

XAN JOHNSON (INDUCTED BY PATRICK STRAIN)

Xan Johnson is a 1963 graduate of Portage High School and in high school was very involved with speech club, forensics and the stage crew. Not only did Johnson excel on stage, he was also known on the court as well. He earned two letters for basketball.

Johnson received a bachelor's degree from the University of Wisconsin Whitewater in 1967 majoring in speech and theater with a minor in psychology and secondary education. He was certified to teach speech, theater and psychology. The following year, he received a master's degree in modern theater and directing from the University of Nebraska. Xan also earned a doctorate from Northwestern University in 1978 in an interdepartmental program combining theater, oral interpretation and communication studies.

In the summer of 1991, Johnson returned to Portage to find an existing children's theater program and the Portage Center for the Arts. That summer, Johnson held a teacher workshop in kindergarten to 12th grade drama methods that incorporated children in the community. Since 1992 Johnson has incorporated more than 30 theater professionals and professional theater artists from across the nation to guest teach at the Youth Theater Workshop. He has a long-standing commitment to the success of local students, the vitality of the theater and gifting of his extensive knowledge.

Xan Johnson is also internationally recognized for developing several youth theater programs; as a published playwright; for directing and for lectures about brain scan research and its relationship to theater, child development and learning theory.