

# Virginia E. Johnson

Sexual Pioneer in the Conservative Midwest



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# Virginia Eshelman Johnson

- Noted research partner of William H. Masters
- Iconic pioneer of sexual medicine
- Longtime resident of Saint Louis, Missouri



# Virginia E. Johnson



Personal Interviews



Bernard Becker Library – Archives and Rare Books

# Before she was “Masters and Johnson”

- Born February 11, 1925 in Springfield, MO
- Raised in California
- Returned to Missouri with her parents after high school to attend college
- Married during college and paused school
- Had 2 children and divorced



# Early Beginnings at WashU

- Originally wanted to do sociology research
- Began working with William H. Masters in 1957
- OB/Gyn Department
- Began doing infertility research
- Signed on for only a 2 year research post



Washington  
University  
in St. Louis



# Masters and Johnson – Early Work

- “Boldest work of the decade”
- Began doing sexual function research 6 months into research position
- Recruited from academic faculty, student population, St. Louis social groups



# Masters and Johnson – Support and Dissent

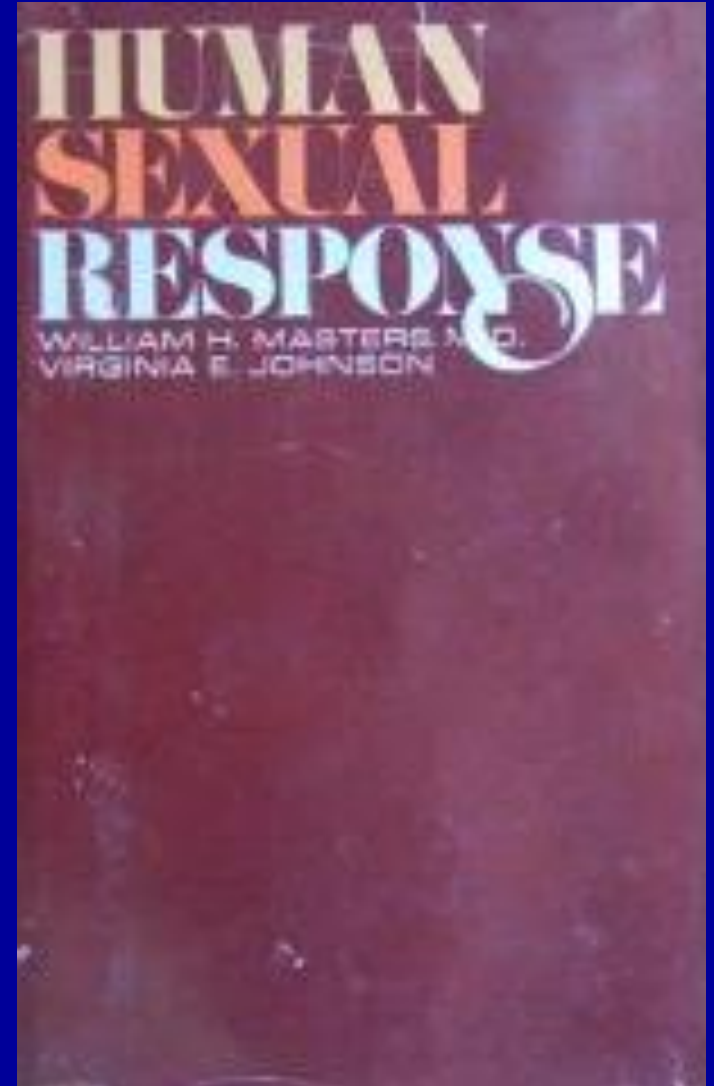
- Support
  - WashU Chancellor Ethan A.H Sheply
  - Local religious groups
  - Local social clubs
- Dissent
  - Other physicians
  - Local religious groups
  - Local social clubs





# Human Sexual Response

- First textbook of sexual function
- Published in 1966
- Sold out its first printing in 3 days
- 11 years of research
- 694 research subjects
- Published in 10 languages





# Masters and Johnson

- Became interested in treatment of dysfunction
- Left WashU in 1964 to open Reproductive Biology Research Foundation
- Created the Masters and Johnson Institute in 1973
- Both organizations within blocks of WashU



# Why Saint Louis?

- East coast was “too stuffy”
  - would not have been allowed to do research
- West coast was not credible
  - would have been considered “kooks”
- Saint Louis was most open and legitimate location



# Saint Louis Walk of Fame



# Why Virginia E. Johnson?

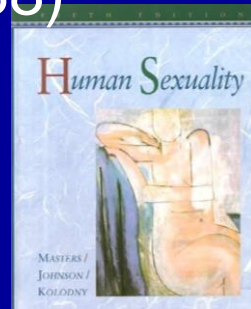
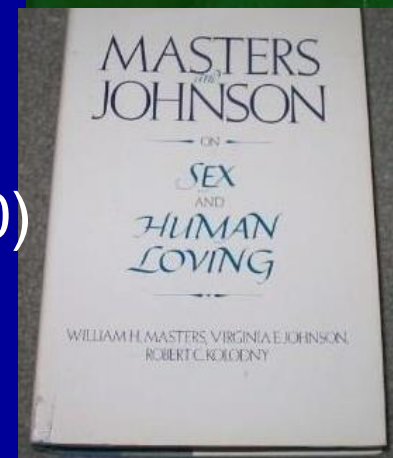
- “People Person”
- Impeccable history taker
- Social networker
- Translator





# Virginia E. Johnson – Publications

- Human Sexual Response (1966)
- Human Sexual Inadequacy (1970)
- The Pleasure Bond: A New Look at Sexuality and Commitment
- Textbook of Sexual Medicine (1979)
- Homosexuality in Perspective (1979)
- Ethical Issues in Sex Therapy and Research (1980)
- Human Sexuality (1982)
- On Sex and Human Loving (1986)
- CRISIS: Heterosexual Behavior in the Age of AIDS (1988)
- Biologic Foundations of Human Sexuality (1993)
- Heterosexuality (1994)



FREE CONTENT

MAY 25, 1976

Sex Education for Adults

# TIME

**RESEARCHERS  
MASTERS AND  
JOHNSON**



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- Personal interviews with Virginia E. Johnson, St. Louis, MO, April 2007.
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- Sanford RK. Sexual response research by group here gains notice. St Louis Post-Dispatch 1965 April 18.
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# Special Thanks to:

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# Any questions?

