

R.I.P. Louis Johnson

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Louis Johnson, acclaimed bass player and one-half of '70's funk group, The Brothers Johnson passed yesterday at age 60 of undisclosed causes. Johnson and his guitar-playing brother George hail from Los Angeles and they had their own band in the '70's that worked for people like The Supremes and Billy Preston. After working with Quincy Jones on his Mellow Madness album Jones produced their debut project as artists, *Look Out For #1*. "Stomp," "Get The Funk Out Ma Face," "I'll Be Good To You" and their version of Shuggie Otis's "Strawberry Letter 23" were Top-Ten hits that made them mainstream R&B stars. Four of their seven studio albums went platinum giving them a solid standing in their career as artists until they split-up in 1982. Louis Johnson was an innovator of the slap bass style of playing and he was in demand as a session player. He was most famously heard on Michael Jackson's *Off The Wall* and *Thriller* albums. Stevie Wonder, Paul McCartney, Aretha Franklin, Bjork and George Duke are some of the people he worked with after The Brothers Johnson and he created the much sampled bassline in Michael McDonald's cover of "I Keep Forgetting." Louis and George never formally reunited as The Brothers Johnson but they would infrequently perform together. In 2004 indie label Cleopatra Records released *Strawberry Letter 23: Live*, which is a live recording of the brothers performing in Oakland, CA on Memorial Day in 2003.