



Reginald L. Jones

Award for Distinguished Career Contributions to Education and Training

Citation

“Publisher and editor of 22 books, 200 articles and presentations, and 28 videotapes, Reginald L. Jones has produced a body of materials that instruct, enlighten, and both coalesce and expand the knowledge base in psychology and education. By documenting the history, theories, and research in the area of Black psychology, he has been heralded worldwide as a father of Black psychology. He is equally renowned for his groundbreaking research on special education labels, stigma, and attitudes toward exceptional children. By also providing a forum for psychologists whose writings were outside traditional publication venues, he has acted as a modern griot whose efforts will serve countless students, researchers, and scholars for years to come.”

Biography

Reginald L. Jones is the Distinguished Professor of Psychology Emeritus at Hampton University (HU), where he held positions as chair, Department of Psychology; director of the Center for Minority Special Education; and director of the Career Opportunities in Research program. Prior to his HU appointment, Jones was at the University of California, Berkeley, for 17 years, where he is now professor emeritus. At Berkeley, he held various positions, including chair, Department of African American Studies; director of the Joint Doctoral Program in Special Education; and faculty assistant to the Vice Chancellor for Academic Affir-

mative Action. He has been professor and vice chair, Department of Psychology, The Ohio State University; professor and chair, Department of Education, University of California, Riverside; and professor and director, University Testing Center, Haile Sellassie I University, Addis Ababa, Ethiopia. Jones has also taught at the University of California, Los Angeles, and at Miami, Fisk, and Indiana Universities. His service has included appointment to President Clinton’s Council of Advisors to the Education Transition Team and President Nixon’s Task Force on Mental Health; various commissions, task forces, and committees of the Secretary of Health, Education and Welfare, Congress, and the National Academy of Sciences; directors of various state and federal agencies and the National Association for the Advancement Of Colored People. Jones has been a fellow of the American Psychological Association (APA) for more than 30 years.

Jones has been active in prodding the APA to respond to the issues and concerns of Black psychologists. In 1971, as president of the Association of Black Psychologists, he and his colleagues commandeered the 1971 APA Council meeting and demanded that the concerns of Black psychologists be addressed. Jones’s speech delivered to newly elected and newly seated members of the Council of Representatives, APA, and the APA Executive Committee (September 4, 1971, Washington, DC) included the following:

I am Reginald L. Jones, a Fellow of APA and National Chairman of the Association of Black Psychologists. I am here to talk to you briefly about the concerns of Black psychologists and Black people. We have just finished our own National conference held prior to the meetings of APA now taking place in this city. The presence of several hundred persons at this meeting confirmed our suspicion that Black psychologists were unhappy with APA and its response to the needs of Black people and Black psychologists. Our concern was not with sex in albino rats or research on sharks, goldfish and monkeys. Our concern was not with analyses of Black people and their presumed deficiencies. Our efforts were not directed to interminable studies of problems with little attention to solutions. Rather, our concern was with strategies for dealing with such problems as racism in education, the psychological assessment of Black people, the mental health of Black people, employment, welfare and prisons.

Many of us hoped these would be concerns of APA. Yet our survey of the 182-page convention program revealed that the word *racism* appeared only once—shared with *sexism*. A survey of the index of *Psychological Abstracts* for 1960–1970 revealed that the word *racism* does not occur. We conclude from the survey that this topic is of not much concern to psychologists.

To address problems enumerated in his address, Jones went on to make recommendations for changes in APA’s administrative and governance structure and to highlight needs for the recruitment of Black students and faculty,

scholarship support for Black students, provisions for practical experience in the Black community, and terminal programs at all levels that would equip students for work in the Black community. Much progress has been made since 1971, and Jones is pleased to note that many of the initiatives he and his colleagues proposed more than three decades ago have come to fruition.

Reginald L. Jones was born on January 21, 1931, in Clearwater, Florida, a resort city on the west coast of Florida, to a musician father and a mother who was an occasional domestic worker. He grew up in rigidly racially segregated communities in Clearwater and Miami, Florida, where he completed high school in 1948. Despite segregation and growing up in his adolescent years in what can best be described as a toxic environment, Jones enjoyed warm support from neighbors and peers and a close-knit and supportive family.

Reading and discussion of the events of the day, especially accomplishments and activities of "Negroes," were standard fare at the family dinner table. As an adolescent, Jones grew up with extensive knowledge of the accomplishments of notable "Negroes" and issues in the local and national Black community through reading the *Pittsburgh Courier*, a national Black weekly newspaper, and the *Miami Times*, the local Black weekly newspaper to which his family subscribed, and dinner-table discussions with his mother and stepfather, a truck driver. As he has reflected on reasons for his interest in the psychology of African Americans, Jones believes family discussions of race and racial differences played a significant role in such interest. He also believes his father, Moses Jones, who lived in Chester, Pennsylvania, played an important role in his development by exposing him to the "ways of the world," thus heightening his sensitivity to individual differences among African Americans. During Jones's summer visits to Chester in his preadolescent and adolescent years, his father introduced Jones to all kinds of people: those with a different sexual orientation, those who smoked "reefers" (marijuana), musicians, bartenders, pimps, prostitutes, and other ordinary people. Before or after introductions, the father would tell Jones something about the person who was the object of his "lesson." Jones recalls, for example, his father's suggestion that he observe the nonverbal reaction of a certain woman as he engaged her lesbian lover in conversation or the behavior of the piano player who smoked "reefers." Most of these "educational" sessions occurred in bars, nightclubs, and house parties to which Jones was brought and introduced with great fanfare as Moses's son. It was not uncommon for these activities to last into the early hours of the morning in Philadelphia and Chester and in Black nightclubs in places like Wildwood, New Jersey. Of interest, Jones does not recall a single instance in which anyone questioned why such a young man

was in bars and nightclubs in the late night and early morning.

Jones graduated from Booker T. Washington High School in Miami, Florida, in 1948, where he was noted for his involvement in athletics (basketball and track) and a variety of extracurricular activities. He graduated third in a class of 165 students and received an academic scholarship from Morehouse College, where he planned to major in chemistry. After a semester, it became apparent to Jones that his talents lay elsewhere, so he changed his major to psychology in his freshman year, a decision he has never regretted. The fledgling psychology program at Morehouse had a single professor, Evelyn Barnett, a woman in her early 20s who had received her bachelor's and master's degrees in psychology from Howard University and who taught all courses in the psychology major. Jones remembers Barnett as an excellent teacher who brought psychology alive through lectures, demonstrations, and challenging examinations that emphasized synthesis, integration, and extrapolation. Jones finds it especially noteworthy that three of his classmates who were among the dozen or so psychology majors in the class of 1952 also went on to earn a doctoral degree in psychology.

After earning a master's degree in clinical psychology from Wayne (State) University, where his teachers included Gertha Williams, a student of Lightner Witmer, Jones worked as a clinical psychologist in the military and in a state mental hospital prior to enrolling in the doctoral program in psychology at The Ohio State University, with interest in school and later educational psychology.

The school psychology program was in the educational and developmental subgroup of the Department of Psychology, and educational psychology drew from all areas of the department. The graduate program in psychology at Ohio State during the mid 1950s emphasized comprehensive understanding of the entire field of psychology, an impossible task in the current era of specialization and a daunting assignment nearly 50 years ago when Jones was completing his doctoral degree. In addition to mastering one or two foreign languages, students were required to complete comprehensive examinations in all areas of psychology including methodology and statistics; sensation, learning, and perception; the applied fields (clinical, counseling, and industrial); personality, social, and developmental; and history and systems. The broad, rigorous nature of this training (his instructors included doctoral advisors John Horrocks and Robert Wherry, Herbert Toops, Paul Fitts, Lauren Wispé, Delos Wickens, Julian Rotter, George Kelly, Francis P. Robinson, Horace English, Frank Fletcher, Harvey Austrin, and Samuel Renshaw) provided an excellent understanding of psychology as a discipline. Jones has found this background valuable in his books on Black psychology that have addressed the wide application of psychological principles to African American behavior.

Jones has authored more than 200 papers, articles, book chapters, reviews, and technical reports; edited 22 books; and produced 28 instructional videotapes. He has been associate editor of the *American Journal of Mental Retardation* and editor of *Mental Retardation*, these being, respectively, the basic and applied research journals of the American Association on Mental Retardation. He has also been a consulting or guest editor of more than a dozen other journals in psychology and education. Throughout his nearly 50-year career in psychology, Jones has engaged in research and writing in two primary areas: research on the psychology and education of exceptional children and writing and research on issues of race and psychology.

Jones's research and writing on the psychology and education of exceptional children have included seven edited books (including *Attitudes and Attitude Change in Special Education*, 1984, and *Problems and Issues in the Education of Exceptional Children*, 1971) and a number of empirical research studies involving gifted, mentally retarded, orthopedically disabled, and visually impaired children. In addition, he has written papers or conducted research on attitudes toward exceptional children, the occupational psychology of special education teaching, the impact on children of stigma and special education labels, and accountability and program evaluation. Some of this research and writing has addressed the intersection of race and disability (e.g., *Mainstreaming and the Minority Child*, 1976, and *Psychoeducational Assessment of Minority Group Children: A Casebook*, 1988).

Jones's second area of interest has been Black psychology. For more than 30 years Jones has worked systematically to ensure the development of Black psychology as a field of study. His approach has been that of midwife—identifying, corralling, cajoling, and shepherding his colleagues in sharing their research and writing in print. He has developed introductory texts in Black psychology (four editions of *Black Psychology*, the first published in 1972, with subsequent editions published in 1980, 1991, and 2003); resources for teaching Black psychology (the two-volume *Sourcebook on the Teaching of Black Psychology*, 1980, that includes more than 130 course outlines for graduate and undergraduate courses, bibliographies, tests, scales, student exercises, and an annotated film listing); 28 videotapes of talks and symposia developed by some of our most noted Black scholars (1983–1986); books on Black human development (*African American Children, Youth, and Parenting*, 1999; *Black Adolescents*, 1989; *Black Adult Development and Aging*, 1989); tests and measures (the two-volume *Handbook of Tests and Measurements for Black Populations*, 1996, which includes more than 100 culturally specific tests and measures); and topical volumes that address advanced topics in theory and research: *Advances in African American Psychology* (1999), *African American Identity Development* (1998), and *Afri-*

can American Mental Health (1998). These works have been authored by more than 600 African American psychologists. Jones sees his reasons for editing the volumes just described as best expressed in the opening editorial in *Freedom's Journal* (1827), the first Black newspaper. The editor stated, "We wish to plead our own cause. Too long have others spoken for us. Too long has the publick [*sic*] been deceived by misrepresentations in things which concern us dearly." Jones is hopeful that the many research studies, master's theses, and doctoral dissertations that have used the theoretical and empirical work in the volumes he edited and to which he and his colleagues contributed have not only expanded our understanding of the behavior of African Americans but enriched psychology's storehouse of knowledge as well.

Colleagues and institutions have acknowledged Jones's work in the education and psychology of exceptional children and Black psychology. His honors and awards include the Citation for Distinguished Achievement from The Ohio State University, the Distinguished Alumni Award from Wayne State University, the Norfolk (Virginia) Mace (Key to the City), the J. E. Wallace Wallin Award from the Council for Exceptional Children, the Education Award from the American Association on Mental Retardation, the Award for Outstanding Publications and Service from the Black Caucus of Special Educators of the Council for Exceptional Children, the Loetta Hunt Award from the Faculty for Exceptional Education at The Ohio State University, the third annual award from the Black Students Psychological Association, the Distinguished Psychologist Award from the Association of Black Psychologists in 1989, and the Association of Black Psychologist's Scholarship Award in 1979, 1986, and 1999. He was recognized by APA's Board of Ethnic Minority Affairs "for unusual and outstanding contributions in the field of psychology," and he received awards from several organizations at the University of California, Berkeley, including the Black Faculty and Staff Organization, the Black Alumni Club of the University of California Alumni Association, and African American Students. Upon retirement from the University of California, Berkeley, in 1991, he received the Berkeley Citation, one of the university's highest honors, "for distinguished achievement, and for notable service to the University."

In addition to receipt of APA's 2003 Distinguished Career Contributions to Education and Training Award, Jones also received the Lifetime Achievement Award from APA's Division 45, the Society for the Psychological Study of Ethnic Minority Issues, at the 2003 APA Convention in Toronto, Canada. Not yet ready for retirement, Jones will be a visiting professor at the University of Michigan in fall 2003.

Finally, Jones feels the above description of his career would be incomplete without acknowledging the wind be-

neath his wings, his wife, Michele—his best friend, confidante, and supporter—a woman of grace, intelligence, inner strength and beauty, and extraordinary talent, who is a counseling psychologist in private practice specializing in conflict mediation, multicultural communication, and cultural diversity. They are proud of their five adult children, Kai, Angela, Cynthia, Sjaun, and Leasa, who have careers in motherhood, law, business, and entrepreneurship; and they cherish their grandchildren, our future, Tony, Shelby, and Christopher.

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