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# Nelson Johnson

**Nelson Johnson** (born 1948) is an American lawyer, judge and author, best known for his 2002 *New York Times* bestseller, *Boardwalk Empire: The Birth, High Times, and Corruption of Atlantic City*.<sup>[1]</sup>

## Contents

**Early life**

**Career**

**References**

**External links**

## Early life

Johnson is a life-long resident of Hammonton, N.J.<sup>[2]</sup>

## Career

Johnson was admitted to the New Jersey Bar in 1974. He represented the Atlantic City Planning Board in the early 1980s. In explaining his motivation to write *Boardwalk Empire*, Johnson explained "It [City Hall] was dysfunctional and corrupt. I thought, in order to do my job here, I have to find out how it got this way. I didn't set out to write a book. I just wanted a better understanding."<sup>[3]</sup>

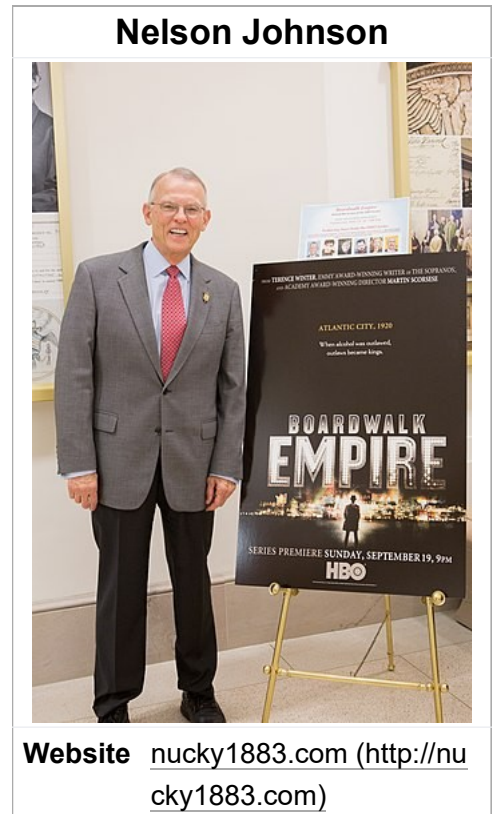
Johnson retired from his position as a New Jersey Superior Court Judge in September, 2018. During his tenure on the bench, he handled mass tort cases/product liability claims.

Nelson's 2002 book *Boardwalk Empire* was the basis for the HBO drama series *Boardwalk Empire*.<sup>[3]</sup> Its sequel is *The Northside: African Americans and the Creation of Atlantic City*.<sup>[3][4]</sup> In 2010, Nelson was asked by the New Jersey State Superior Court to cease promoting the book and the series in order to preserve the ethical neutrality of his position as a judge.<sup>[5]</sup>

His third book, published by Rutgers University Press, is *Battleground New Jersey: Vanderbilt, Hague and Their Fight for Justice*, and is about Jersey City Mayor Frank Hague and Arthur T. Vanderbilt, first Chief Justice of New Jersey's modern Supreme Court.<sup>[6][7]</sup>

## References

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- "Author of 'Boardwalk Empire' helped historical book transition into dramatized crime series" ([http://blog.nj.com/njv\\_mark\\_diiionno/2010/09/author\\_of\\_boardwalk\\_empire\\_boo.html](http://blog.nj.com/njv_mark_diiionno/2010/09/author_of_boardwalk_empire_boo.html)). *BLOG.NJ.COM*, September 19, 2010
- "Book Review: Johnson gets it right with tale of 'The Northside'" ([http://www.pressofatlanticcity.com/life/book-review-johnson-gets-it-right-with-tale-of-the/article\\_4d5d32bd-1107-5865-8fc1-c4665fd8e3d6.html](http://www.pressofatlanticcity.com/life/book-review-johnson-gets-it-right-with-tale-of-the/article_4d5d32bd-1107-5865-8fc1-c4665fd8e3d6.html)). *Press of Atlantic City*. November 21, 2010 By PATRICIA REID-MERRITT,
- "Boardwalk Empire Author Muzzled"** (<https://observer.com/2010/09/boardwalk-empire-author-muzzled/>). *Observer*.
- Michael Clark, "Author Nelson Johnson strikes gold with infamous Atlantic City characters "[1]" ([http://www.pressofatlanticcity.com/blogs/boardwalk\\_empire/article\\_9420a56c-a814-11df-a495-001cc4c002e0.html](http://www.pressofatlanticcity.com/blogs/boardwalk_empire/article_9420a56c-a814-11df-a495-001cc4c002e0.html))
- "Judge details state politics history in book (<http://www.mycentraljersey.com/story/news/local/somerset-county/2015/01/16/judge-details-state-politics-history-book/21866329/>)". *MyCentralJersey*. Katie Park January 16, 2015

## External links

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- [Nelson Johnson's Official Website \(https://www.nucky1883.com/\)](https://www.nucky1883.com/)
  - *Boardwalk Empire* (<http://www.boardwalkempire.com/about-nelson-johnson/>)
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