**Interviewer:**  **Jake Clements**

**Interviewee: Cavalier Johnson**

**Date of Interview: 05/09/2024**

**Location: University of Milwaukee, WI**

**Event: Invited Interview**

**Acronyms: MJ: Mayor Johnson, IN: Interviewer**

KIDS: Hello Mayor Johnson!

KID 1: Welcome Mayor Johnson.

MJ: Thank you all for that warm welcome. I’m happy to be here with you guys. Do you mind if I have a seat... hang out with you guys for a little bit? So, you guys all know my name. I'm Mayor Johnson. And so, I think I was told that this is a blend of K4 and K5, so, some of you

KIDS: [indiscernible interrupting]

MJ: OK, very good. The reason, you know, why I asked that question... I asked that question because I go into a K5 classroom pretty regularly because I've got three kids. I've got a son who is 13 years old. He's a teenager. And then I have two daughters. They're twins. They look just alike. Their names are Madison and Bella, and they are six years old and in K5. Ain’t that cool?

TEACHER: Yeah, we have a teacher Madison too.

MJ: Must be a good name.

Teacher 2: It is a very good name.

MJ: So, you all are learning how to vote? Is that correct today? You know, voting is very important. The reason why I'm here as Mayor--I can tell you why--is because people voted for me. Isn't that crazy? Isn't that crazy?

KID 2: No because I knew that.

MJ: You knew, OK, so. All right. It's not crazy to some. It's a little crazy to others. I think it's pretty crazy that people voted for me and I got to be mayor of the whole city. That's really, really exciting. That means that I get to come here and spend time with you guys. Which is one of my favorite parts of the job... is coming and talking to kids. It really, really is. So, you guys have some questions for me about voting is that correct?

IN: Yes, we do. We will get to your questions. OK, one moment. Hold on, though. Wait. Thank you so much. And thank you so much for being with us today. We're from the Center for 21st Century studies and we are going all across the city and asking people about trust and voting, and today we're doing the Teach A Kid to Vote Challenge. Today we have a few prizes you can win for doing this challenge we have, “I Taught A Kid How To Vote.” We have, “A Kid Taught Me How To Vote,” and then we also have a sticker that says there is 180 days now until we're able to vote. It's a little bit longer for you guys, but you might have to do some math for that one. Alright and if we are not able to teach kids how to vote, we do have a wonderful pamphlet made by some of the children here that explains the process of the voting for people-

KID 3: I wanna take mine home.

IN: What? All right. So our first question today is, do I have your consent to record today?

MJ: Yes.

IN: Wonderful. Thank you so much. So today we have some children here from the Children's Center at UWM, and we are wondering if you could tell these children how to vote. And why it's important.

MJ: Oh, sure. So, there are a couple of steps before you vote. OK, so, you can't just go to a polling location and say, “Hey, I'm ready to vote.” You have to actually register to vote because the location that you vote is tied to the place where you live, so you have a voting ward and in the City of Milwaukee there are over 300 voting wards. So, the Election Commission will want to verify that you are who you say you are, right? So that you only get one vote. One person, one vote. You can't vote twice. You only vote one per one time for each person. So, you'd get your driver's license or a state ID or a voter ID, which you can get for free, and then you get a piece of mail, usually like a utility bill, like an energy bill or a cell phone bill or something like that. Perhaps your lease. You take those documents with you over to your polling location. You can register in Wisconsin at your polling location. You'd register, they'd sign you up, and then you'd be able to go in and cast your ballot for whomever it is that you seek to vote for. You should also work to make sure that you do your research to know exactly what the candidates stand for, that you're going to cast your ballots for. You don't want to vote for somebody who doesn't have your interest in hearts so like... Like let's say this. Does anybody here like cake? Raise your hand. Anybody like cake? I like cake. OK, so if I'm Cavalier Johnson and I'm running for mayor and I as mayor, I say “When I'm mayor, everybody's gonna get a slice of cake.” Would you vote for me?

SOME KIDS: Yeah.

MJ: Yeah. Cause you like, yeah, cause you like cake. But if you don't like cake... OK. So, but if there's somebody else, let's just say candidate King, let's just say who is running for mayor too, and he says, “If I get elected mayor, there will never be any cake in Milwaukee.” Would you vote for that person?

SOME KIDS: Yeah.

MJ: OK, well, they get one vote. But the vast majority of you would not get a vote, or he would not vote for candidate King. So, then because I like cake and you like cake and I'm going to give you cake, then I win. And that's essentially how you vote.

IN: Wonderful. Now, does anybody have questions?

MJ: Yes, my non cake loving voter. You want to think about it a little bit?

KID: At the end of the day, being president, what are you covered in?

MJ: After the day's all over, what am I covered in? What am I covered in when the day's all over? Tiredness? I'm covered in... I'm covered in sleepiness.

TEACHER: [indiscernible]

IN: Any other questions about voting?

KID 4: Do you teach speeches?

MJ: Do I teach speeches? I don't teach speeches, but I do give a lot of speeches. I go to a lot of places and I do a lot of speeches. In fact, before I came here, guess what I was doing. I was practicing a speech, and before I did that, guess what I was doing. I was delivering a speech, like, I do a lot of speeches. That's part of the job as mayor. You go and you talk a lot. That's part of my job: talking. So much that when I get home, I'm like, alright, no more talking. Yeah, I know I'm talking now. I just keep on doing it.

IN: All right, another question about voting.

KID 5: How long do the speeched take?

MJ: That's a great question. Sometimes they're short, sometimes they can be like 2 minutes long when folks really want me to get out of there. Sometimes they're much longer than that. Sometimes they're like 30 minutes long.

KID 5: No, that is half an hour.

MJ: That is half an hour! That’s what I say when I see it. I say, “I got to read all this?” But I do and we get it done, and it usually turns out pretty fine.

IN: Any other questions? Yes.

KID 6: How do grown-ups vote?

MJ: How do grown-ups vote? The same way that I just explained. You got to understand who the candidates are who are running for office, you know, find somebody that you like... like Mayor Cavalier Johnson, right? Like somebody like me... find somebody that you like, get all your documents together, your voter ID, your piece of mail that's got critical information like your address and, you know, like, utility bill or something like that. You take that information in, you register to vote--you could also do that online-- and then you go to your polling location or order a ballot online and they can send it to you at your house. You vote for who you want, so their name will be on the line with a bubble next to it usually. And you circle the bubble in and then you either put it in the mail and send it back in, or you go to your polling location and you vote right there and then your vote is cast. Then the Election Commission will take all the votes, they'll add them all up, and then they'll say, “OK, this candidate got this many votes. This candidate got that many votes.” Whichever one gets the most votes is the winner. That's how it goes.

KID 7: We voted on this morning if we wanted a sunny day or a rainy day and a lot of people voted for sunny day and it was sunny day won.

MJ: Exactly. That's how it goes.

KID: I voted for rainy day.

MJ: You voted for rainy day? So no cake and rain?

KIDS: [indiscernible]

IN: All right, we got another question. Go ahead.

KID 8: Can kids vote?

IN: Can kids vote? That's a great question. That's a great question. Kids your age cannot vote. You're learning how to vote, like, what you're doing right now. Today you're learning the process. You're preparing yourself to be a voter when you get older, and it's very, very important. We have so many people, not just here Milwaukee, but across the state, across the country, who can vote and should vote. But they don't vote. But it's really important that everybody votes. So, I'm glad you guys are learning this right now. You'll be able to vote when you turn 18 years old, when you when you become a-

KID: Or older!

MJ: Yes, I'm older than 18 and I vote. I vote in every election. So, when you become a legal adult at 18, then you'll be able to cast your ballots. But all the work you're doing right now, the learning that you're doing right now, is going to prepare you for when it is time to vote. That's a great question. Kids can vote for things like whether you want a rainy day or sunny day. Whether you want cake or not, right? You can open those things though.

KID: Or if you want to go to Downer Woods or not.

IN: All right, so it looks like the mayor has won the Teach A Kid To Vote Challenge. So for your participation today, you win a sticker that says “I taught a kid how to vote.” There you are. Yeah. Thank you so much for joining us today..

MJ: Thank you guys for letting me join you guys. I can't believe I taught a kid to vote today. That's great.

KID: You taught a bunch of kids to vote.

KID 10: I have a question.

IN: Oh, you did? OK, what's your question?

KID 10: Why do some kids do vote, like, writing it on a piece of paper and putting it in the box?

MJ: Why did they do it that way? Because usually when you vote, it's just between you and yourself. It's a secret ballot. Nobody needs to know who you vote for, only that you vote. You know, so who you ever whoever you vote for, that's nobody else's business but your own business, so you can vote wherever you want to and put it in the box and nobody knows. And then you add them all up, and whoever gets the most votes is the one is the winner. Exactly. Exactly.

IN: All right. Thank you so much.

TEACHER: For sharing your time with us.

MJ: Thank you. Thank you, guys.