

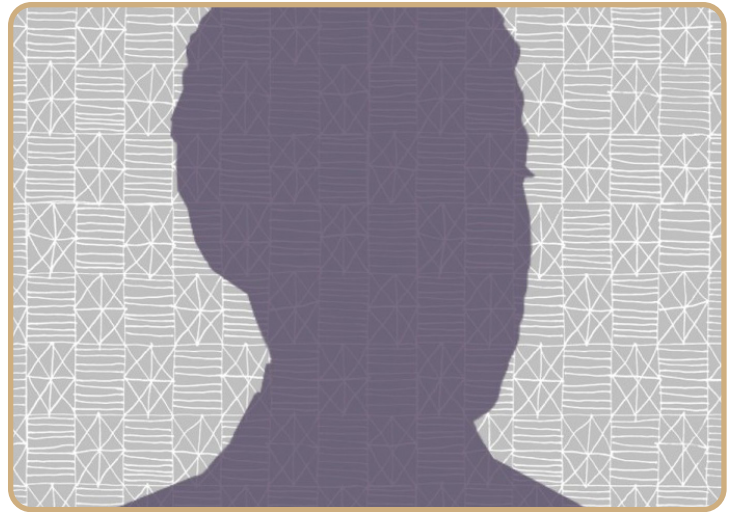
Phillip L. Jones

Author: Yvonne Giles,
Research Consultant

Places: Huntington, Cabell County,
West Virginia; Lexington, Fayette County,
Kentucky

Birth: January 10, 1945 **Death:**

Professions: Trainer, Breeder, Owner



Birth and Family

Phillip L. Jones, son of Anna Mae and Harold Jones, was born in Huntington, West Virginia. At the age of sixteen, Jones moved to Lexington, Kentucky to live with his grandparents Marshall and Zella Hathaway.

Developing a Career

Jones, in an interview in 2019, told how he got started with horses. As a teenager, he went to work with his grandfather. He was a stud groom, trainer, and manager at horse farms in Fayette County. He told Jones not to get involved with horses because it was too hard. Jones followed him anyway.

To earn money as he developed his stable, Jones drove for McLane Trucking Company. Later he drove for United Parcel Service. When he got home in the morning, he ate, changed clothes, and headed to the stable. After forty years, he retired from trucking to devote the rest of his life to horses.

Breeding and Naming Horses

Jones prefers breeding his own Thoroughbreds. He chooses names for them that have meaning to him. For instance, he named Marshall's Back in honor of his grandfather. A second horse, He's Rising, was foaled at Easter. Jerry Barry Jack was given the names of three friends. One of them was Jerry Sidney, a blacksmith. The other friend was Julius Berry. He owned the Thoroughbred VE NI VI DI VI CI. Jackie Thompson, the third friend, was a farrier - horseshoer.

Training the Winners

Jones, a licensed trainer since 1979, has a proven routine for training winners. With patience and calmness, he gets the young colt or filly used to being handled and ridden.

Jones has trained Thoroughbreds at Churchill Downs, Latonia Race Course and River Downs.

He currently stables and trains at the Lexington Training Center near Lexington, Kentucky. Jones used to condition and train horses himself. Now he hires others but is careful in selecting people. The horse and person must agree with each other, he explained.

Races Won

Jones shared several photos of winning Thoroughbreds he had conditioned.

- Disco Johnny won at River Downs in 1985.
- Jerry Barry Jack won a \$46,000 Purse race at Churchill Downs in 2009.
- He's Rising won the Charles Town Race in 2010.
- Stan's Old Habits won two races in 2016. The first was a \$9,900 Purse race at Belterra Park. The second was a \$16,000 Purse at Churchill Downs.

He also shared a photo and story of a special Thoroughbred.

A One-Eyed Winner

Jones was given a one-eyed horse. As a baby, the colt's left eye - the rail eye - was knocked out by accident. Jones started training the colt and found that the horse learned quickly. Jones named him I Can Still See U. While racing, the colt would turn his head as horses approached on the left. Even though distracted, the colt finished second in most races but Jones felt that the colt might win if run on the inside rail. A new jockey, Daniel Coa, took the colt to the inside. For the first time, I Can Still See U won! It happened for the \$15,000 Maiden Claiming race at Turfway Park in 2002.

For the Future

Jones, who sees himself as a little man who must work with the best he has, likes working with and training horses. One of these days he hopes to develop a top winner.

When asked about other African Americans he knows in the industry, he named several. They are Larry Demeritte, Shane Demeritte, Dean Hayes, and Chuck Hamilton. They also breed and train Thoroughbreds. He is not alone in his pursuit to produce a Derby winner!

Sources

Jones, Phillip L., 2019. Giles. Chronicle of African Americans in the Horse Industry Oral History Project. Louie B. Nunn Center for Oral History. University of Kentucky Libraries <https://kentuckyoralhistory.org/ark:/16417/xt716tqwcdxfn>

Footnotes

¹Jones, Phillip. 2019, Chronicle of African Americans in the Horse Industry Oral History Project.