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Papers of Norman E. Jones, Sr. : A Collection Guide

Nelson Poynter Memorial Library. Special Collections and University Archives.

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Norman E. Jones 1909-1990

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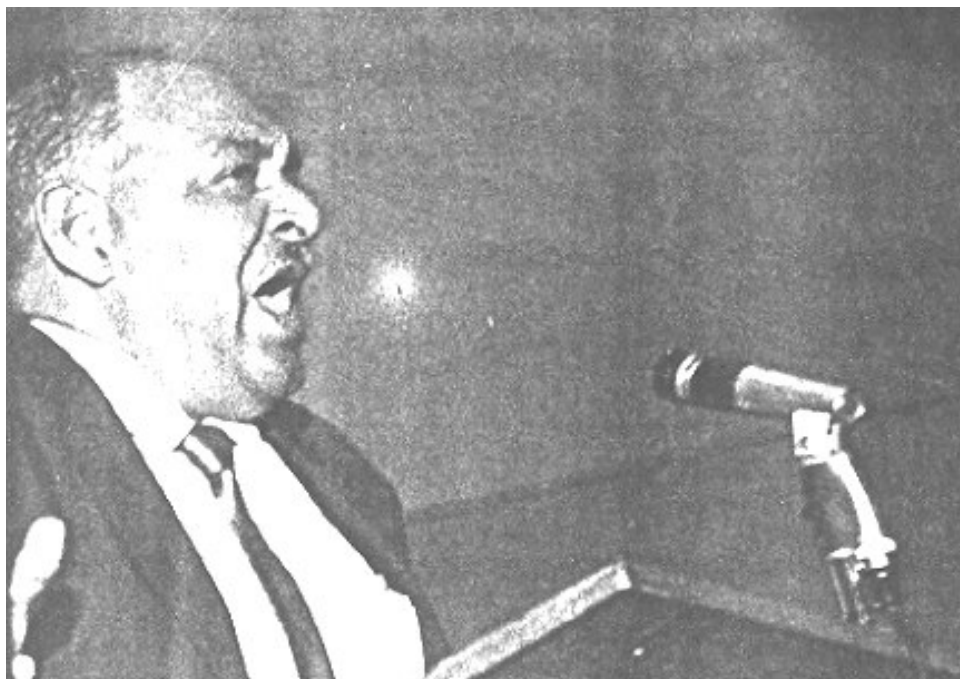
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The Papers of Norman E. Jones, Sr.



A Collection Guide by

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Introduction to the Collection and Biographical Information

The papers and audio recordings of Norman E. Jones trace the life of an African American entrepreneur in St. Petersburg. A Kansas native, born in 1909, Jones moved to the Tampa Bay region in 1950. He wrote regular columns in local and national newspapers, worked as a freelance photojournalist, supported conservative political organizations, embraced the economic philosophies of Booker T. Washington, and sparked controversy by holding strong opinions that often contradicted local advocates of racial integration and the civil rights movement.

This collection offers an invaluable resource for researchers wishing to gain insight into the social, political, and economic climate facing St. Petersburg's African-Americans community during the 1960s and 1970s. Materials include drafts from a series of articles entitled "Let's Talk Politics" that Jones wrote for newspapers. Researchers can also examine written documents about his television program on WTOG-Channel 44, as well as clipping files and correspondence with business leaders and government officials.

Early experiences shaped Mr. Jones's political philosophy. Born in Lawrence, Kansas, on 17 November 1909, as a young child he moved to Kansas City, Missouri. He graduated from Lincoln High School in 1926 and took classes at Lincoln Junior College in Kansas City. He also studied photography with Warren B. Harrison. Jones later went to Henderson Business College in Memphis, Tennessee. After living in nearly forty different U.S. cities, he moved to Tampa in 1950. He later settled in St. Petersburg in 1955.

Throughout his adult life, Jones characterized himself as a "hustler," though not in the traditional meaning of that term. He did not see himself as a black man who gained by "hustling" others weaker than him. Jones considered his "hustling" as the same action that "white folks" ascribed to a person with "drive and creativity."

A photographer, publicist, and journalist, Jones worked as Florida Editor for the *Pittsburgh Courier* and edited the "Negro News" pages of the *St. Petersburg Times* and *St. Petersburg Evening Independent*. For almost twenty years, beginning in 1956, he contributed a column entitled "Let's Talk Politics" to various black newspapers throughout Florida. He also produced his own radio program on two Tampa stations, WEBK and WIOU. During its early years of operation WTOG-Channel 44 televised the "Norman E. Jones Show," a public affairs program hosted by Jones.

His writings and broadcasts offered Jones an opportunity to share his contrarian and conservative political views. Many of his statements, considered heretical or at least unorthodox by other members of the black community, certainly added some interesting dimensions to the critical debates of his times. Jones once proclaimed that he was "an ardent, strict, unequivocal believer in the free enterprise system of America." To him, the only color that mattered was the color "green." He praised the accommodationism of Booker T. Washington and preached economic self-sufficiency and self-determination rather than racial integration. In one of his more notable comments, he once proclaimed that "slavery . . . was a 250-year on-the-job training program . . . [followed by] another 100 years to serve his apprenticeship."

Jones criticized the decisions of numerous civil rights activists, many of whom he believed usurped power from the black community only to filter it to the white community. He was suspicious of integration, believing that the survival of strong and vibrant African American institutions required an emphasis on developing and sustaining black-owned businesses and

media outlets. He condemned the actions of black activists across generations—including W.E.B. DuBois and Martin Luther King, Jr.—who "have destroyed the only two meaningful Black programs in [U.S.] history—those created by Booker T. Washington and by Marcus Garvey." Jones branded Thurgood Marshall, the notable attorney involved in landmark school desegregation lawsuits who later joined the U.S. Supreme Court as a Justice, "a traitor to his race when he said that all Negroes who ever attend colored schools are inferior and those who will go to Black schools in the future are inferior."

Almost always referring to other African Americans as "Negroes," he claimed that the sum effect of the civil rights movement was "misery, poverty, and destruction to the Negro communities, capped with disillusionment." He added that the movement was "started by Black people who wanted to get away from the masses; it was not started by the masses." In his opinion, the Black Power Movement that took shape in the late 1960s was nothing but "nonsense to fool the Negroes." At a time when many colleges and universities embraced Black Studies programs and Afro-American Studies curricula, he made it clear that he considered such academic exercises as unnecessary and superfluous.

Jones's notoriety reached across the nation as he supported the presidential campaign of George C. Wallace, former governor of Alabama and a staunch segregationist. In March 1972, Jones won election as one of Florida's eighty-one delegates to the Democratic National Convention, receiving 174 out of the 190 votes cast in Tampa's Sixth District caucus. At the time, Democratic Party rules required that delegations must have a "reasonable relationship" to the cultural mosaic of the general population. In a state where Wallace had dominated in the presidential primary election and would gain seventy-five of the eighty-one delegates, Jones was the only African-American delegate committed to Wallace.

In a 13 April 1972 interview in the *Wall Street Journal*, columnist Neil Maxwell portrayed Norman E. Jones as a "Don Quixote." Jones told Maxwell that he served as chairman of a group known as National Black Citizens Committee for George Wallace Inc., an organization he had registered with the Florida Department of State a week earlier, on April 7. When other black leaders—most notably John Lewis and Andrew Young of Atlanta—claimed that Jones's position might endanger his life, Jones dismissed such talk as nonsense and instead predicted a surge of support for Wallace's campaign: "The only physical danger I am in is the crush of blacks trying to get on the bandwagon. And after the election, it will be from the people trying to get my autograph."

As the sole black supporter of Wallace who "integrated" Wallace's Florida delegation, Jones nevertheless condemned integration: "I do not believe in the Easter Bunny, Santa Claus, or the tooth fairy, and I have doubts about the Great Pumpkin. I also do not believe in integration, because it is another fantasy. Two forces cannot integrate without destroying them." He added that attempts to mandate integration amounted to "a demoniacal, destructive effort" that would crush self-determinism in the black community. When questioned about Wallace's views on racism, Jones quickly retorted: "Ask the Kennedys how many black maids they've got. The biggest racist in the world is the NAACP."

In July 1972, after an assassination attempt on George Wallace had left him paralyzed, Jones remained a firm believer in the Wallace's victory. He tried to persuade blacks to support the campaign, and in the process of making speeches, delivered comments that certainly drew attention: He told a group of Wallace delegates that "black people are better off in Alabama than any state in the nation." An active member of the news media, Jones then condemned liberal

journalists as "cotton-picking liberals" for creating Roy Wilkins and Martin Luther King as leaders, when, in Jones's opinion, the last 'true' national black leader was Booker T. Washington.

Until his health failed in the 1970s, he ran an advertising and public relations business in St. Petersburg. It was during this time that he reconnected with his son, Norman E. Jones Jr. The younger Jones launched a long search to locate his father, who had left the Ohio home to pursue opportunities at a time when the younger Norman was only a child. Norman Jr. encouraged his father to record his many thoughts and statements about black history, economic self-determination, and similar topics on audiocassettes. These recordings constitute part of the collection.

The elder Jones continued to live in St. Petersburg until his death on 13 August 1990. He was survived by his widow, Mary Brayboy Jones; a son, Norman E. Jones; a daughter, Elizabeth Jones; a step-daughter, Ossie B. Robinson-Shaw; and a stepson, Elihu Brayboy, Jr. Norman Jr. donated this collection to the Poynter Library in November 2000.

Jones' correspondence reveals him to be a complex political pragmatist. Like a chess player, he often would think two or three moves ahead, unexpectedly aligning himself with parties and issues that would seem to run counter to his agenda. His complex reasoning defies simplistic explanations. Although many activists condemned Jones's comments at the time, some of his predictions have become prophetic: Contemporary conservative black commentators such as Juan Williams can look back to Jones's statements of the late 1960s and find elements that bolster their claims that racial integration has not offered a panacea to larger social issues.

His controversial work for the Wallace campaign grew out his life-long political philosophy, here summarized by his son:

*My Father's will is to build and rebuild, the Black Communities throughout the Nation, through active participation, by utilizing the cry of self-determination. He wants to preserve the origin, growth, and identity of African American Educational, Commercial, Cultural, Religious, Fraternal, Recreational, Professional, Social, and Sports Institutions in America. It is his desire to work within the established Free-Enterprise System to attain our collective goals. He talked about giving the people a vehicle to express their culture. He felt the need to develop Thrift and engage in productive occupations; and to a greater degree, become job creators.
(Norman E. Jones Jr., The Ohio State University, 1981-1982)*

Preservation Note

While preservation measures may slow the physical deterioration of items in this collection, these steps cannot prevent damage from occurring. Please report any tears or other damage so that library staff may take appropriate preservation or conservation measures. Protective gloves should be worn when handling all photographs and brittle documents. While no restrictions limit access to this collection, library staff will evaluate photocopying or digitization requests on an individual basis to ensure the long-term preservation of this unique collection. Patrons using this collection must adhere to copyright and fair-use guidelines and provide proper citation of sources appearing in their research.

Provenance of the Papers of Norman E. Jones

This collection falls under the Local and Regional History provenance of the Special Collections and Archives department, Nelson Poynter Memorial Library, USF St. Petersburg.

Scope and Contents

The contents occupy five archival boxes and two audiocassette storage cases (approximately 3.75 linear feet). No restrictions inhibit access to this collection. Some materials from his personal archives related to Wallace were previously donated to the University of Alabama.

Container Listing

Box 1

Box 1, Folder 1. "Let's Talk Politics," 1964 (?) #1-35
Most of the articles cover the "Historical Background of The Negro in Politics"

Box 1, Folder 2. "Let's Talk Politics," 1966 (?)
Chapters 1, 18-46

Box 1, Folder 3. "Let's Talk Politics," 1967
Chapters 47-96

Box 1, Folder 4. "Let's Talk Politics," 1968 (?)
Chapters 97-139

Box 1, Folder 5. "Let's Talk Politics," 1969
Chapters 1-42

Box 1, Folder 6. "Let's Talk Politics," 1970
Chapters 1-21; March 7-August 8

Box 1, Folder 7. "Let's Talk Politics," 1970s (?)

Box 1, Folder 8. Miscellaneous Materials

Box 2

Box 2, Folder 1. Black Economic Month

Box 2, Folder 2. Election of Negro Community Leaders

Box 2, Folder 3. Golf, Putting Game

Box 2, Folder 4. Challenging the Role of "The Creative"

- Box 2, Folder 5.** Tampa Model Cities Program
- Box 2, Folder 6.** What is Black Power?
- Box 2, Folder 7.** *Florida Sentinel Bulletin* Promotions
- Box 2, Folder 8.** Black Manifesto
- Box 2, Folder 9.** Black "Unintelligensia"
- Box 2, Folder 10.** Project Help
- Box 2, Folder 11.** There is Something about a Negro
- Box 2, Folder 12.** For Whom the Bells Toll
- Box 2, Folder 13.** The Negro as an Economic Factor in the South
- Box 2, Folder 14.** Community Workers Personal Public Relations
- Box 2, Folder 15.** Philosophy and Goals of Community Development Project
- Box 2, Folder 16.** Importance of Census
- Box 2., Folder 17.** Proposal to the City of Riviera Beach
- Box 2., Folder 18.** Community Action Program Projects
- Box 2., Folder19.** Use of Creative Forces to Come Up with Preventative...
- Box 2, Folder 20.** Negro Community Leaders vs. Black Power Movement
- Box 2, Folder21.** Len Rogers
- Box 2, Folder 22.** Prospectus for the Democratic Party in Florida
- Box 2, Folder 23.** Gulf Oil Boycott
- Box 2, Folder 24.** Sociological Impact of Negro Urban Communities
- Box 2, Folder 25.** "If I were to write about love"
- Box 2, Folder 26.** Proposals for Public Relations Campaigns
- Box 2, Folder 27.** Political Strategy for Jacksonville

- Box 2, Folder 28.** Solutions for Ills of the Negro Community
- Box 2, Folder 29.** Editorial: "Negro in America needs story of Roots"
- Box 2, Folder 30.** Operation Carwash and Hungerama
- Box 2, Folder 31.** Possible Innovations (Citizens Participation Program)
- Box 2, Folder 32.** Community Relations Programs
- Box 2, Folder 33.** Negro Protests Should be Economic
- Box 2, Folder 34.** Proposal for War on Poverty for Negro Citizens
- Box 2, Folder 35.** Specifically Designed Curative for Recipients of Government Relief Funds
- Box 2, Folder 36.** Possible Solutions (Economy)
- Box 2, Folder 37.** Response to Mary McGrory on LBJ/Civil Rights
- Box 2, Folder 38.** Outline of Negro Program
- Box 2, Folder 39.** \$100,000 a Year Youth Clubs
- Box 2, Folder 40.** *Soulville Gadfly*
- Box 2, Folder 41.** Senatorial Candidate Lays Campaign Plans in Jacksonville
- Box 2, Folder 42.** "I Believe"
- Box 2, Folder 43.** Unidentified (Direct Sales, Money, Communism)
- Box 2, Folder 44.** Channel 44 Television Program: *The Norman E. Jones Show*
- Box 2, Scroll.** Prospectus for the Democratic Party in Florida in Relations to Negro Voting Potential

Box 3

- Box 3, Folder A.**
Correspondence: Bus-Ice Cream Incident; Community Relations Council; Bi-Racial Committee; GOP; American College Lecture Bureau
- Box 3, Folder B.**

Correspondence: Milton Beckerman; Farris Bryant; Community Relations; Haydon Burns; Negro News Pages; Jeraldine Brown-Economic Protests; Black and White News; Sam Tucker; Black Economic Pioneers

Box 3, Folder C.

Correspondence: Citrus; James Turner; Al Canaanata; Leroy Collins; CBS News; Coca-Cola; Ann Cramer

Box 3, Folder D.

Correspondence: L.V. Davis; Dew Cadillac re Bill Cramer; Richard Fulton; Bill France to Roosevelt Jones re: Roasting of Norman E. Jones

Box 3, Folder E.

Correspondence: Clarence Edwards; Edmiston Rothschild; Roland Elliott; Sen. Sam Ervin

Box 3, Folder F.

Correspondence: Ford Foundation; Elmer Friday; Walter E. Fauntroy re: Black Caucus

Box 3, Folder G.

Correspondence: [Tampa] Mayor Dick Greco re: Black Youths; T.J. Parrent of GM; [St. Petersburg] Mayor Herman Goldner re: Biracial Committee; Chester Guth, Community Relations; A.G. Gaston Interests; Joe Garagiola re: baseball; Charles Gainey; Florida Voters League; GM; John Gardner, Urban Coalition; Charlie Greene, NIA Convention; Edward Kennedy; Mark Goodson and Bill Todman re: Golf Putting Game; A.G. Gaston re: W.C. Handy; General Telephone Compay, Fred Learey

Box 3, Folder H.

Correspondence: Patricia Roberts Harris, Democratic Party reform; Hubert H. Humphrey re: 'Nixon's dirty tricks'; Pat Hardeman; S.E. Hand re: Economic Opportunity Act; Chet Huntley re: 'The Harlem Riots'; Alexander Hawkins, Community Relations; Bus-Ice Cream Incident; Arthur Powell, Harvard University re: Black History; Dick Hollahan, Campaign Mgr. for Fred Shultz, Negro PR Agency; Mayor Chuck Hall, Labor

Box 3, Folders I-J.

Correspondence: Bus-Ice Cream Incident, The Plot Thickens; LBJ re: Civil Disorder; T.B. Ingram; Mayor Don Jones re: Unwanted Promotion; Robert Johnson, *Jet* Magazine; Job Corps; Cornelius Johnson re: Ingram Promotion; Hattie James; Sam Jones

Box 3, Folder K.

Correspondence: Loudon Wainwright, *Life* Magazine, re: 'The Right Kind of Uncle Tom'; David Ginsburg re: Testimony on Civil Disorders; Otto Kerner, re: Riots; Robert Kennedy re: Black Power; Stanley Karson; Merlin Keese re: Return of Materials; C.W. King re: Independent Party; Claude Kirk; Keedick Lecture Bureau

Box 3, Folder L.

Correspondence: Leo Burnett Co. re: Museum for Commercial Transportation; Jesse Lewis re: citrus; Gaylord Rolle; Melvin Laird, Counselor to the President; George Lee, Grand Commissioner of Education re: Jackie Robinson; John Lindsay, Mayor of NYC re: Committee on Investigation of the Riots in Negro Communities; Melvin Laird; Lincoln Univ. School of Journalism; W. Colston Leigh, Inc.; Jesse Lewis re: Roasting of Jones

Box 3, Folder M.

Correspondence: Dr. Von D. Mizell re: 'Lets Talk Politics'; J.P. Field re: manuscript; Eyre R. Saitch, Miller Brewing Company re: Negro History Calendar; Senator John Matthews re: election; Rev Edward McCreary, Jr.; J.J. Maxwell re: *The Soulvilve Gadfly*; Jimmy Mann re: Gibbs Basketball; McVey Speakers Bureau; Richard Milner, CBS; Tampa Electric Company re: Employment; Eugene McCarthy: George McGovern; Lester Maddox

Box 3, Folders N-O.

Correspondence: George Harris, NIA; Edwin Nichols resume; Open Mike, WLCY-Channel 10; Madeleine Edmondson, *Newsweek*

Box 3, Folder P.

Correspondence: Naylor Fitzhugh, Pepsi; Steve Puffer, apology; Cecil Powell, "My Creed"; [Adam] Clayton Powell, Congressman of the Peoples of the United States re: Stokely Carmichael, Riot Bill; Printers' Ink re: Civil Disorders; Parks Sausage Company; Jim Pidgeon, Public Information Officer of Tampa; Florida Voters League

Box 3, Folder R.

Correspondence: Garth Reeves, *Miami Times*; Gaylorde Rolle, *The Liberty News*; Francisco Rodriguez, Tampa Economic Opportunity; A. Phillip Randolph, Pullman Porters; Grant Reynolds, National Negro Republican Assembly; Jackie Robinson; Nelson Rockefeller, William Raspberry, *Washington Post*

Box 3, Folder S.

Correspondence: Eric Simpson, *Florida Star*; Schlitz; War on Poverty; Irving Scott; Budd Schulberg; Sharpe Cadillac re: Cramer; Eric Simpson, *Florida Star*; *St. Petersburg Times*, Gibbs High School Football; Fred Schultz; John Sulik; WTVT-Channel 13

Box 3., Folder T.

Correspondence: C.A. Tucker re: Daytona; "Forced Busing"

Box 3, Folder U.

Correspondence: re: Women's Job Corps, Mayor Herman Goldner; Nat; Benjamin Berry, Afro American Studies; Russell M. Cooper, USF; Sherman Thompson re: Economic Opportunity

Box 3, Folder W

Correspondence: Alyson Wise, *Florida Star*; Betty Wimbish, Suncoast Progress; R.L. Williams, FAMU; Broward Williams, State Treasurer; Harry Walker, Lecture Bureau.

Box 3, Folder Y

Correspondence: Sidney Mintz, Afro-American Studies; Whitney Young, Urban League

Box 4

Box 4, Folder 1. Clippings of Articles by and about Norman E. Jones
"Let's Talk Politics"

Box 4, Folder 2. Clippings about Norman E. Jones and George Wallace

Box 4, Folder 3. Clippings by/about Norman E. Jones and *St. Petersburg Times*
"The End of the Negro Page"; an editorial protest by Norman Jones

Box 4, Folder 4. Clippings, Miscellaneous.
Articles, some by Norman Jones

Box 4, Folder 5. Clippings about Norman E. Jones, Miscellaneous
Obituaries

Box 4, Folder 6. Norman E. Jones, Jr.
1968.

Box 5

Copies of Various Photographs of Norman E. Jones Sr.

Audiocassette Cases

Miscellaneous Recordings by Norman E. Jones Sr.