periodicals

Correspondence

Clippings (information artifacts)

Photocopies

Diplomas

Certificates

Audiocassettes

Compact discs

Videocassettes

Color photographs

Administrative Information

Preferred Citation

[Identification of item], Harriet McBryde Johnson papers, College of Charleston Libraries, Charleston, SC, USA.

Acquisitions Information

Materials were donated in 2009, 2011, 2012, and 2014 by Elizabeth Johnson.

Processing Information

Processed by Joshua Minor, December 2014.

Encoded by Joshua Minor, December 2014.

Detailed Description of the Collection

1. Writings, 1971-2008

Disability press periodicals, 1993-2008

Box 1 Folder 1	Ability, "The Utterly Reasonable," 2005
Box 1 Folder 2	Ability, "Too Late to Die Young: Nearly True Tales from a Life" excerpt, 2005
Box 1 Folder 3	Disability Rag, "Hope for Judenrats," letter to the editor, 1993 July-August
Box 1 Folder 4	Disability Rag, "We Should Know Better," letter to the editor, 1994 March-April
Box 1 Folder 5	Exchange, "The Future of Disabilities: Celebrating 25 Years of Advocacy," 2006 Fall
Box 1 Folder 6	Mouth Magazine, "Not Another Peep Out of You," #79, Volume 14, Number 3, 2003 September-October
Box 1 Folder 7	Mouth Magazine, "More News on Eugenics at the Holocaust Museum, Harriet McBryde Johnson Testifies on Language and Institutions," #93 and #94, Volume 16, Numbers 5 and 6, 2005 January-April
Box 1 Folder 8	Mouth Magazine, "I Can Tell You About Not Moving," #104 and #105, Volume 18, Numbers 4 and 5, 2007 November-2008 February
Box 1 Folder 9	New Mobility, "Return to Cuba," 1998 May
Box 1 Folder 10	New Mobility, "My Spin: Power Dressing," 1998 December
Box 1 Folder 11	New Mobility, "A Celebration for the Day of the Dead", 1999 October
Box 1 Folder 12	New Mobility, "Conventional Wisdom, Part One," 2000 September
Box 1 Folder 13	New Mobility, "Conventional Wisdom, Part Two," 2000 October
Box 1 Folder 14	New Mobility, "My Spin: Voice Lessons," 2001 January
Box 1 Folder 15	New Mobility, "School of Hard Knocks, A Painful Coming of Age at Duke University," 2001 June
Box 1 Folder 16	New Mobility, "Body Hunger," 2002 April
	Article is written under the pen name "Miss Jane."
Box 1 Folder 17	New Mobility, "Physician Assisted Death, Are We Asking the Right Questions," 2003 May
Box 1 Folder 18	New Mobility, "Person of the Year: Harriet McBryde Johnson," 2004 January
Box 1 Folder 19	New Mobility, "One Life," 2005 March
Box 1 Folder 20	New Mobility, "Celebrating Barry," 2005 September
Box 1 Folder 21	New Mobility, "Barry Corbett: Embedded," 2007 January
Box 1 Folder 22	Ragged Edge, "Reclaiming Our Civil Rights," 1999 September-October

Box 1	Folder	23	Ragged Edge, "On Answering Personal Questions About My Disability From Children I Meet on the Street," 1999 July-August
Box 1	Folder	24	Support Magazine, "Wie Mag Leven?" [Who Should Live?], 2004 May
Box 1	Folder	25	TASH Connections, "Worth Living," Issue Number 7, Volume 29, 2003 July
		Fic	etion, 1995-2003
Box 1	Folder	26	Accidents of Nature typescript, 1995 October
Box 1	Folder	27	Accidents of Nature photocopied typescript, 1995 October
Box 1	Folder	28	Notre Dame Review, "Marriage of Convenience," Number 8, 1999 Summer
Box 1	Folder	29	Point, "Marriage of Convenience," Volume 11, Number 102, 2001
Box 1	Folder	30	The Post and Courier South Carolina Fiction Project, "Sight Seeing," 2003
		Le	gal publications and periodicals, 1981-2007
Box 1	Folder	31	College of Charleston Masters Thesis "Rights of Handicapped People in Public Employment Under Title V of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973," 1981 April 30
Box 1	Folder	32	<i>The Elder Law Journal</i> , "Civil Rights and Long-Term Care: Advocacy in the Wake of Olmstead v. L. C. Ex Rel. Zimring," 2002
Box 1	Folder	33	<i>Guild Notes</i> , "Tearing Down the Walls: The Fight Against State-Created Segregation," Volume XIV, Number 2, 2000
Box 1	Folder	34	Guild Notes, "Guild Disability Rights Committee Activities," 2002
Box 1	Folder	35	Legal Rights of Handicapped People: A Survey for South Carolina Advocates, 1981 March
Box 1	Folder	36	The National Lawyers Guild Newsletter of the Labor and Employment Committee, "Unions Urged to Reconsider Support of Jerry Lewis Muscular Dystrophy Telethon," 2003 May
Box 1	Folder	37	Paralysis Resource Guide, Second Edition, "Legal Basics: Job Hunting with a Disability," 2007
Box 1	Folder	38	Perspectives on Taxing and Spending Limitations in the United States, "David Meets Leviathan: Remarks on Myth, Attitudes, and Political Articulation of Protest in the Great Tax Revolt of Seventy-Eight," 1981
Box 2	Folder	1	Review of Public Personnel Administration, "Who is Handicapped? Defending the Protected Class under the Employment Provisions of Title V of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973," Volume 2, Number 1, 1981
Box 2	Folder	2	South Carolina Bar, Continuing Legal Education: Social Security Disability Practice from Kindergarten to College, "Kindergarten: First Contact," 2001 July 27
Box 2	Folder	3	South Carolina Jurisprudence: A Complete, Narrative, and Encyclopedic Statement of South Carolina Law, "Eminent Domain," 1993

Box 2 Folder 4	South Carolina Lawyer, "The Americans with Disabilities Act: Some Highlights for South Carolina Lawyers," 1991 March-April
	Newspaper periodicals, 1971-2008
Box 2 Folder 5	New York Times Magazine, "Unspeakable Conversations or How I Spent One Day as a Token Cripple at Princeton University," 2003 February 16
	Includes typescript draft.
Box 2 Folder 6	New York Time Magazine, "Stairway to Justice," 2004 May 30
Box 2 Folder 7	New York Times Magazine, "Wheelchair Unbound," 2006 April 23
Box 2 Folder 8	New York Time Magazine, "Happy Nevertheless: An Ongoing Conversation About a Disabled Life," 2008 December 28
Box 2 Folder 9	The Post and Courier, "High Profile: Harriet McBryde Johnson," 2003 April 12
Box 2 Folder 10	Clippings, 1971-1982
Box 2 Folder 11	Why Freedom Matters, "Courage" essay, 2003
2. Working files.	1971-2008. undated

אווא זכ Killy files,

Box 2 Folder 12 Charleston County Courthouse, 1985-1988 Box 2 Folder 13 City of Charleston, 1997-2004, undated Box 2 Folder 14 College of Charleston, 1993-1999, undated Box 2 Folder 15 Hibernian Hall, 1999 Box 2 Folder 16 Advertising, 2002-2008 Box 2 Folder 17 America's Overlooked Minority: The Sociology and Politics of Disability teaching file, 1977, 1982, undated Ashley Hall Foundation accessibility lawsuit, 1989-2002, undated

Box 2 Folder 18 Americans With Disabilities Act general file, 1989-1997, undated Box 2 Folder 19 Ashley Hall general file, 1999-2000 Box 2 Folder 20 Drafts, 1999-2002 Box 2 Folder 21 Pleadings, 2000-2001, undated Box 2 Folder 22 Barry Corbett, 1993, 2000-2007, undated Box 2 Folder 23 Carolina Alliance for Fair Employment, Charleston Chapter, 1993-1995, 2000, undated Charleston County Democratic Party, 1988-2000, undated

Executive committee, 1988-2000, undated

Accessibility, 1985-2004, undated

Box 3 Folder 1

Box 3 Folder	2	Executive committee, 1991-1995, undated
Box 3 Folder	3	Harkin committee, 1991-1992, undated
	City	of Charleston Democratic Party, 1989-2000
Box 3 Folder	4	City Democratic Party general file, 1991-1998, 2001
Box 3 Folder	5-9	City Democratic Party general file, 1997, undated
Box 3 Folder	10	City Democratic Party general file, 1997, 1999, undated
Box 3 Folder	11	City Democratic Party general file, 1999, undated
Box 3 Folder	12	Democratic convention, 1999
Box 3 Folder	13	Democratic Party candidacy filings, 1999
Box 3 Folder	14	Executive Committee minutes, 1989-1995
Box 3 Folder	15	Executive Committee minutes, 1997
Box 3 Folder	16	Executive Committee minutes, 1998-1999
Box 3 Folder	17	Get out the vote, 1997
Box 3 Folder	18	Janie Anderson, Clerk of Court candidate, 1992
Box 3 Folder	19	Petition receipts for Alma Dungee and Caliph R Hanesworth, 1997
Box 4 Folder	1	Precinct data, 1999-2000, undated
Box 4 Folder	2	Precinct reorganization, 1991, undated
Box 4 Folder	3	Precinct reorganization, 1993, undated
Box 4 Folder	4	Primary, 1999
Box 4 Folder	5	Primary and run off, 1997, undated
Box 4 Folder	6	State Ethics Commission disclosure manual and forms, 1992, undated
Box 4 Folder	7	Unofficial tally results by precinct, 1999
	Corr	espondence, 1971, 1980-1987
Box 4 Folder	8	General, 1971, 1983-1987
Box 4 Folder	9	General, 1989
Box 4 Folder	10	General, 1990
Box 4 Folder	11	General, 1991
Box 4 Folder	12	General, 1994, 1996
Box 4 Folder	13	General, 1997

Box 4 Folder	14	General, 1998
Box 4 Folder	15	General, 1999
Box 4 Folder	16	General, 2000-2001
Box 4 Folder	17	General, 2002
Box 4 Folder	18	General, 2003
Box 4 Folder	19	General, 2004
Box 4 Folder	20	General, 2005-2008
	Coun	ty council campaign, 1994-1995, undated
Box 4 Folder	21	Expenses, 1994
Box 4 Folder	22	Expenses, 1994-1995
Box 4 Folder	23	Printed materials, 1994
Oversize Pape	r Folder 1	Harriet McBryde Johnson County Council campaign yard sign, 1994
		(Flat Storage)
Box 4 Folder	24 Debra	a B. Henson v. Berkeley County School Board Brief of Appellant, 1999
Box 4 Folder	25-27 Demo	ocratic National Convention, 1996, undated
	Jerry	Lewis MDA Labor Day Telethon protest, 1990-2007
Box 4 Folder	28	Anti-telethon, 1990-1991, undated
Box 4 Folder	29	Anti-telethon, 1992-1993, 2001
Box 5 Folder	1	Dump Jerry Lewis button, undated
Box 5 Folder	2	Telethon protest, 1990-1992, undated
Box 5 Folder	3	Telethon protest, 1993, undated
Box 5 Folder	4	Telethon protest, 1994, undated
Box 5 Folder	5	Telethon protest, 1995, undated
Box 5 Folder	6	Telethon protest, 1996, undated
Box 5 Folder	7	Telethon protest, 1997, undated
Box 5 Folder	8	Telethon protest, 1998, undated
Box 5 Folder	9	Telethon protest, 1999, undated
Box 5 Folder	10	Telethon protest, 2000, undated
Box 5 Folder	11	Telethon protest, 2001, undated

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Box 5 Folder 12	Telethon protest, 2002, undated
Box 5 Folder 13	Telethon protest, 2003
Box 5 Folder 14	Telethon protest, 2004, undated
Box 5 Folder 15	Telethon protest, 2005
Box 5 Folder 16	Telethon protest, 2006-2007, undated
Oversize Paper Folder 1	Assorted protest signs, undated
	(Flat Storage)
I	iterary and public speaking career, 1985-2008, undated
Box 5 Folder 17	Accidents of Nature correspondence, 1993-1996, 2004, undated
Box 5 Folder 18	Accidents of Nature and Too Late to Die Young book publicity, 2004-2007, undated
Box 5 Folder 19	Fan Mail, 2005, undated
Box 5 Folder 20	Goin to Carolina 2004 NAELA Symposium, "Disability Rights: A Liberation Movement for All People," 2004, May 20-23
Box 5 Folder 21	Literary agents correspondence, 2003-2005, undated
Box 5 Folder 22	Literary contests, 2001-2005
Box 5 Folder 23	Short Fiction, 1994-2002, undated
Box 5 Folder 24	Speeches and articles, 1985-1995, undated
Box 6 Folder 1	Speeches and articles, 1996, undated
Box 6 Folder 2	Speeches and articles, 1999
Box 6 Folder 3	Speeches and articles, 2000
Box 6 Folder 4	Speeches and articles, 2001
Box 6 Folder 5	Speeches and articles, 2002
Box 6 Folder 6	Speeches and articles, 2003
Box 6 Folder 7	Speeches and articles, 2004, undated
Box 6 Folder 8	Speeches and articles, 2005, undated
Box 6 Folder 9	Speeches and articles, 2006
Box 6 Folder 10	Speeches and articles, 2007
Box 6 Folder 11	Speeches and articles, 2008
Box 6 Folder 12	Unspeakable Conversations, 2003
Box 6 Folder 13	National Conference on Independent Living Service Regulations, 1979

Box 6 Folder 14 Nurse Practice Act S.977, 2002 Olmstead v. L.C., 1999-2001, undated Box 6 Folder 15 Box 6 Folder 16 Petition of Writ of Certiorari in Wright v. Universal Maritime Service Corp., et al., 1997 Box 6 Folder 17 School file, 1975-1987, undated Includes several photographs of Johnson graduating from Charleston Southern University. Box 6 Folder 18 Second International Conference on the Rights of People with Disabilities, Havana, Cuba, 1997-1998 South Carolina Coalition for Handicapped Persons, 1983-2000, undated Box 6 Folder 19 Client Assistance Program and Vocational Rehabilitation, 1985-1993, 2000, undated Box 6 Folder 20 Minutes and Newsletters, 1983-1988, undated

3. Diplomas, awards, and recognition, 1985-2008

Box 6 Folder 21 Certificates of appreciation, 1992, 2004-2008

Box 6 Folder 22 City of Charleston proclamation and House and Senate resolutions, 2003-2008

Oversize Paper Folder 1 College Diplomas, 1978-1986, 1999

(Flat Storage)

Box 6 Folder 23 Jean Galloway Bissell award nomination packet, 1998, 2005

Box 6 Folder 24 Miscellaneous awards, 1985-2008, undated

4. Memorials, 2008, 2010

Box 6 Folder 25 Harriet McBryde Johnson: A Celebration of Life memorial pamphlet, 2008

Box 6 Folder 26 Harriet McBryde Johnson Scholarship programs, 2010

Box 6 Folder 27 "Memory Hold the Door," South Carolina Bar Convention, Kiawah Island, SC, 2010

Box 6 Folder 28 "Remembering the Past, Charting the Future," C.A.F.E. (The Carolina Alliance for Fair

Employment) tribute, 2010

Box 6 Folder 29 "We Shall Overcome!!!" bumper sticker, 2008

5. Audiovisual materials, 1992-2010, undated

Audiocassettes, 1992, 1997, 2000, undated

(Special Collections Audiocassette Box 2 | 4 audiocassettes)

Audiocassette 0156-a01 "A. Bryant Election Protest," 8/15/1997, 1997 August 15

Audiocassette 0156-a02 "Harkin Speech, Morris Street Baptist, 1992," 1992

Audiocassette 0156-a03	"Harriet Johnson- Radio Show," undated
Audiocassette 0156-a04	"The Infinite Mind with Dr. Fred Goodwin, Courage (#130)," 2000
Audiocassette 0156-a05	"Wisconsin Public Radio, 0314 D," undated
Com	pact Discs, 2000, 2005, 2010
	(Special Collections Compact Discs Box 1 9 compact discs)
CD 0156-cd01	"The Hearts and Minds Project," undated
CD 0156-cd02	"HOLT Author Harriet McBryde Johnson, Audio TT: 2:54, Henry Holt, 07/13/04," 2004 July 13
	Too Late to Die Young: Nearly True Tales from a Life radio promo.
CD 0156-cd03	"The Kojo Nnamdi Show, 11-10-05 Hr 1, Living With Serious Illness," 2005 November 10
CD 0156-cd04	"Memory Hold the Door," South Carolina Bar Convention, Kiawah Island, SC, 2010
CD 0156-cd05	"On A Roll: Talk Radio on Life and Disability, Hour 1, 9/3/2000," 2000 September 3
CD 0156-cd06	"On A Roll: Talk Radio on Life and Disability, Hour 2, 9/3/2000," 2000 September 3
CD 0156-cd07	"Remembering the Past, Charting the Future," C.A.F.E. (The Carolina Alliance for Fair Employment) tribute recording, 2010 October 23
CD 0156-cd08	"Remembering the Past, Charting the Future," C.A.F.E. (The Carolina Alliance for Fair Employment) tribute supplemental materials, 2010 October 23
	Includes PowerPoint presentations, event photographs, and honoree biographies.
CD 0156-cd09	"Your Day Today, 10-31-07, NPR Broadcast, Federal Project to Aid Elderly to Return/Stay Home," 2007 October 31
Vide	ocassettes, 1993-1997, 2005, undated
	(Special Collections Videocassette Box 1 5 videocassettes)
Videotape 0156-v01	"Harriet McBryde Johnson, Mediator's Opening Statement, Circuit Court Mediation Training, August 19, 1993," 1993 August 19
Videotape 0156-v02	"Harriet McBryde Johnson, Teleconference Olmstead Training," undated
Videotape 0156-v03	"Harriet McBryde Johnson/'Too Late to Die Young,' Cable Market, CNN NewsNight with Aaron Brown, 3/23/2005, 10:35 pm, (5:30)," 2005 March 23
Videotape 0156-v04	"Harriet McBryde Johnson, Working Women's Conference, 9/7/1997 Morning Session, 1997," 1997 September 7
Videotape 0156-v05	"Harriets' Campaign Commercial For ComCast," 1994