

Biographical Description for The HistoryMakers® Video Oral History with The Honorable Nathaniel R. Jones

PERSON

Jones, Nathaniel R., 1926-2020

Alternative Names: The Honorable Nathaniel R. Jones; Nathaniel R. Jones

Life Dates: May 13, 1926-January 26, 2020

Place of Birth: Youngstown, Ohio, USA

Work: Cincinnati, OH

Occupations: Federal Circuit Court Judge

Biographical Note

Retired United States Circuit Court Judge and General Counsel for the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP) Nathaniel R. Jones was born on May 13, 1926 in Youngstown, Ohio. The son of Virginians, Lillian Brown Jones and Nathaniel Bacon Jones, he attended Westside School and Grant Junior High School. Black publisher J. Maynard Dickerson, owner of the activist Buckeye Review, mentored Jones, who wrote for the column, "Sports Shorts," before graduating from South High School. Drafted in 1945, Jones served in the United States Army Air Corps in Dayton, where Dickerson introduced him to NAACP activists Mylie Williamson, James H. McGhee and F. Leon Higginbotham. After his discharge in 1947, he was introduced to Walter White, NAACP executive secretary. Jones earned an A.B. degree from Youngstown State University in 1951 and an LL.B. degree from Youngstown State University Law School in 1956.

Admitted to the bar in 1957, Jones, after four years of private practice, served as executive director of the Fair Employment Practices Commission and in 1960 was appointed by Attorney General Robert Kennedy as United States Attorney for the Northern District of Ohio in Cleveland. In 1967, Jones was appointed Assistant General Counsel to President Johnson's National Advisory Commission on Civil Disorders (the Kerner Commission). Briefly returning to private practice, Jones was asked by NAACP executive director, Roy Wilkins, to serve as NAACP general counsel in 1969. For the next ten years, he argued several cases before the United States Supreme Court and led national efforts to end school segregation and to defend affirmative action. Jones investigated discrimination in the armed forces and successfully coordinated the NAACP's First Amendment defense in the Mississippi Boycott Case. Jones was

nominated by President Carter to the United States Court of Appeals in 1979 to which he became Senior Judge. He retired from the bench in 2002.

Currently a senior partner with Blank and Rome LLP, Jones has published widely and built a distinguished community record. He taught law at the University of Cincinnati College of Law, North Carolina Central University College of Law and Harvard University Law School. In 1993, Jones served as part of a team of observers for the first democratic elections in South Africa. Recipient of scores of awards, Jones is married to the former Lillian Hawthorne and has four grown children.

Related Entries

Youngstown South High School [STUDENTOF]

[from ? to ?]

West Side School #2 [STUDENTOF]

[from ? to ?]

James Hillman Junior High School #2 [STUDENTOF]

[from ? to ?]

Youngstown State University [STUDENTOF]

[from ? to ?]

The Buckeye Review [EMPLOYEEOF]

[from ? to ?]

Columnist

Fair Employment Practices Commission [EMPLOYEEOF]

[from 1956 to 1959]

Executive Director

Northern District of Ohio at Cleveland [EMPLOYEEOF]

[from 1960 to 1967]

Assistant Attorney

National Advisory Commission on Civil Disorders [EMPLOYEEOF]

[from 1967 to 1968]

Assistant General Counsel

U.S. Court of Appeals [EMPLOYEEOF]

[from 1979 to 2002]

U.S. Circuit Judge

Blank Rome LLP [EMPLOYEEOF]

[from 2002 to ?]

NAACP [MEMBEROF]

[from ? to ?]

General Councillor