



Dr. Leander C. Jones

July 16, 1934 - July 2, 2016

Leander Corbin Jones was born July 16, 1934 to Leander Corbin and Una Bell in Vincent, Arkansas. The oldest of four, Leander excelled in the one-room schoolhouse where his mother taught. After a high school career in Memphis, he went on to be the first in a long line of college graduates from Arkansas Agricultural, Mechanical & Normal College (AM&N), which is now the University of Arkansas at Pine Bluff.

Leander served two years in the United States Army, before moving to Chicago, IL. He married Lethonee Angela Hendricks in 1963, and shortly thereafter the two were among the earliest Peace Corps volunteers to Somalia. After returning to the states, they started their family. In 1968, Leander received his Masters degree from the University of Illinois.

Leander was employed in various positions, such as TV producer at a public television station in Chicago and later as a grant writer at Meharry Medical School in Nashville, TN, He later landed at Western Michigan University in Kalamazoo, Michigan in 1975, where he became a professor of Black Studies until his retirement in 2003. He was known to many who referred to him as "Dr. Jones", as he had received his PhD from Union Graduate School in 1977.

Dr. Jones was active in various community organizations, such as the Kalamazoo Civic Theatre and the Community Access Center. He coached

AYSO teams for his children as well as refereed. Dr. Jones started a theatre company during his tenure at WMU and was a board member of the Black Civic Players. He protested apartheid with his SASO II group at the university. He was a long time member of Allen Chapel A.M.E. Church, serving as a Steward, Sunday School Superintendent and he taught the adult Sunday School class. Leander also participated in Vacation Bible School, teaching the young children how to play chess. He loved bowling and joined a bowling team days before his death. He was a proud husband, father, and grandfather. He loved his family, and went to great lengths to be a support to all of them.

He is preceded in death by his wife; Lethonee; a granddaughter, Yasha Gray; a brother, and his parents.

Surviving him are a brother, Lonnie (Elizabeth) Jones of Chicago; a sister, Florence (Anibol) Abolsky; daughter, Angela (Curtis) Gray; son, Leander Jr. (Kathleen) Jones; daughter, Jerrilyn Harris; 14 grandchildren: Ayanna, Xavier, Imani, Joyous, Esteban and Chanya Gray; Avery Jones, Leander Jones, Evan Bowser, Jediah Moore, Devon, Darius, Daniel and David Harris; 2 great grandchildren; and a host of nieces, nephews and cousins. Also, a special friend, Mary Baumgartner. He was loved by many and will be greatly missed.

*****IN LIEU OF FLOWERS*****the family requests sending donations to the:

UNITED NEGRO COLLEGE FUND (UNCF),
Attn: Denise Scott, Direct Response Programs
1805 7th Street, NW
Washington, D.C. 20001

Cemetery Details

Mt. Ever-Rest Cemetery

3941 S. Westnedge Avenue
Kalamazoo, MI

Previous Events

Visitation

JUL 8. 5:00 PM - 7:00 PM (ET)

Allen Chapel A.M.E. Church
804 W. North Street
Kalamazoo, MI

Fraternal Service-Kappa Alpha Psi Fraternity, Inc.

JUL 8. 6:30 PM (ET)

Allen Chapel A.M.E. Church
804 W. North Street
Kalamazoo, MI

A Service in Loving Memory

JUL 9. 12:00 PM (ET)

Allen Chapel A.M.E. Church
804 W. North Street
Kalamazoo, MI

Tribute Wall



“ Harper Funeral Home created a Tribute Video in memory of Dr. Leander C. Jones



Harper Funeral Home - July 06, 2016 at 08:28 PM

YS

Beautiful video. Beautiful memories. Thank you for sharing.

Yvette Hyter Santiago - July 07, 2016 at 10:26 AM



“ Dr. Leander C. Jones

October 23, 2023 at 06:06 AM



“ Dr. Leander C. Jones

October 06, 2023 at 10:42 AM

WI

“ *Dr. Jones was the kindest person I knew at Western Michigan University. He had a personality that could get along with anyone.*



When I was a student, I remember going to him fearful about graduating and having a bright future. He made sure I was comfortable by assuring me that things would work out after matriculating at the University. I really appreciated his beautiful personality during a very stressful time.

Thank you Dr. Jones. The journey is the reward!

*Walter E. Teamer III
B.S. 1998, Industrial Management
Western Michigan University
College of Engineering and Applied Sciences*

Walter E. Teamer III - July 12, 2016 at 10:39 PM

TS

“ *Dr. Jones was an outstanding Professor, I looked forward to going to his classes because we always had lively discussions and he allowed a lot of classroom participation. May you R.I.P Dr. Jones
Sincerely Elder Timothy O. Sheppard*

Timothy O Sheppard - July 11, 2016 at 05:02 PM



“ *Karest Willis-Brown lit a candle in memory of
Dr. Leander C. Jones*



Karest Willis-Brown - July 10, 2016 at 05:03 PM

WI

“ *Walter E. Teamer III lit a candle in memory of Dr. Leander C. Jones*



Walter E. Teamer III - July 10, 2016 at 01:24 AM

AN

“ *1 file added to the album New Album Name*



Angie - July 09, 2016 at 10:15 AM

AN

“ *1 file added to the album family*



Angie - July 09, 2016 at 10:13 AM

JC

“ *Jimmie & Jeannie Cole lit a candle in memory of Dr. Leander C. Jones*



Jimmie & Jeannie Cole - July 09, 2016 at 08:12 AM

BM

“ *Beulah Marcelle lit a candle in memory of Dr. Leander C. Jones*



Beulah Marcelle - July 09, 2016 at 08:11 AM

DS

“ *Leander Jones was a kind, helpful man. He acted in several shows that my husband, Robert L. Smith, directed. If Bob needed an actor for a small, thankless role, he knew that Leander would always help him if necessary without needs for recognition and attention. He leaves a void in the Kalamazoo community.*
Carol Payne Smith

Dr. Carol Payne Smith - July 08, 2016 at 03:09 PM

“ Miles to go before I sleep

*The woods are lovely, dark and deep,
But I have promises to keep,
And miles to go before I sleep,
And miles to go before I sleep.*

I see my brother's take on life and my relationship with him in this last verse of Robert Frost's famous poem. It speaks to Len's energy, drive, and purpose in life. The woods might signify life as being lovely, dark and deep. He saw the complexities in life and always chose to laugh and fight on. He enjoyed the beauty of life, even though at times it seems dark and deep, and he never became mired in its thickness. He always tried to find a way through it.

He had promises to keep to his parents that he would be the best person he could be and that he would set an example for his younger siblings. He would strive to be among the best and the brightest. He had promises to keep to his siblings. He would set a fast pace for them to follow in scholarly pursuits, depth of understanding of the world and people in it, and curiosity about all things. He had promises to keep to his family. He would always love them, engage with them in fun and laughter, support them, teach them, and be a significant part of their lives.

He traveled many miles and now he sleeps. He traveled to the other side of the world and back, bringing the richness of that experience to his daily existence. Having traveled to the other side of the world, Somalia in east Africa, he was able to see a comparison between Somalia and the place of his birth. For the first time, he realized that coming from his own small village of Vincent, Arkansas; he had much to give to the world. He traveled deep in the hearts of those he touched because they knew that what he was presenting was a genuine kindness. He traveled deeply within his church, his community, the university, his fraternity, his civic duties, and his hobbies. He traveled deep into the minds of others through books.

He was an avid reader and a wonderful storyteller, getting into the mind of the author like no one else I have ever known. People ask me how old he was and my answer is: too young to die. He kept his youthful spirit and people felt it.

Now I have promises to keep. I promise to complete the writing projects that we planned. I promise I will do something with the drafts of his Somali experience that he sent to me. I promise to pick up my reading pace again and continue to pursue my 33 page a night pledge that I made. I cherish the memory of our conversations about books. I promise to write to Darrius as he requested. I promise to work hard, play hard, take care of myself, and live life to the fullest every day. This is not a promise, but I just might start Words with Friends, one of his favorite pastimes. I promise to follow his model. If I keep these things in my mind, he will always be with me in my heart. So, I have many miles to go before I sleep.

Florence

Florence - July 07, 2016 at 06:51 PM

FC

“ *Florence J. Calhoun-Abolsky lit a candle in memory of Dr. Leander C. Jones*



Florence J. Calhoun-Abolsky - July 07, 2016 at 06:19 PM

JH

“ *15 files added to the tribute wall*

Jerrilyn Harris - July 07, 2016 at 02:37 PM

DJ

“ *DaNetta Julian lit a candle in memory of Dr. Leander C. Jones*



DaNetta Julian - July 06, 2016 at 04:55 PM