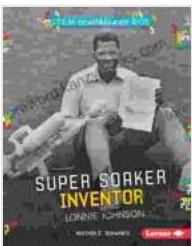


# Super Soaker Inventor Lonnie Johnson: A STEM Trailblazer Who Changed the World of Play

For anyone who grew up in the 1990s, the Super Soaker was more than just a water toy - it was a revolutionary invention that transformed summer playtime and sparked a passion for STEM in countless children. The mastermind behind this iconic creation was Lonnie Johnson, an African American engineer and inventor whose groundbreaking work has left an indelible mark on the world of science, technology, and play.



## Super Soaker Inventor Lonnie Johnson (STEM Trailblazer Bios) by Heather E. Schwartz

★★★★★ 5 out of 5

Language : English

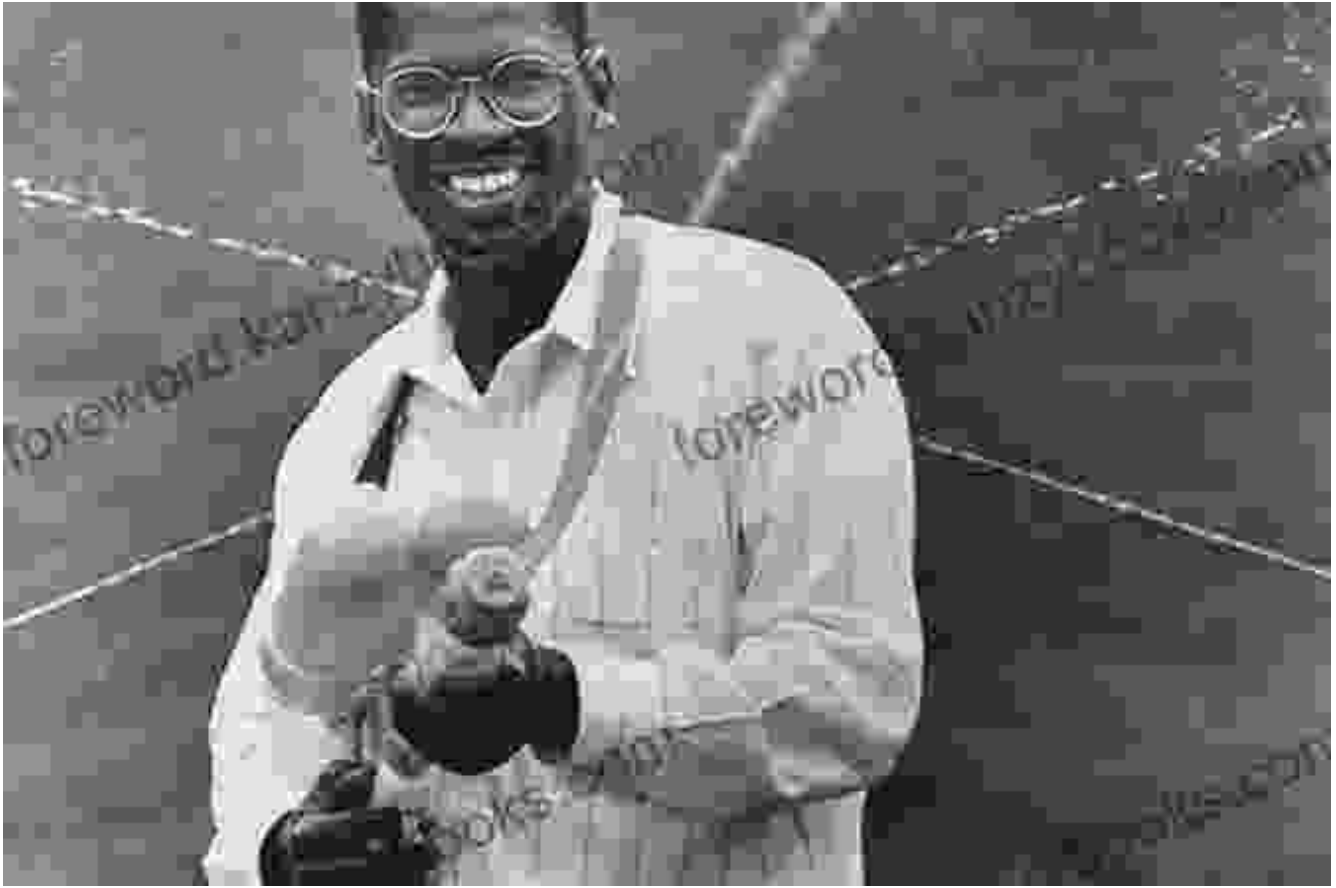
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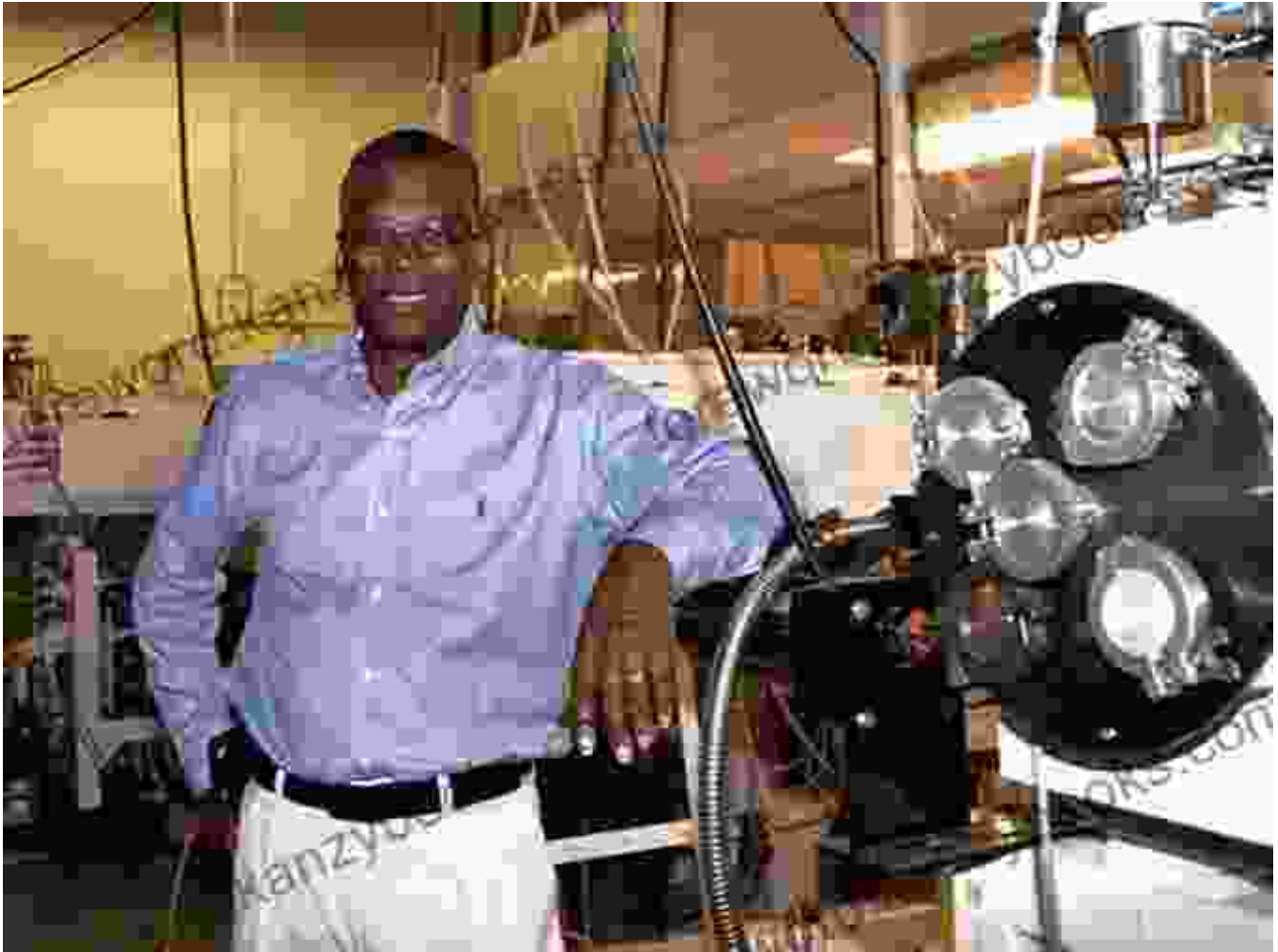
## Early Life and Education

Born in 1949 in Mobile, Alabama, Johnson displayed a natural curiosity and a love for tinkering from a young age. He often took apart old radios and appliances to understand how they worked, and he loved building model airplanes and rockets. After graduating from high school, Johnson attended Tuskegee University, where he earned a degree in mechanical engineering in 1973.



## **Military Service and NASA Career**

After college, Johnson served in the Air Force for three years before joining NASA's Jet Propulsion Laboratory (JPL) in 1979. At JPL, he worked on various projects, including the design of the Mars Pathfinder spacecraft. It was during this time that Johnson developed an interest in fluid dynamics, which would later become instrumental in his invention of the Super Soaker.



Lonnie Johnson during his time at NASA, where he gained valuable experience in fluid dynamics.

### **The Genesis of the Super Soaker**

In 1990, while trying to find a way to clean his house without using harsh chemicals, Johnson had a eureka moment. He noticed that the water coming out of his garden hose formed a narrow stream, and he wondered if he could create a toy that would shoot water with greater force and accuracy. Armed with his engineering knowledge, he set out to design a water gun that would revolutionize play.

After months of experimentation and refinement, Johnson developed a prototype for a water gun that used a pressurized air system to propel water with incredible force. He named it the Super Soaker, and in 1991, he licensed the design to Larami, a toy company that launched the Super Soaker to unprecedented success.



### **The Impact of the Super Soaker**

The Super Soaker was an instant hit, becoming the bestselling toy of the 1990s and selling over 100 million units worldwide. It not only provided countless hours of summer fun for children of all ages, but it also sparked a new interest in STEM among young people. The Super Soaker demonstrated the power of science and engineering, and it inspired many children to pursue careers in technical fields.



The Super Soaker brought joy and excitement to children around the world, while also inspiring a passion for STEM.

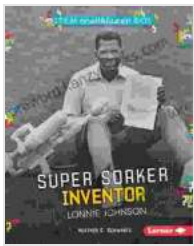
### **Johnson's Legacy**

Beyond the Super Soaker, Lonnie Johnson has continued to make significant contributions to the fields of science and technology. He has founded several companies, including Johnson Research & Development and Excellatron, which specialize in developing innovative products and technologies. He has also been a vocal advocate for diversity and inclusion in STEM, working to mentor and inspire young people from underrepresented backgrounds.



Lonnie Johnson's invention of the Super Soaker is a testament to his creativity, engineering prowess, and passion for making a difference in the world. His journey from a curious child to a STEM trailblazer serves as an inspiration to anyone who dreams of pursuing a career in science, technology, or innovation. Johnson's legacy will continue to inspire

generations to come, reminding us that play, curiosity, and a relentless pursuit of knowledge can lead to extraordinary achievements.



## Super Soaker Inventor Lonnie Johnson (STEM

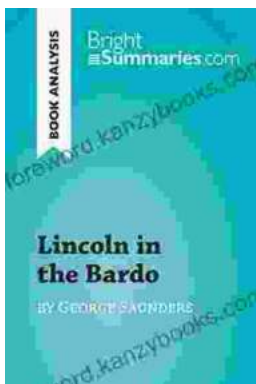
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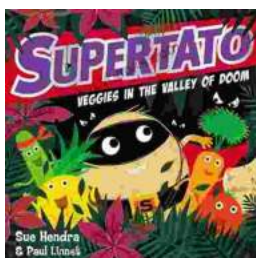
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