

WOMEN'S HISTORY

Women Growing Their Business



Clara Hawkins Jones, C.E.O.



Jones

By Fran Farrer-Nash
THE CHARLOTTE POST

One would be extremely surprised to find a 7,000 square foot home nestled in the Oaklawn Park community off Beatties Ford Road where neighboring homes average a third the size. That is, one that did not know Clara Jones. When Clara and Cedric Jones bought their home over 50 years ago, it was a 1,900 square foot ranch designed to provide comfortable living to raise their children. What changed? Clara Jones had a passion. "I want to be a drum major, sharing God's beautiful music with the community. Helping someone quietly, daily is always a goal of mine. My desire is to teach children. When preparing for a performance, I want to teach music to children. Those who want to succeed find a way, those who would rather not, find an excuse," says Clara. That passion grew when the first lesson took place on Dean Street.

Clara's passion brought forth the birth of Clara Jones Studio with a growing number of students. Expansions began, and five additions later, you can find a recital hall that will seat 200, 17 pianos and one organ, and always three or more students practicing in one of many classrooms. Her goal is to produce exceptional musicians with the ability to compete if they so choose. She once told a student, "if you can play the piano, you will always have a job."

In 1986 Jones decided to resign from the school system and dedicate all energies to teaching full time in her own studio. All students affectionately become her children, she posts their accomplishments throughout the studio for younger students to view, and tracks them through college and career choices. Jones promotes the each one teach one philosophy

by pairing advanced students with younger peers to aid their growth.

To further encourage and assist musical careers for her students, in 1996 the Clara Jones Music Foundation was formed. A 501(c)(3) foundation would allow corporations to make tax deductible contributions while providing scholarships to worthy students. Of course students majoring in music receive higher awards than others. Awards top \$25,000 to date.

Professionally involved, Clara is a life member of the National Education Association, former chairperson, N.C. Junior High Choral and NAACP Life Membership Drive, member, Teachers Piano Teachers' Forum, Black Political Caucus and League of Women Voters.

For love of children, commitment to their success, and tireless energy devoted to both, Clara Jones has been presented many awards. National Sojourner Truth Meritorious Service Award, Urban League Community Service Award, Black Political Caucus Community Service Award, Women's Equality Day Virginia Shadd Community Service Award, Omegas Award for training youth, Royal and Surveillance Spirit Award - Mint Museum of Art 2003,

Symphony Guild of Charlotte Marie R. Roule Award 2002, Hezekiah Alexander Homesite and History Museum of Charlotte Dare to Dream Award, and Northeast Seventh Day Adventist Church Community Guest Person of the Year Award 2003, are among the many. She and husband Cedric received the North Carolina Certificate of Appreciation for Outstanding Service from Governor James G. Martin.

Born in Franklin County, Clara began her education there, received her B.S. in music education at Hampton University, masters in education at the University of North Carolina at Greensboro, and completed further study at Boston University. Her teaching career covers over 30 years as a school teacher in junior and senior high schools in Hendersonville, and Charlotte; she served as the supervisor of music for Charlotte-Mecklenburg Schools, and taught music at Central Piedmont Community College. In addition, Jones served as choir director and organist for several churches including her own, First Baptist Church-West.

Clara and Cedric have four grown children. Mona Jones Roberts, cum laude graduate of Howard

University's School of Music; Dr. Cedrella Jones Taylor, coordinator of Internal Medicine at the Veterans Hospital in Decatur, Ga.; Ina Juliet Jones, AT&T computer specialist, and Rev. Cedric Jones Jr., vice president, Johnson & Johnson, Philadelphia. They are the proud grandparents of nine.

"Being a wife, mother, and a teacher are my magnificent obsessions. Lord, I want to be a Christian in my heart."

- Clara Jones

Highlighting "Women's History" is dear to the hearts of the management and staff of The Charlotte Post. It is our goal to recognize the accomplishments of women from the past that have helped to mold the world in which we live. However, in 2004 we realize that no one else can be the first to refuse relinquishing their seat on the bus, or spend months brining slaves to freedom, starve for the right to vote, invent the hair perm, or even be the first women to integrate the schools in Charlotte-Mecklenburg.

We do however realize, that women continue to mold the future in business, education, technology, medicine and more. For that reason we are proud to feature today's women as role models and mentors to follow, or at least to know "that all things are possible."

- Fran Farrer-Nash,
Advertising & Mkt. Director
The Charlotte Post Newspaper

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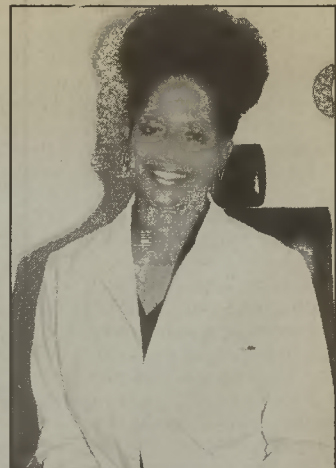


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