

# Education is a 'Tool for Survival,' says Jones to ECSU's freshman at the Fall Convocation

By Steve Cooke

"If we are ever to truly be free, you must make the most of this opportunity at Elizabeth City State University—not only for you, but for us all."

That was the Honorable Jerrauld C.C. Jones' message delivered to the class of '96 at the Fall Convocation and Candlelighting Service, held Sunday Sept. 27 in The Vaughan Center. Jones, a member of the Virginia House of Delegates, was the guest speaker for the event.

Jones told the freshman class that a quality education is needed to "succeed and survive" in today's rapidly changing society.

"Education is a basic tool in the fight for survival," said Jones, adding that young people who don't excel "will miss the gate. Half of our nation's youth face a questionable future."

Jones said American children spend more time "wandering the malls and listening to music" than reading and educating themselves.

To stress the importance of black people educating themselves to more effectively combat the forces of racism, Jones quoted

*"This tragic episode (The Rodney King trial and verdict) draws our attention to the fact that our society is still divided along racial lines."*

**Jerrauld C.C. Jones**

Nelson Mandela with, "Education, not violence, is the most valuable weapon to fight racism."

Jones said that despite great progress in black America, "we are still not free," adding that the "Rodney King trial and verdict" seemed to him to be a defining event of America in 1992.

"This tragic episode draws our attention to the fact that our society is still divided along racial lines," said Jones. "There are more young black males in jails than in colleges and universities today. These are the harsh realities that will linger on."

Jones asked the students to consider the problems of "poverty, racism, crime and AIDS," which affect black Americans at a high rate. "And he predicted the problems would grow more complex "as we grow closer to the 21st century."

Jones advised the freshmen to follow a four-point plan in life:

"Be knowledgeable of your history, be committed to something other than yourself, begin to act for the larger good, and be willing to accept a higher level of risk in your life."

Following Jones' address, the presidents of each class were installed by Dr. Leon White, Vice Chancellor for Student Affairs. The Presidents are: Dominick Allen, Freshman Class; Lynn Jordon, Sophomore Class; Nathan Stevens, Junior Class, and Clifton Butts, Senior class.

ECSU Chancellor Dr. Jimmy Jenkins then delivered the charge to the freshmen class.

Following this, the freshmen were officially inducted into the University in the traditional service, with was conducted by members of the freshmen class. The

speakers were: Nikita Sutton, Valerie Bouldin, Lolla Gilliam, Iraina Sutton, Vonita McDaniel, and Chad Witherspoon.

Joynita Robinson, Miss ECSU, 1993, spoke on "the purpose of candlelighting," and ECSU junior Terri Lewis issued the "pre-alumni induction" oath.

SGA President Michael Myrick served as counselor for the event. Jones, an attorney and founding partner of his own law firm in Norfolk, is a graduate of Washington and Lee University School of Law, in Virginia. He was elected to the Virginia House of Delegates, 89th District, in 1987. His committee memberships in the House include Courts of Justice, Labor and Commerce.

Jones was the first black law clerk to the Supreme Court of Virginia during 1980-81. In 1982, he won the "Outstanding Young Man of America" award.

Jones is a member of Sigma Pi Phi Fraternity; the Richmond Jazz Society; and the Association of Black Princeton Alumni.

He is married to the former Lynn Simmons. The couple have a son, Jerrauld C.C. Jones, Jr.

Photo by J. Gary Brinn

## Geology major offers fast track to big bucks

By Melanie Harrington

Mention the word "geologist," and most people picture a man in a lab coat, studying slides of rocks under a microscope.

That image of the field, however, isn't rooted in fact.

Today, geology is a high-tech, dynamic field offering a diverse variety of career opportunities—in the oil and gas industry, in construction, mining, and in numerous areas of the U.S. government.

Typically, graduates of a geology program, start out earning as much as \$30,000 a year, according to Dr. Ravindra P. Sinha, Chairman of ECSU's Department of Geosciences. The average starting salary is \$20,000 to \$25,000 a year, he said.

"The job opportunities are excellent for good students," Sinha said. "Geology is a broad field."

ECSU offers both a B.S. degree and a minor in geology, along with a minor in environmental sciences. Along with courses in geology, students must also take courses in chemistry, physics, trigonometry, and geometry.

"Companies are more than willing to hire students with a 2.5 average or above," said Sinha. "We have former graduates now working for such employers as Exxon, Ashland Oil Company, the U.S. Geological Survey, and the Environmental Protection Agency."

Although the overall job market for geologists has stabilized, the field has excellent opportunities for minorities, Sinha says. And he is eager to see his program grow at ECSU.

"Right now we have about 20 majors in the department but we would like to double that number," Sinha said. "We are offered more summer jobs and internships than we have students available."

The low number of majors stems from not enough students knowing about geology since it is not taught in all the public schools in this area, according to Sinha.

"When geology is taught, teachers tend to make it boring," he said. "If only teachers would make the subject come alive for their students, they would see how interesting geology really is. When I teach a class, I show the students how everything relates to them and their future. I get them involved in the coursework and show them what is to be gained by learning. What students learn in my class can be used throughout their lives." Despite the small number of majors, things could be worse for the department, however. Out of the 117 Historically Black Colleges in the country, only three have geology programs.

"One of the programs has been shut down and another one has been recommended to shut down, so ours is the only one that's flourishing," Sinha said.



ECSU students Tabitha Rice, Jason Pearce and Damion Godfrey, identify rocks in geology lab held in the Jimmy Jenkins Science Complex.

Much of department's success is the result of grants from the National Science Foundation which have been used for equipment and research, according to Sinha. Through these grants the department has been able to purchase much specialized equipment for the students, including computers and software which are used for data analysis, graphical presentations, and report writing.

The department now has a dual ocular microscope which can be used by two people at a time, and which has a TV monitor for classroom lectures. The department also has equipment that allows students to interpret satellite images. (What kind of equipment, specifically?)

Grants have also provided money for

the Geology Club, composed of the department's majors. The club is planning a trip to Morehead City this semester to study beach erosion, Sinha said. And, each summer, the students take a six week trip to the western United States to study land formations.

"Field trips are fully funded by the National Science Foundation right down to the students' meals," Sinha said.

The club also has a Thanksgiving dinner each year.

"We have a lot to offer and I would like to see more students take advantage of the opportunities that are right here for them," Sinha said. "After all, that's why we're here."