

Pandora Johnson

Pandora Ware Johnson was born and raised in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, but her family roots run deep in Virginia. Her paternal grandfather, G. Seymour Ware; great-grandmother, Patsy McDaniel Ware; second great-grandfather, Madison McDaniel; and third great-grandfather, Benjamin McDaniel—who was enslaved at James Madison's Montpelier—all lived in Orange County, Virginia.

She is a graduate of Hampton (Institute) University, where she earned a B.A. in Mass Media Arts and also holds an M.A. in Journalism from Regent University.

Her dedication to community service and youth was recognized by the Virginia State House of Delegates and Senate in 1998 with House Joint Resolution 418, presented during her reign as the first African-American to be crowned Mrs. Virginia America 1997.

She started working in public education in 2009 and retired as an educator from Chesapeake Public Schools in 2021. Since retirement, she has served as the Board Secretary (until July 2026) and is the Communications Chair of the Montpelier Descendants Committee. Married for over forty years, she and her husband Rob are the parents of five adult children and grandparents to five grandsons. She currently resides in Virginia Beach, Virginia.