



MARY GARDINER JONES

12/10/20 – 12/23/09

Mary Gardiner Jones, the last surviving Jones of the Jones Family of Long Island, NY died peacefully of natural causes at her home in Washington, DC December 23. She was 89 and professionally active until the last year of her life. Lawyer, nationally recognized feminist and consumer advocate, first woman Federal Trade Commissioner and former Vice President of Consumer Affairs at Western Union, Ms. Jones was a dedicated public servant and central figure in the early feminist movement, opening doors to higher office for professional women in the law, government and business. Ms. Jones was an Honoree of the Veteran Feminists of America, a Board member of the National Women's History Museum and was included in the 2007 publication *Feminists Who Changed America 1963-1975*.

The Jones family roots reach back to the early 1600's in New York and New England. It was their donation of family property which became Long Island's Jones Beach. Mary G. Jones followed the lead of her Aunt "General" Rosalie Jones, the first woman to graduate from the Washington DC College of Law and a well known suffragist, leading marches to Albany and Washington DC starting in 1912.

Ms. Jones graduated from Wellesley College in 1943 and worked as an analyst at the Office of Strategic Services, precursor to the CIA. In 1945 she entered Yale Law School, one of two women in her class. She graduated in 1948 Order of the Coif, the high academic honor society of the law profession. She also served as Managing Editor and first woman Board member of the Yale Law Journal. Despite her accomplishments she interviewed with over 50 law firms, many openly refusing to hire a woman, before joining Donovan Leisure as the first woman lawyer in that firm. Work in international trade there eventually led to the start of her public service career when she joined the Antitrust Division of the U.S. Department of Justice in 1953, taking cases on monopolistic practices of IBM and a cartel of Swiss watch companies. In 1961 Ms. Jones joined Webster Sheffield, continuing with her interest in the antitrust arena.

In 1964 President Lyndon Johnson appointed Ms. Jones to the Federal Trade Commission where she quickly became involved in the developing consumer movement. She was instrumental in bringing about a stronger consumer voice in FTC deliberations, greater FTC activism on

consumer issues and an expanded range of enforcement strategies to correct anti-consumer business practices. Although she left the FTC in 1973, the Agency created the annual Mary Gardiner Jones Award for Volunteerism in 2002, and awarded her the Miles W. Kirkpatrick Award for Lifetime Achievement in 2008, reflecting her public service contributions there and in the intervening years.

In 1973 she went to the University of Illinois at Champaign as a professor in the Law and Business Schools, teaching courses in ethics and social responsibility. After two years she returned to Washington DC wanting more direct impact in her areas of interest, though continued to remain active in the educational arena as a Trustee of Wellesley College and Colgate University. She was awarded an Honorary LLD from New York Law School in 1975.

In 1975 Ms. Jones joined Western Union as their first woman senior executive. The telecommunication industry was undergoing rapid changes in its technology and regulatory environments and the competitive landscape was shifting. Continuing her efforts on behalf of the consumer, she worked to improve consumer practices at Western Union, but more importantly to bring management recognition that strong consumer focus was of strategic importance. This perspective was increasingly being sought throughout corporate America and during this period Ms. Jones joined the Boards of Safeway, American Airlines, MCA, Alcon Pharmaceuticals and John Wiley Publishing. She also became President of the National Consumer's League, the oldest consumer organization in the Nation.

Retiring in 1982, Ms. Jones founded the Consumer Interest Research Institute, a policy think tank and conference organizer which focused on the application of emerging telecommunications technologies to consumer information services and telemedicine health care delivery. This organization was active until 2000.

In 1992 at the age of 70 she began graduate study for a PhD in Political Science at Georgetown University, completing coursework and comprehensive examination in two years before deciding to focus her energy on volunteer activities in Washington DC and continue consumer advocacy through speeches, articles and conference participation.

The last fifteen years of her life were dedicated to the aged, homeless, and inner city children mental health services and issues. Ms. Jones was President and Board member of the DC Mental Health Association and a Board member of the Institutional Review Board of the National Institute of Mental Health. She assumed leadership and support roles in a variety of advocacy coalitions and was actively involved in the National Council on Aging, IONA senior services organization, Washington School of Psychiatry, Older Women's League, Hillcrest Children's Center, and the DC Hurt home for Children.

In 2005 she started writing her memoir Tearing Down Walls – A Woman's Triumph, which details both Jones and related family history and her life experiences. It was published in 2007.

She is survived by nephews John, David and Charles Watkins and Robert Crooker, great nephews Marc and Christopher Watkins, great nieces Sharon and Kelly Watkins and Hannah Crooker, and great great nephew David Watkins. Ms. Jones will be remembered for her brilliance, hard work

and tireless energy, integrity, independence, commitment to Public Service, lifetime pursuit of personal growth, deep devotion to family, the extraordinary breadth of friendships she had, and the many, many people she helped during her life.

With a long-standing interest in race relations, Ms. Jones has endowed an ongoing scholarship at Howard University, Washington DC for students who work toward improving Black – White relations. In lieu of flowers or other remembrances, she asked that donations be made to the “Harold O. Lewis Endowed Scholarship Fund”. c/o Nesta H. Bernard, Interim Vice President Development & Alumni Relations, 2225 Georgia Avenue, NW, 8th Floor, Washington, DC 20059