

T. Harry Williams Center for Oral History Collection

ABSTRACT

INTERVIEWEE NAME: Johnnie A. Jones, Senior **COLLECTION:** 4700.0321

IDENTIFICATION: Jones is a native of West Feliciana Parish; he served in the army in WWII and took part in the Normandy Invasion; he is a graduate of Southern University Law School and his long legal career in Louisiana includes several landmark civil rights cases.

INTERVIEWER: Mary Hebert

PROJECT: Civil Rights

INTERVIEW DATES: September 1, 1993; September 4, 1993; October 2, 1993; November 13, 1993; December 4, 1993; February 12, 1994; October 29, 1994; October 14, 1995

FOCUS DATES: 1919-1995

ABSTRACT:

Session I

Tape 451

Jones born in Laurel Hill Louisiana in 1919; parents Henry E. Jones and Sarah Ann Coates were farmers, not sharecroppers who rented land; female ancestors lost family land to whites, then their sons were killed trying to get it back; great-grandmother Emily Bowers, considered a mulatto; his mother went through fourth or sixth grade; his father had one day of school but was extremely talented with words and numbers; parents stressed importance of an education; father hired John Dawson to teach Jones and his siblings, Dawson paid in animals and food; Huey Long era meant free books; Robert Perkins and Amanda White, children who regularly went to school with Jones and his brother; Jones' father was considered a school board member in 1918 in West Feliciana; a school was built for black children; father worked on school board under Charlie Argus; his father had a way with animals, could heal their injuries; Jones had to milk the cows before walking to school; many people in West Feliciana are descendants of whites, whites and black could marry until around 1896; after he finished school, people thought he shouldn't work in the fields; people's ability to pick hundreds of pounds of cotton each day; what Jones' family grew on their farm; trading eggs and chickens for school supplies at Max Dampf's store; other black children worked in the fields and only went to school on rainy days; his father would sometimes pick them up on their way to or from school on his horse or with his buggy; father scolded him once for waiting for the kids to come from the fields; he was closer to his father's family because mother's family lived farther away near Spillman, Louisiana; his uncle and oldest brother's oil business in New Orleans, their conflict with Italians also in the oil business; went to Woodville, Mississippi, work for Mr. [Hergen?] at the Ransom Lumber Company; staying with the Hergen family and serving as butler and as a tutor for Mr. Hergen's young son, Buddy; becoming the lumber shipping agent at Ransom, complaints because he didn't include any extra lumber on orders like the previous clerk had; Jones was good at lots of things, people said he

wasn't afraid of white people; dances in Woodville where both blacks and whites attended; blacks and whites attended separate churches; rumor going around that Jones ran the office at Ransom; the Hergens always gave him gifts of clothing, shoes, etc. in addition to his weekly pay; ate with the family, interactions with Mrs. Hergen and Buddy; he wasn't a good dancer but all the white girls would try to learn his moves, it caused jealousy; his father saw this jealousy, saw Jones' privileged position with Hergen family and Ransom; father told him, "if the whites don't kill you, the blacks going to kill you"; explanation of how white customers got served first in the grocery store, especially high-status whites; Jones got served ahead of some whites because he was working for the Hergens who were in the local power structure; father made him leave Woodville immediately; father decided to send him to Southern High school around 1936; he stayed with his uncle John in Scotlandville who owned a farm; back to discussion of dances in Woodville, bands that played; he feels he grew up on both sides of the fence and that could be tough, but he can get along with any type of person; Southern High was then known as Southern University Demonstration School and later, Southern Lab; he was sixteen, the poorest and least educated in his class, but a very good student; Dawson introduced Jones to American and black history, Dawson got his college degree from Southern University sometime after Jones; favorite teachers at Southern Demonstration, trying to fit in with the other students there; difficulty of paying \$17.50 tuition; working while going to high school; other students quickly learned he was a good fighter; playing basketball, baseball, football; white truck drivers would try to run Jones and his brother off the road while they were walking to school; one truck driver had an accident which killed a white woman and tried to blame Jones for standing in the road; Argus and Dampf "came to his rescue"; his childhood playmates were white, Fred Blanche and Buddy Cross; he always beat them at marbles; no one worked on Sundays and work stopped at noon on Saturdays; speaking at church rallies as a child; powerful whites prevented any harm for coming to Jones after truck accident, father had his guns loaded anyway; white man that Jones' father rented land from once came to their door and said Johnnie needed to go work in the fields;

Tape 452

The man was probably intimidated by Johnnie being smart; whites feared educated blacks; incident where a friend of Jones' from elementary school was killed on the job by his supervisor, perhaps because he was too smart; elementary teachers from the two-room schoolhouse that the black community built; he loved his teacher Inez Smith, she boarded with a local family; Mr. Dawson drove his old Ford to the school from St. Francisville; Jones went to college for a year and a half before going into the army.

Session II

Tape 458

Jones majored in industrial education at Southern University; when he was drafted in 1942, Dr. [Rigger?] from the draft board in Scotlandville got him a semester delay; plans to continue his education, switched his major to psychology after returning from the war; finished in psychology, married, worked two years at the post office, then started law school; his army unit was all-black with white officers; Camp Claiborne, Louisiana; his IQ allowed him to work in administration but he didn't think he was eligible because he didn't type; he impressed the inspector general with his knowledge of protocol; working on a detail loading warehouse got him promoted to first class by Sergeant Cage; was entrusted to figure out a monetary transaction mistake, got him promoted to buck sergeant and he got a weekend pass from the sergeant;

nervous he would get picked up by MPs in New Orleans even though he had the pass; being called up for Officer Candidate School (OCS); choices for what field to enter, he desired postal or administration; explanation of quartermaster units where many black soldiers went, danger of this position; he refused OCS and Major Bagert accused him of being a “Huey Long boy” or an “NAACPPer”; order came days later for him to transfer to Harahan, Louisiana, to be the recruiting officer under Lieutenant Goodman; story about Goodman’s nervousness dealing with first group of recruits, Jones took over and helped him; Goodman questions Jones on his background and rejection of OCS, suggests Jones try out for warrant officer; studying to become a warrant officer; everyone except Goodman thought he would fail the test but he passed; he was the first black to qualify; they tried to deny him the position saying he lied about his age; proved his age because his birth was recorded in Laurel Hill’s records; mostly he was not treated differently than white officers; he was one of Colonel McKee’s officers; assigned to barracks with white officers in Charleston, South Carolina; civilian orderly who worked in barracks put Jones’ belongings out on the street, the colonel would not intervene; Jones had his driver, Jackson, take him to see General Duke; meeting with Duke, describing problems he’d had with racism on the base; Duke decides Jones will rent a room instead of going back to the base, lets Jones take his command car; sentries at the gate salute the car, then get angry because Jones was in the car; soldiers could be racist no matter what part of the country they came from; leaving Charleston for Staten Island, New York, then Glasgow, Scotland; his experience during the D-Day Invasion at Omaha Beach, landing craft, Germans in the hills, casualties, rough weather; white soldier who drove a bulldozer into a German pillbox; highly skilled African American anti-aircraft gunner named Hill [or Hull?]; Jones was in Normandy for 150 days, his outfit’s experience (Fifth Engineering, 494th Port Battalion) was written up in the *Stars and Stripes*; there are no non-combat positions in the army; gunner Hill was killed when his gun malfunctioned; explanation of how they survived 150 days in Normandy; he wasn’t informed about a meeting of D-Day veterans in Normandy under President Reagan administration; President Truman's decision to integrate the army; more about Major Bagert’s assertion that Jones was an “NAACPPer”; Jones was in the NAACP youth chapter in high school and established the NAACP chapter at Southern University after WWII; Leonard Barnes’ impression of Jones speaking at Southern; influence of his father’s teaching and his military service on wanting blacks to stand up for their rights; he was part of the NAACP national veterans committee.

Tape 459

Attending NAACP meeting in Cincinnati, Ohio, where Thurgood Marshall was awarded the Spingarn Medal; being followed by the police constantly, probably because of his NAACP membership; in 1946, stopped by a state trooper on the way to New Orleans, the officer assaulted him; shrapnel fragment in his neck that he had removed at Charity Hospital; talking to A.P. Tureaud about the assault; case never went to court because black leadership compromised with State Police superintendent Grevemberg and Tureaud; the compromisers didn’t understand because they hadn’t been to war; it rains all the time in England, France is sometimes sunny; his discharge papers from the army say he’s white; invited to become a member of a local American Legion post until they realized he was black; some of the legionnaires thought he had a right to join; establishment of African American Legion posts in Louisiana, they are all numbered in the 500s; he becomes the first vice-commander of Bonnette Harrison Post 502; legion leader from WWI and white leadership were able to out-vote Jones’ contingent, so his post was not numbered 501; this is just what faith dealt him and he made the best of it..

Session III

Tape 481

Identifies on a map the route he traveled from England to France on D-Day; invading Omaha Beach under General Bradley; he came in on Dog Red; Omaha to Le Harve, there for 150 days; work with the Port Battalion 494th attached to the Fifth Engineers; he ran at the Battle of the Bulge; visiting Paris and touring France and Germany; Russell Patterson another black warrant officer; working on special assignments out of General Eisenhower's headquarters; seeing General Patton; the Red Ball Express; the danger of quarter master units and commanders placing black soldiers in exposed positions; he had no problem as a black officer over white soldiers; after being assaulted by a police officer; discussions with black community leaders in New Orleans when Jones wanted to sue and they wanted to work it out differently; many of these leaders associated with the NAACP, many were opposed to sit-ins; he doesn't know how his father put up with discrimination; service in WWII affected Jones's view of civil rights; his family never accepted slavery, they were never sharecroppers; he has always been willing to speak up for what is right; he was either going to be a preacher or a lawyer; blacks would fund and build schools and recreation facilities for themselves only to have them taken over by whites, examples like Brooks Park swimming pool and Gilmer Wright School; explanation of Brooks Park pool project and how pool would be turned over to the city; no recreation facilities for blacks in Baton Rouge or surrounding towns; other black veterans who were activists like Jones; Gilmer Wright school, built by and for blacks, taken over by school board and designated for white students; approached by Alex Pitcher to work on the Gilmer Wright case; meeting with community members at a church, decision to march on Gilmer Wright; getting attested and being tried before members of the bar association for disbarment; Southern Gentlemen and Citizens' Council; Sargent Pitcher was the lawyer for the bar association; Jones and Alex Pitcher given opportunity to recant and confess. Pitcher did so, Jones did not; case went to trial, description of proceedings during trial, claims against Jones, female witness set up to testify against Jones; he's the lawyer of record on a school desegregation case filed in 1956; East Baton Rouge Parish school still has not met standards of desegregation; activism on the Southern University campus and working to establish a NAACP chapter; Dr. Felton Clark's view of activism at Southern; importance of equal and open competition among all schools, not segregated by race; example of Dr. Clark not wanting Southern's debate team to compete against Emory or other white schools; importance of education in bringing change; Gunnar Myrdal's *American Dilemma*; differences in education and unfairness of separate but equal doctrine, example of outdated things being taught at black schools before *Brown vs. Board of Education*; Reverend Jemison leading bus boycott;

Tape 482

Reverend Jemison and planning the bus boycott in June 1953; Hebert and Jones are unclear on dates and events during this period; Jones opened a law practice with Bruce Bell and Leonard Avery, the local Masons gave them office space; the United Defense League (UDL) and the bus boycott; Jemison's desire to compromise on bus desegregation was done without Jones' support, led to Ordinance 222; discussion of how ordinance worked; working with other black lawyers in Louisiana; Jones and Bell's disappointment in Jemison's compromise; Jemison was receiving threats, threats Jones received; Jones and Bell attending the hearing on Ordinance 222, being prevented from speaking; Bell was arrested for attempting to speak, Jones ran away; Jemison told blacks not to go to the hearing which angered Jones because the meeting was public and everyone had a right to attend; *Plessy vs. Ferguson* and equality without distinction; his respect for the framers of the Constitution; opinions of Reverend Jemison; arguing bus boycott case in front of

Judge Charles Holcombe; Jones personally discussed segregated seating in the courtroom with Holcombe; Jones initially had difficulty writing judgments, got help from Holcombe; judges wouldn't want their decisions reversed when Jones took cases to court of appeals; other judges that Jones dealt with regularly; Judge Fred LeBlanc openly questioned Jones' professionalism and spoke as if Jones was a fool; Jones' friends would sometimes side with the judge, their minds were being "propagandized"; desegregation cases involving Pearl George, Lily Harris, Weldon Rougeau and Ronnie Moore; Reverend Jelks, local NAACP leader; Horatio Thompson, successful African American businessman; being questioned by Judge LeBlanc on his legal experience, court transcripts showed Jones was right and LeBlanc was wrong; Judge St. Clair Favrot and the Clark and Memorial Golf Course desegregation case; Gordon Kean quit his job when Jones was hired to the parish attorney's office; promoting Joe Delpit for city council election; Judge Favrot also talked down on Jones' legal capabilities; meeting between Jones and clients with superintendents of BREC [The Recreation and Park Commission for the Parish of East Baton Rouge]; Jones spoke at meeting in front of an almost entirely white audience about necessity of equal access to all recreation facilities; Embree Easterly yells racial epithets and claims blacks are trying to take everything whites have; Tom Jordan steps in to mediate with prayer; parks in East Baton Rouge are no longer segregated.

Session IV

Tape 508 Note - Tape is damaged, no audio available

Reverend Jemison's plans for the bus boycott; Jones had just finished law school around this time; Jemison and other boycott participants were all NAACP members; mass meetings where Jemison would speak; organizing a carpool and collecting money for gas; boycott was effective, next issue was getting black bus drivers hired; negative reactions, harassment, death threats; being threatened by the Ku Klux Klan at a bar association event with Earl Amedee; KKK threats in Plaquemines Parish; becoming the first black member of the Baton Rouge Bar Association and people who supported him; some bar members resigned when Jones joined; story about his wife, Sebell Chase, being invited to women's auxiliary event at the country club and being denied entry, members moved the meeting elsewhere; B.B. Taylor invited him to a Christmas party at the segregated country club, some guests and the black waiter were shocked; even today Jones would not be allowed into the club, even for lunch with a white person who invited him; other black attorneys in the state; meetings and boycott strategies discussed by Jemison and Martin Luther King, Jr.; debate over taking bus case to federal court, Jemison did not want to be plaintiff; arguing the case in front of Judge Holcombe; another judge falsely claimed that he had done and said certain things, case was reversed on appeal; Jemison hesitant to offend white "power structure"; many blacks felt that confrontation with whites wasn't right, older generation was used to asking permission from whites; support from Elayn Hunt and Sam DeMico; use of sir, ma'am, and mister when addressing whites, doesn't bother him; one of Martin Luther King Jr.'s associates, Reverend Major Johns in Plaquemines; the Citizens' Council and the Southern Gentlemen, local people active in these groups; Jones and Bruce Bell attending public hearing on Ordinance 222, Bell getting arrested there; explanation of why Jemison discouraged blacks from attending hearing; Jones' disagreement with Jemison's stance; Bell and Jones signed up to speak at hearing, police called, Bell arrested for disturbing the peace; Jones and Curtis "C.J". Gillam invited to a meeting of Armstrong Loan Company but denied entry because they were black, community boycotted the loan company and they later went out of business; explanation of test cases and the declaratory judgment act; many civil rights cases came out of Louisiana; more explanation of declaratory judgment, instead of

someone being arrested and then suing, could bring issues to court without anyone being arrested; he used this on the Brooks Park case, against Greyhound, in *Miller vs. Fun Fair Park*; school desegregation cases in Baton Rouge; black students desegregating the high schools, process of choosing which students would attend and coaching them for what they might face; black students were still made to sit as a group, making them easy targets for things being thrown; incident where heavy metal item was thrown at the group, Jones told the principal if his children were hurt, he would go on a rampage and kill every white person he saw; explanation of why he felt he would react that way, discussing his feelings with his friends; other incidents between black students and white classmates; potential for Jones' children to be alienated; Jones' children's educations;

Tape 509

The city park desegregation case; attendees and events at public meeting; Jones took up the case for Willie Major, Allen White, Roosevelt Spencer and Alvin Scott; Jones opinion that Jemison's approach was too gentle, feels that sometimes you have to demand change; Jones' interpretation of turning the other cheek; the Civil Rights Act of 1964 desegregated everything in Baton Rouge; public accommodation and the question of interstate commerce in the *Patricia Miller vs. Fun Fair Park* case; initiative and actions of Miller in bringing suit against Fun Fair Park; discussion of timeline of events in the mid-1960s; more about Miller's actions, she was an NAACP member; attempts by the state to gain access to the NAACP membership list; William Rainach and the Louisiana American Sovereignty Commission.

Session V

Tape 510

During bus boycott, Jemison asked saloon owners to voluntarily close their doors; Jones and Bell attending the public hearing on Ordinance 222; "now" became a password among blacks, indicating they wanted equality now; threats toward Jemison; Jones wasn't afraid of threats himself because he had been through D-Day; incidents where his office was broken into; two bombings at his office on Government Street, he narrowly escaped injury both times; losing clients because other people spoke poorly of him and his tactics and tried to cast doubt on his expertise; mass meetings about the bus boycott; desegregation of the public schools in Baton Rouge went in reverse order, older grades desegregated first, should have begun in younger grades first; harassment of black students at Lee High School; Jemison's daughter, Betty, and Velma Hunter Jackson, students at Lee High; Jones was opposed to the biracial committee because they never got anything done, just pacified blacks; working to get Joe Delpit elected to city council in 1968; opened a voting school in Scotlandville with Robert Harrison; practices that prevented African Americans from registering to vote; his own experience trying to register to vote with registrar Jody Smith; most blacks registered as Democrats; difficulty of calculating one's exact age for voter registration; Lucian and Twylie Barker, both with PhDs in government, also failed voter test; registrar of voters in Ruston was often closed, deterrent to black voter registration; lawsuit to hire African American bus drivers, excuse that they were too tall and their feet were too big; Jones would laugh at the absurdity of these excuses, that upset his colleague Louis White; being called "boy" by the judge; his dad always told him to be careful and not get killed; he liked President Kennedy and thinks he did a lot to change things; President Johnson's role in desegregating the military; he was called in on the Garner case after arrests had been made, he didn't know about it beforehand; unusual situation returning to Southern University after World War II, fraternizing with professors was forbidden but many of his professors were already his friends and he would socialize with them anyway; raising questions with teachers at

Southern about *American Dilemma* by Gunnar Myrdal; Dean John Brother Cade, Dr. Clark and Mrs. Bollie at Southern University; Jemison thought he was too hot-headed but he had support from other community members; people against him were aligned with the biracial committees; trying to explain to his clients that working on change meant being met with opposition, telling them not to listen to those who tried to discount his abilities; Sargent Pitcher believed Jones' tactics were right; black community was mostly supportive of student sit-ins; Eddie Charles Brown was arrested and Judge Fred LeBlanc refused to release him; inopportune timing of court orders meant Brown should have been released immediately, order came from another judge back to LeBlanc; taking the Garner case to the State Supreme Court and to the U.S. Supreme Court; tactics used in district court by LeBlanc to discredit Jones; people reporting to Jones after leadership meeting, misunderstood what the judge said and thought Jones had addressed an envelope wrong; Jones had to defend himself again and persuade people to trust his tactics, make them understand that judges were trying to make them doubt his abilities; Dupuy Anderson's arrest for speaking to his wife, police believed she was a white woman and he was harassing her; NAACP meeting in New Orleans regarding sit-in cases across the country; not being taken seriously by NAACP because his approach to arguing cases was different; as a student at Southern Law, influence of professors and advantage of one-on-one discussions with Dean A.A. Lenoir, Vanue LaCour, Louis Berry, and Red Moss.

Tape 511

Learning to deal with professors when his opinion differed from their teachings; moot court at Howard University; explanation of a declaratory judgment versus an advisory opinion; people involved in lawsuits not being counseled properly; he tried to explain that what he was doing was something new; more instances of people claiming that his ideas were "hare-brained"; people grow up with certain attitudes that are hard to change; working with student protestors from Southern University; support from A.P. Tureaud on Garner case; comparison of Tureaud and "Dutch" Morial; Tureaud only added one word to the brief Jones wrote up for the case, just an adjective for emphasis; Thurgood Marshall complimented Jones; becoming a cooperative lawyer with the NAACP and working with NAACP Defense Council; hearing from Tureaud that the Supreme Court upheld his case; NAACP advocating for Jones' tactics; impact of Garner case on the Civil Rights Movement; Garner case application to public demonstration and flag burning; blacks can't hide their color and color alone is not enough to disturb the peace and warrant arrest; he doesn't think Earl Long or the Longs are prejudiced; KKK threats in response to the Garner case; Jones accused of being a Northern agitator; worked washing dishes at Mike and Tony's restaurant during high school, he witnesses humiliation of African American staff for tips, he refuses to participate; Albert and Barnes store where Jones got clothes on credit while attending high school, father paid the debt each year; idea held by Earl Long if that their own "homespun" people were becoming disgruntled (and weren't being prodded by Northern agitators) that something had to change; attitudes change and societies evolve, fear of and resistance to change is normal; starts to discuss Dupuy Anderson's arrest; discusses NAACP studies of sociological and legal issues; describes situation surrounding Anderson's arrest, he was only talking to his wife, the police were "peeping" and believed he was speaking to a white woman; describes how his and Hebert's interaction throughout interview sessions would have led to his arrest in the 1960s or 70s; when Anderson and his wife sat in court, she is asked to move to the white side of the courtroom and ignores the bailiff; Mr. Anderson acts like the bailiff has asked him to move and jumps over to the white side of the room, causing an uproar; Anderson exonerated easily; description of people's skin tones, some pass for white, like Anderson's wife.

Session VI

Tape 605

Working on the Garner case with help from NAACP attorneys; the Cox case over a demonstration at the courthouse which Jones witnessed; demonstration led by CORE [Congress on Racial Equality]; CORE's lawyers turned case over to Jones; Cox and others arrested; explanation of high bond that was set, restrictions were placed on acceptable payments and payers; Cox could have served seven years in jail; Morgan Bonding Company upset at damage to their reputation when the bond they put up was refused; double bond because money and collateral were put up, illegal practice; Cox was tried because he led the demonstration; Cox trusted Jones as his lawyer; strategy for keeping him in jail for a bit knowing he would be released due to outcome of case; Cox's other lawyers, primarily Robert Collins; Jones always advised protestors on what they could do within the law; explanation of getting Cox's case heard using seventy-two hour writs of *habeas corpus*; he knew how to ignore comments from presiding Judge John Fournet that were designed to ruffle him; Cox had trained for jail time, said he could last twenty-one days; support from sheriff Bryan Clemmons; more on Cox's time in jail, his hunger strike; local and national news coverage of Cox's plight; Jones was once questioned by a gas station attendant about Cox's release, Sargent Pitcher pulled up and the attendant asked his opinion, Pitcher says he thinks Jones will get Cox released; Jones' writs relating to Cox case; Jones would say ignorant things to fool judges into thinking he was ignorant; many blacks didn't know how to navigate the legal system or know their rights; incorrect belief held by many that the police are the law, when really the courts, judge, and jury are the law; story about a recent client of Jones' being told by a police officer that she caused an accident when the evidence showed otherwise; client is surprised that the officer would so easily blame it on her; freedom of speech and the right to demonstrate; book from Jones youth called *Democracy* that had an illustration of free speech; Cox had been denied his freedom of speech and right to demonstrate; Hebert says Cox case is mentioned in book, *May it Please the Court*; Jack Greenberg spoke with Jones about a book he was writing; NAACP and CORE; CORE viewed as more militant; incident in Plaquemine with James Farmer where they spent the night in the graveyard and Farmer had to escape hidden in a coffin; whites using derogatory statements and other tactics to provoke anger and retaliation; death threats and harassment he faced, assistance from FBI agents in avoiding death threats; cases he worked on in Monroe; he didn't work on the LSU integration suit; Gilmer Wright school case; political offices he ran for included judge, district attorney, state legislature; he was never invited but always showed up for candidate debates; he got white and black votes; Joe Delpit's election to city council on a block of black votes in 1968; Jones service as assistant attorney and then parish attorney; names several of the prominent black community leaders in Baton Rouge; recent article about the Baton Rouge Bus Boycott; organization set up by Acie Belton, FOCUS;

Tape 606

Goals and leadership of FOCUS; receiving funding for the Voter's Rights League; voting school organized by Jones and Robert Harrison; funding of FOCUS and Voter Education Project; misinformation among blacks about their voting rights; Wiley Branton, friend and colleague of Jones' was president of the voting rights foundation based in Atlanta; Jones spoke out a lot and white community reacted badly; Jones and Dr. Williams worked on Hubert Humphrey's presidential campaign; ran for state legislature while working for the parish attorney's office; found that he earned increased respect from whites due to his diligence as a lawyer; conflicts between Jones and Gordon Kean; his career aspirations since childhood; "crookedness" Jones saw in city government; discussion of how he and other handled wrongdoing; people accused Jones of no

longer being a “friend to the blacks”, people who made those accusations were later convicted of crimes; defending himself to his wife who heard people talking badly about him; the one term he served on the state legislature from 1972 – 1976 during Edwin Edwards’ first term as governor; J. Bennett Johnston’s attempts to recruit Jones to campaign for him, Jones declined because he had committed to Delpit who had committed to Edwards; Jones talks about other black legislators he served with; a bill Jones co-authored with “Billy” Tauzin about lowering the voting age to eighteen; Jones explains how bills may or may not be consolidated depending on the subject matter; his complaints about the way this works in Louisiana, no proper hearings for amendments to bills, no public hearings; Jones also pressed or legislators having time to review bills before sessions began; one had to know how to utilize the legislature and get fellow legislators to support you; recalls time with parish attorney’s office and fellow legislators being sent to jail; Jones was the odd man out in the legislature, some fellow black legislators were dealing in criminality; staying active in the black community; interview Jones did with Baton Rouge Council on Human Relations, other people interviewed; preparing for televised debates, people planted in audience with specific questions, advice and help from A.A. Lenoir and Vanue LaCour on juvenile law helped him in debate; Annie Smart wanted Jones to be president of FOCUS but he was too busy with law school and his family.

Session VII

Tape 677

Visiting St. Francisville and meeting with members of his extended family; some history of his father’s side of the family, Native American ancestry and intermarriage; his great-grandfather was killed, family land taken by whites; members of the Babers family who owned the land Jones grew up on; origin of Jones’ father’s nickname, “Stokes”; friendship between Stokes and Vinnie Jackson; Stokes rented seventy-five acres for one dollar per acre; Jones’ chores at home, he didn’t work as much in the fields as some of his peers did; his father wanted him to be educated; working in New Orleans as a paperboy; living and working on his Uncle John’s farm and going to high school at Southern Demonstration; other uncles on his mother’s side; Cherobee[?] a community near Spillman, Louisiana; people being impressed with Jones’ accomplishments despite tough upbringing; newspapers with black readership; going to elementary school at least five or six months per year, then being tutored; local church he attended; taking care of livestock on his parents’ and uncles’ farm; his oldest brother and an uncle worked in New Orleans; involvement in Garner case when it went to the Supreme Court; case was argued by Jack Greenberg and James Nabrit III; practicing for the trial at Howard University, people doubted Jones’ strategy; after case was decided, people sought Jones’ legal advice and new way of dealing with civil rights cases; friendship with A.P. Tureaud; recollections about Supreme Court justices who served on Garner trial; Kenneth Johnson, Dean A.A. Lenoir, Don Moss and others active at Howard and Southern Universities; case involving John Johnson and SCLC dismissed soon after Jones signed on; attorneys involved with Garner case in local courts; Cox case was the result of a demonstration by CORE activists; Cox led a demonstration outside the courthouse in Baton Rouge; Cox was arrested and opted to stay in jail on a hunger strike; bond money for Cox was raised by a church in Michigan; Robert Collins handed Cox’s case over to Jones; Cox faced seven years in jail but Jones was sure he could get the decision reversed; using writs to get Cox case moving; unreasonable time limits placed on writs by judges; being pulled over on his way to New Orleans to file a writ, other tactics to prevent writs from being filed and cases from moving forward; police officer ticketed him but let him proceed to New Orleans and pay his ticket on the way home after filing the writ; tactics to delay filings were so prevalent, Supreme Court had to rule that no time limits could be placed on

filing; Jones started filing writs at all hours of the night and then the rule was changed so writs could be mailed in; local courts ruled against Cox, case was appealed to Supreme Court; Collins took over and won the case; Sargent Pitcher warned Jones that the Cox case decision would have a negative effect; Jones didn't grasp Pitcher's warning until the Cox case was used to defend flag burning; Cox case simply about free speech and right to peaceful demonstration; civil rights lawyer D'Army Bailey is still in touch with Cox; Cox's plan to survive in jail for up to twenty-one days; attention from the national media on the Cox case; Jones explains more about how he used writs to get Cox released; some support from judges in dealing with his writs in a timely and fair manners; discusses high bond for Cox and limits placed on how bond could be paid; Cox stayed out of jail during time before Supreme Court hearing, would have gone right back to jail for seven years if cases went against him; Jones was adept at using writs because he had studied writ practice;

Tape 678

First days of bus boycott, rumors that Jemison made a deal with the city; Tureaud had faith in him; Jemison refused to act as plaintiff in federal court; getting a hard time from his professors but learning from them; Moss, at Southern Law; bus segregation was overturned later; support from UDL board member Fannie Washburn who called him "little lawyer"; other UDL board members; Raymond Scott announced the bus boycott on the radio; potential danger to Scott and uproar in town that night; derogatory statements toward blacks are common; Jones' fellow lawyer, Bruce Bell, arrested at public hearing on Ordinance 222; Jemison announced that no black should attend that hearing; Jones and Bell attended and tried to speak in opposition; police moved to arrest them and caught Bell while Jones escaped; Jemison said they had been insubordinate; Washburn agreed with Jones that the ordinance was unconstitutional; Martin Luther King, Jr.'s meeting with Jemison; case could have been appealed to federal court after district judge ruled there was no right of action; Jemison's leadership in the National Baptist Convention, terms of office; boycott case moved on later when Jones was using declaratory judgment; Jones' recent meeting with Eugene Young, someone who despised him back in the civil rights era; case for desegregating BREC recreation facilities and parks; public hearing on parks where Jones was one of few blacks in attendance; Jones was a lawyer for the men who were denied entry to the golf course; Willie Major's difficulties as a plaintiff on that suit, losing work; the other plaintiffs along with Major, Jones recently ran into Wesley Nicholas; when Jones spoke at the public meeting, he was assailed by racist taunts from Embree Easterly; habit for whites to say "niggra" instead of "Negro" or "nigger"; Easterly's taunts continue, telling the white audience that blacks are driving better cars and living in better homes than they are; Jones and his contemporaries had means but were not rich, many wives were teachers and feared losing their jobs; his wife couldn't stand the constant threats and phone calls, he had to leave her; back to public meeting, Favrot calls Jones' ideas hare-brained, Gordon Kean says Jones is just trying a new tactic; Favrot and Kean's legal background; legal practice runs differently today, writs are used more, more steps before cases come to trial; his son and daughter's reaction to his reputation on civil rights cases; more explanation of BREC case progress through the courts; case went to Judge Herbert Christenberry in New Orleans; opposing attorney Jack Gremillion argued that golf was not a sport for blacks; J.Y. Sanders tried to make an analogy between separation of races being like God creating different species of birds; Jones destroys Sanders' analogy saying that all birds nest in the same bush; Christenberry ruled in favor of Jones and plaintiffs; next step was desegregating the dancing pavilion; Jones narrowly avoiding a confrontation with Eugene Young at the pavilion while Jones' children played tennis; running into Young recently after not seeing each other for decades; significance of being at an event with blacks and whites together, eating from the same bowl of dip, would have never happened thirty years ago; Jones always knew that full

desegregation would happen; recalls vaccination day at his school, instruments used to scratch skin; doctor administering vaccinations would ask children what they wanted to be when they grew up to distract them from the pain, Jones said he wanted to be a lawyer and the doctor refused to vaccinate him; Willie Chamberlain said he wanted to be president and the doctor wouldn't vaccinate him either; Mr. Dawson made an excuse for Willie to be vaccinated but couldn't help Jones; even as a child Jones spoke at meetings in front of whites about history and other topics, his father felt whites were threatened by Jones' abilities; Cox demonstrating was just like the protest of the Boston Tea Party; interview ends.

Session VIII

Tape 799

NAACP youth division activities; unequal treatment of blacks; in later years he thought of the danger he might have faced for taking a stand against racism and segregation; he'd always been like that, learned it from his dad; importance of attending school; his father didn't have much respect for Marcus Garvey and "Back to Africa" was hard for people to understand; family background in Laurel Hill; his father learned a lot from Mr. Vinnie Jackson; his father rented land, other family members owned acres; *Pittsburg Courier* and *Chicago Defender* newspapers; United Defense League (UDL) and First Ward Voter's League in Baton Rouge; Reverend Jemison's compromise on bus segregation upset Jones and Bruce Bell; some on UDL supported Jones' stance and were angry over the ordinance; bus ridership went way down after the boycott, still has not rebounded; black-only bus lines, no black drivers on city busses; bus transit in the Baton Rouge area was very limited; white bus drivers went on strike until they understood that whites were still getting their way - segregation had been maintained when Jemison compromised with white leadership on the ordinance; Hebert wants to talk more about WWII, Jones' time at Camp Claiborne in a segregated unit; separate USO for black soldiers in Alexandria; during a riot in Alexandria, a soldier in Jones' outfit was killed; when Jones' interviewed for warrant officer, he was already familiar with Form 54 because of the soldier killed in Alexandria; he doesn't know much about that riot, he saw things deteriorating and got on the bus back to base; all-black 761st Tank Battalion; left Camp Claiborne for staff sergeant position at Harahan; stepping in for Lieutenant Goodman who was too nervous to address new class of recruits; Goodman encouraged Jones to go for warrant officer position; while at Camp Claiborne, he was assigned to work in the coat room at the officer's club after previous attendants had mixed up the coat return system; he made hundreds in tips each night, caused resentment among white civilians; whites in Alexandria and Charleston, South Carolina, treated him and other black soldiers terribly; in Harahan and Jackson Barracks soldiers were integrated but Harahan had separate officers' quarters, separate USO; separate USOs overseas until Truman started integrating the armed services in 1948; he was the only black warrant officer and developed close friendships with the white officers at Jackson Barracks; in Baton Rouge, location of several black businesses, Temple Theater, Lincoln Hotel and other hotels for blacks; George Eames of the NAACP; NAACP didn't have much to do with the bus boycott; whites viewed the UDL as breaking with NAACP leadership; Jemison pursued the bus compromise independently; NAACP would not have compromised, they didn't believe in that; time has proven that Jones knew what he was doing and wasn't misleading people like some claimed; people at the time simply didn't stand up to Jemison; Jones and Bell attended a public hearing that Jemison said no blacks should attend, he called them insubordinate; Bell was arrested; Bell was a great mind but he took his time with things, sometimes to his detriment; story about Bell arguing before Judge [Jess] Johnson, coming back to court after lunch and trying to rehash testimony from that morning, the judge told him he was too

late, things were already in the record; Jones had Bell write the briefs, but he wrote them too long; white lawyers didn't accept the federal court system; Jemison never went to federal court, the Montgomery Bus Boycott would not have happened if he had; Martin Luther King's case was the same as Jemison's; Jemison raised money through his church; Jemison took security precautions; Jones' father thought Jemison's precautions were for show, that if whites wanted him dead he would be dead; Jemison compromised with whites so whites saw him as a means of keeping the black community in line; more on Jemison's security measures; Jones' ideas for progress were at odds with black community leaders like Jemison and B.V. Baranco who wanted to compromise; Jones didn't understand why private money was raised in the black community for a swimming pool that the city would take over; Judge Favrot's criticism of Jones' "hare-brained" ideas; Jones wanted all city parks integrated, not for the city to build new parks for blacks; Gordon Kean backed Jones' stance on declaratory judgment; Jones' trying to explain that compromising with white city leaders was like letting the opposing team call your plays; if Jones' criticized Jemison too much, it would divide the community and he wanted to avoid that; plaintiffs of the golf course case; people active in the First Ward Voter's League like Gus Young; Jones integrated the bar association, explains how one was admitted to the state and local bar associations; bar examiners scrutinized exams of black law students; many people flunked the bar exam because they were nervous; person who scrutinized Jones' exam was named Heard; Heard ranked Jones highly and shared that with his professors; Dupuy Anderson was Jones' closest ally but Anderson was less diplomatic; Anderson dealt with a lot of trouble because his wife looked white; Jones never had a cross burned in his yard but did face threats, his office and car were bombed; teacher pay equalization suit took place while he was in the service;

Tape 800

Malcolm Lagarde sent Jones money as a gift; Jones deposited it at American Bank in Lagarde's name; later Jones went to withdraw money and the teller gave him \$500 extra; Jones put the money aside knowing a mistake had been made; a year later the bank called him and wanted the money back, he returned the same bills in the same envelope; the deposit for Lagarde and this extra \$500 were meant to test his honesty; interview ends.

RECORDINGS: 16 (451, 452, 451, 452, 481, 482, 508*, 509, 510, 511, 605, 606, 677, 678, 799, 800)
(* Tape 508 original cassette is damaged, no audio)

TOTAL PLAYING TIME: 17 hours, 29 minutes

Session I	1 hour, 41 mins	
Session II	1 hour, 58 mins	
Session III	2 hours, 46 minutes	
Session IV	2 hours, 10 minutes	(estimated, Tape 508 is damaged)
Session V	2 hours, 24 minutes	
Session VI	2 hours, 9 minutes	
Session VII	2 hours, 49 minutes	
Session VIII	1 hour, 32 minutes	

PAGES: 708

Session I	65 pages
Session II	65 pages
Session III	107 pages
Session IV	77 pages
Session V	96 pages
Session VI	69 pages
Session VII	147 pages
Session VIII	82 pages

OTHER MATERIALS: Correspondence (3 pgs)

RESTRICTIONS: None

(Expired restriction: "The interview may be used only with the permission of the interviewer until January 1, 2005.")