**George C. Jones, Historical Political Trailblazer**

**1909-1994**

**Highlights of Life, Achievements, Contributions**

George Calvin Jones was born on March 26, 1909 on the Drum Point Farm in Dorchester County, Maryland which was a part of the Goodriches choice. He was the son of the late Albert and Kathryn Riley Jones. He grew up on a waterfront farm twelve miles up the Choptank River from Cambridge, Maryland. He came from a family of seven girls and three boys. He was the second oldest in the family. George, at a very young age, left Dorchester County and moved to Baltimore where he lived and worked for several years as a carpenter and a contractor. George later retired as a highly successful Baltimore County general contractor. As an adult he primarily lived in Baltimore County with shorter periods to Dorchester County and Florida.

What gave George great pride was knowing and feeling that every member of his family through generations since and before the revolution have been honorable, courageous and hardworking people. They were farmers, carpenters, seamen and blacksmiths. Also, some of them had served in some capacity in the War of 1812 and the Civil War.

George stated that the early ancestors on his father’s side emigrated from England and Wales, and settled along the Chesapeake Bay in Dorchester County around 1700.

George frequently made reference to the importance his family has played in his life--his wife Helen was his greatest inspiration. He was also inspired by his seven sisters Myra , Generva, Mabel, Gladys, Emmalyn, Luella, Marion and his two brothers Roger and Orville. What these family members shared in common, according to George was abject poverty in their early youth.

Bard Avon located in Baltimore were favorite public speaking schools at the time when George Jones registered for a course in public speaking. He met Theodore R McKeldin who was a leading teacher and later became the Governor of Maryland. More importantly, this relationship was the beginning of a long and interesting friendship. It also showed the beginning of very important networking skills and strategies that George later used for building support in addressing voting injustices in the county.

George retired as a successful Consultant from Westinghouse Learning Corporation. He pursued his interest as a consultant in providing special education for black people, who were crowding into the northern cities from the deep south. George mission was to make employable those who were unemployable, and Governor Theodore R. McKeldin was deeply involved in this project.

George became friends with the former Governor R. Mckeldin and Herbert R. C. O’Connor who recommended and introduced legislation that supported passing a law to help people who wanted to improve their educational status. The Maryland State Legislature passed a law that would allow a person to take a high school equivalency test. If the person was successful, the person would have the status of a high school graduate. George passed the test with a high score. This confident building experience gave him new ideas and incentives to test his ability in college. With this new confidence and hard work George enrolled and received the **Associate Art Degree** **in PreLaw** and the **Bachelor of Science Degree in Industrial Management** from the University of Baltimore.

George served four years in the United Marines during the years 1928-1932. Governor Herbert R. O’Connor commissioned Jones a captain and assigned him the job of organizing the First Company of Reserve Militia under Colonel John McBray, the 602 2nd Company, 6th Battalion was completed. The first assembly and parade were held at the Pikesvile Armory. He was a World War II Veteran. He was also a member of the Masonic lodge in Cockeysville, Maryland.

George was a member of the rotary club in Baltimore in which he served in several capacities including club president. He was also a member of the Cambridge Rotary Club. In 1973 he was elected district governor for what was District 763 for the year 1974-1975. Later he was elected to the board of directors for Rotary International. George was a Paul Harris Fellow. He supported the rotary foundation and other rotary objectives. During this time period, George built a stronger bonding relationship with former Governor J. Millard Tawes, an old Rotarian.

According to George, Governor Tawes in his declining years, brought up and tried very hard many times to address the outdated and illegal voting system in Maryland. Unfortunately, he was met with strong political resistance. The senators during that time period would not support him and they talked him out of it. He suggested that after Jones left office as Governor of Rotary, this would be a good project on which to work for the good of the entire state. He challenged George Jones to go home and think about it. Shortly, after Governor Tawes died, George took on the monumental challenge to address the voting inequities in Dorchester County regarding blacks and whites living in the rural part of the County.

George reported that his **last great battle in life** was changing the illegal voting system that promoted political inequities in voting for blacks and whites living in the rural county. The political strategy George used to help him accomplish his objective started with the creation of the **North Dorchester Democratic Club**. George was the President of the Club that included eight white men and two black men. George was a political activist who was very passionate about making sure voting was fair for all of the citizens.

The chronology of events, documentation, timeline and significant leaders are engraved on a memorial monument that tell the story why the Maryland Constitution was amended in 1986. The 20,000 pound monument is called **Freedom From Political Persecution and Tyranny**. However, it is more popularly today known as the **Historical Freedom Shrine**.

George was the author of two books, **Revolution on the Eastern Shore.** *This book describes the state of affairs of blacks in respect to voting rights and opportunities. It documented that similar unjust conditions and laws have existed in every County in the state since the Maryland Constitution was written in 1851*. What happened in Dorchester Countyaffect the entire state**.** According to George, the change that took place brought at least one hundred years of political progress to the Eastern Shore of Maryland during the years of 1985-1986.

*In his second book,* ***An Eastern Shoreman’s Flight from Poverty****, George talked about what* it was like growing up on the Eastern Shore, lessons learned, education, challenges and family living, etc.

One of George’s greatest contributions was creating the **Dorchester County Third Emancipation of** **Proclamation.** This document changed the system of voting from at**- large voting to district voting** in Dorchester County. It provided political voting equity for the blacks and whites living in the County.

Finally, **George Calvin Jones, Historical Political Trailblazer** successfully lived to see the Maryland State Constitution amended in 1986. This amendment brought about statewide reform in local elections. A memorial was erected in 1987 honoring the members of the **North Dorchester Democratic Club. George** seeing his **last great battle in life** of changing the illegal voting system in Dorchester County was accomplished, and he followed through on his commitment to his late close friend Governor Tawes to help change the illegal voting inequities in Maryland. This special project was achieved. *The relevance of George’s political legacy is still alive today.*