

Title Page & Abstract

An Interview with Christopher Johnson

Part of the Abraham Lincoln Presidential Library

Tumultuous 2020 Oral History project

Interview # T20-A-L-2022-33

Christopher Johnson, CEO of Tivoli Enterprises, Inc., was interviewed on the date listed below as part of the Abraham Lincoln Presidential Library's *Tumultuous 2020* Oral History project.

Interview dates & location:

Date: April 19, 2022

Location: Downers Grover, Illinois

Interview Format: Digital audio

Interviewer: Philip Pogue, ALPLM volunteer

Transcription by: _____

Edited by: _____

Transcript being
processed.

Total Pages: _____ Total Time: 1:32 / 1.53 hrs.

Accessioned into the Abraham Lincoln Presidential Library Archives on August 5, 2022.

The interview is archived at the Abraham Lincoln Presidential Library in Springfield, Illinois.

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Abstract

Christopher Johnson, *Tumultuous 2020*, T20-A-L-2022-33

Biographical Information/Overview of Interview: Christopher “Chris” Johnson was born in Downers Grove, Illinois, in 1966. He grew up in his family’s movie theatre business and got his first job while in elementary school. He grew into roles with more responsibility and at different points worked as an usher, concessions manager, and weekend manager. After graduating from Downers Grove North in 1985, he went on to pursue a Bachelor of Science in management from the University of Illinois Chicago. He earned his Master of Business Administration from the University of Chicago in 1998. Still committed the family business, Johnson worked as the Vice President of Operations, which includes finance, IT, and human resources. He became the CEO of his family’s business, Tivoli Enterprises, in 2015. They operate a total of fifteen theatres in fourteen different communities. During the interview, Johnson discusses the business model for Tivoli Enterprises and other details about the family’s business.

Johnson highlights the many impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic on the movie theatre industry in Illinois. Johnson details the abrupt closings the stay-at-home order brought about in March of 2020, the brief effort to reopen in July of 2020, and the subsequent closure of Tivoli Enterprise’s theatres until April of 2021. Johnson describes his team’s efforts to utilize federal programs to ensure the employees would continue to get paid, even when the theatres were closed. He recounts the other challenges they faced, including supply chain shortages, worker costs and availability, safety costs, and restoring confidence in the safety of movie going. Because of the closures and subsequent revenue shortages bank loans, grants, and community support helped Tivoli Enterprises back on their feet. Johnson closes with a description of the personal impacts of the pandemic.

Subject Headings/Key Words: Tumultuous 2020; tumultuous 2020 oral history; Tivoli Enterprises; Downers Grove, Illinois; movie theatres; movie theaters; Christopher Johnson;

Notes to the Reader: Readers of the oral history memoir should bear in mind that this is a transcript of the spoken word, and that the interviewer, interviewee and editor sought to preserve the informal, conversational style that is inherent in such historical sources. The Abraham Lincoln Presidential Library and Museum is not responsible for the factual accuracy of the memoir, nor for the views expressed therein. We leave these for the reader to judge.

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