



*The Gift of the
Paul R. Jones
Collection*



One of the oldest, largest and most complete holdings of African-American art in the world—the 1,000 piece Paul R. Jones Collection—has a new home at the University of Delaware.

The collection, now showcased in Jones’ Atlanta home and in exhibitions across the country, includes works by such noted artists as Charles White, Herman “Kofi” Bailey, David Driskell, Elizabeth Catlett, Earl Hooks, Leo Twiggs, Stanley White, Jacob Lawrence, Romare Bearden, P.H. Polk and Selma Burke, who created the image of Franklin Delano Roosevelt that appears on the dime.

“The University of Delaware is truly privileged to enjoy the friendship and support of Paul Jones, whose collection is magnificent,” UD President David P. Roselle said.

“We are so very pleased and honored that, in the University's outstanding programs in art history, art conservation and museum studies, as well as its leading-edge technologies, Paul Jones has seen an appropriate home for his collection,” Roselle said. “Mr. Jones believes art should be made widely available for the purposes of education and enjoyment, and we share and are committed to implementing his vision.

“We particularly look forward to using it to foster relationships with a wider public, to include our colleagues and students at historically black institutions, including Spelman and Morehouse colleges in Atlanta.”

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From hallmarks of the early civil rights movement like Selma and Watts to the Peace Corps and Watergate, Paul Jones has moved quietly and effectively behind the scenes of some of the most important events in recent American history.

Blessed with the timing of *Forrest Gump*, he has seen history unfold firsthand and been a part of it. Graced with all the charms of James Bond, he has—at the urging of prominent leaders around the nation—used his finely honed negotiating skills to defuse many a crisis.

As the new millennium dawns, Jones stands poised as a quintessential role model—soft-spoken, urbane and erudite. He can discuss everything from Hank Aaron’s batting average to Stanley White’s evolution from painting to sculpture, and he knows how to get things done.

It’s been a long and fulfilling journey from his childhood in an Alabama company town to his current status as one of the country’s leading collectors of African-American art.

A Diamond in the Rough

Paul Raymond Jones was born on June 1, 1928, to Will and Ella Jones. The family lived in the Muscoda community of Bessemer, Ala., a mining camp owned by the Tennessee Coal, Iron & Railroad Co.—a subsidiary of U.S. Steel. “We had a company store, dispensary, school, baseball team, you name it,” Jones recalls. “It was like a big family made up of people from rural Alabama—tenant farmers, people who worked the cotton and corn fields. Some might say a form of slavery still existed in the South, but Bessemer brought some sort of relief from that.”

The Jones family included Ella’s four daughters from her first marriage to a

man who was killed while working in the mines. Paul, who was the beloved baby of the family, says his first recollection is of his mother and her award-winning flower and vegetable gardens.

“My mother was the sweetest, kindest, most loving woman I ever knew. Year after year, she’d win the camp prize for the best flower garden. She’d go out nights to move the hose and soak the flower beds to their roots. Then, she’d come in and we’d sit on the porch swing,” he says. “Because of her, I still enjoy gardening and the beauty of flowers.

“My father,” he says, “was most skilled in diplomacy. He came out of an era when, to be effective, you had to get along. I watched him during the labor turmoil in Bessemer. He was accepted and respected on both sides. The labor union went after him to work for them, and the company offered him a position, too.”

The early days of unionization were difficult and sometimes frightening to an impressionable, young boy.

“When organized labor moved into Bessemer, there was strife. Half the workers were loyal to the company and the other half said they needed better working conditions. I can remember the sound of bullets hitting the tin roofs of the houses we and our neighbors lived in. You’d hear 40-50 rounds every night. I remember seeing bloodied men being brought into the dispensary.”

Jones also recalls the night union activists were waiting to accost his father, a former mining contractor who produced more iron ore for the company than anyone else—as he crossed over the bridge that separated the camp residences from the mines.

“They waited and waited,” Jones recalls. “Then, an acquaintance of my father’s went up and asked them who they were waiting for. They said, ‘Will Jones.’

“‘Oh,’ the friend said. ‘Didn’t you just see that woman go by in the red

outfit, with the red hat? Well, you just missed Will Jones. That was Uncle Bill in the red!”

Before the labor unions came in, Jones says, his father went to work in the coal mines of West Virginia and would visit cities like Chicago seeking a better life for his family. He returned to Bessemer when the TCI mining company offered him a “community relations job.”

“He was the only black who worked out of the offices,” Jones says. “Every Friday night, he would go into the camps. They had their share of bootleggers, and he’d do a run through to make sure there was some order. Everyone knew him and loved him. People would call out from one house to another, ‘Hey! Uncle Bill, come and have a drink with us!’ I was Uncle Bill Jones’ boy and that made me someone special.”

Will Jones was quite a hunter, who enjoyed a rare, interracial friendship with the local company sheriff and deputy. They would go hunting together often, sometimes to a farm of 600 acres owned by Ella Jones’ brother. Jones also has memories of his father taking him hunting and of teaching him to shoot. “Bessemer still had shooting galleries in those days,” he recalls. “My father could shoot backwards, using a little mirror!”

Polished Up North

On matters of education and child rearing, Will Jones sometimes found himself outvoted by his wife and her four daughters. Such was the case when Ella made up her mind that young Paul should go north to school.

“When I was in fourth or fifth grade, we went to New York City to see the World’s Fair,” Jones recalls. “We stayed with my father’s son from his first marriage. Well, my mother was impressed by the school system up there. When we came back, she and my sisters, who were much older and teaching

school at the time, huddled and all decided that I should go to school in New York. My father didn't want me to leave home, but he was outvoted.

"In the fall, they packed me up and put tags on me from head to toe—sewn on both sides of my suit—and I took the train into Penn Station. My brother, who was supposed to meet me, wasn't there. A porter took pity on me and cut all the tags off, as they were attracting a bit of attention, and then at the end of his shift, took me to my brother and sister-in-law's house in the Bronx. We rode the subway, and I was amazed at how New York City could go from the light of day to dark night and back again in the blink of an eye, as we went from station to station.

"Soon, I lost my southern accent and picked up a northern 'brogue,' and when I would return home in the summer, people would gather around just to hear me talk. That helped me learn to live in two different necks of the woods."

By high school, Jones was living at home again, playing football and running track, making good use of his highly competitive nature. In his senior year, he was chosen to take a series of statewide academic exams and scored in the top 3 percent of all students in the state, earning an academic scholarship for college. He also was awarded an athletic scholarship. Up until this point, his encounters with racism hadn't left many scars, but all that was about to change as he headed off to college.

Jim Crow Strikes

After high school, Jones received a scholarship to Alabama State University, where he was president of the freshman class, president of his fraternity pledge club, halfback on the football team and played the drum in the marching band. After two years, he decided to try and get into law school

at the University of Alabama.

Initial responses to his queries were encouraging and cordial.

On Jan. 23, 1947, the law school dean wrote to Jones,

We have received your letter of Jan. 12, and we shall send you a copy of our Law School Bulletin as soon as it is ready for publication. If you desire additional information, please write us again.

Later, as Jones completed his undergraduate education at Howard University in Washington, D.C., the law school changed its mind, and a letter from the dean of admissions, dated Feb. 4, 1949, had a decidedly different tone:

We recognize that it is entirely conceivable that the Supreme Court of the United State can say to the State of Alabama that it must either provide, in a separate institution for colored people, opportunities for the study of law equal to those being provided for white people or, as an alternative, admit colored people to the institution maintained by the State for white people, assuming that the applicant can in every case meet the entrance requirements in force at the institutions maintained by the State for whites.

As you may know, machinery is provided in this state through Mr. E.G. McGehee of the State Department of Education, to assist colored students who desire to engage in the study of law to obtain opportunities for entering high class institutions located elsewhere which accept colored students. It is hoped that you will see your way clear to avail yourself of the opportunities thus afforded which will enable you to obtain a law degree in a high class graduate institution comparable to the Law School of Alabama.

While this may be gratuitous, I am adding that we at the University of Alabama are convinced that relationships between the races, in this section of the country at least, are not likely to be improved by pressure on behalf of members of the colored race in an effort to gain admission to institutions

maintained by the State for members of the white race. On the contrary, we feel that inter-racial relationships would suffer if there is insistence that the issue be joined at this time. The better elements of both races deplore anything that tends to retard or jeopardize the development of better relationships between the races. For these reasons, therefore, we hope that you can persuade yourself not to press further your application for admission here.

With his plans for a law career dashed, Jones stayed at Howard for a year of graduate work. Then, with funds running low, he decided to return home.

Early Government Experience

*B*ack in Bessemer, young Jones first worked as the executive of the Birmingham Interracial Committee of the Jefferson County Coordinating Council for Social Forces, what was then known as the Community Chest.

The position allowed him to recognize some of his political aspirations with the powerful and highly visible appointment.

His duties included serving as a specialist in race relations and community organization and acting as staff to a 50-member blue ribbon committee—of 25 blacks and 25 whites.

He acted as a liaison to nonprofit, municipal, county and state officials in the areas of health, education, welfare, housing, employment, transportation and law enforcement. He coordinated the first, highly visible statewide race relations institute ever held in Alabama on the all-white campus of Birmingham Southern College and worked successfully to provide minority groups access to public facilities and services.

Unfortunately, the White Citizens Council forced funding cuts, and Jones' position was eliminated. Disheartened, he decided to go into business for himself.

The Trendsetter

“I bought a building in downtown Bessemer from a black undertaker and opened up a package store...sold beer,” Jones says. The state ABC store pretty much controlled liquor sales, and a beer store next to it controlled the majority of the rest of the business. So, on pay day, I’d go stand near the store and say to the existing customers, ‘Hey! Did you know there’s a brother selling beer—got his own package store?’ Then, after giving them a card, I’d get in my car and rush back to my store, just in time to jump over the counter and greet them saying, ‘May I help you?’

“My place became one of the biggest businesses in Bessemer. I noticed that guys who had been overseas in the armed services had developed a taste for imported beer. So, I started a fad, selling the first imported beer in Bessemer. Sales sky-rocketed. I later became a sub-distributor for major beer companies, selling to small outlets nights and weekends.”

It wasn’t long, however, before politics beckoned.

Political Pearls

“It was difficult to grow up in the state of Alabama and have any serious interest in politics and not be part of the Democratic Party, as the South was for so long a one-party system,” Jones says.

“I had registered to vote when I came back from Howard University. I still have the poll tax receipt. Back then, folks had such limited funds that a poll tax kept many people from voting. Often, people who were running in hotly contested races would seek out the small black vote. But, they wouldn’t do it openly for fear of alienating white voters.”

In the early 1950s, Jones was attending a presidential black political caucus

in Montgomery, Ala., when a reporter for the Associated Press happened to ask him which candidate he planned to support. Jones replied that he just might run himself if that's what it took to change some of the planks in the party platform for the benefit of people of color. "We need to get our message out to the convention," Jones told him.

A surprised Jones found that the article quoting him about a possible run had been picked up by AP affiliates across the country. Before it was discovered that Jones was too young to run for president, a preliminary committee had been formed to support his candidacy. It was the first time a black was seriously considered a viable presidential candidate.

Local democrats were quick to notice Jones, and, in 1952, he was invited to Washington, D.C., by powerful U.S. Rep. William Dawson of Chicago, vice chair of the Democratic National Committee—the first black to hold the position. He urged Jones to work for Adlai E. Stevenson's presidential campaign. Jones would seek a presidential appointment if Stevenson was elected. Jones took an active role in the race, especially since Alabama Sen. John Sparkman was Stevenson's running mate. While the ticket lost, Jones made a number of political contacts on the national level that were important as he pursued his career.

His next job was as a probation officer in the Jefferson County Juvenile and Domestic Relations Court in Birmingham. As he handled delinquent, dependent and neglect cases and sat as referee in domestic relations cases, he also found time to lobby the local federal district court for a position. When that didn't pan out, due to race, he left the court system and went into business for himself—a move that would have him rubbing elbows with leaders of the civil rights movement.

Integrating a Segregated Birmingham

“A. G. Gaston, one of Birmingham’s most powerful, ground-breaking businessmen, was owner of a new restaurant and lounge in Birmingham, and I agreed to lease it,” Jones recalls. “People warned me not to do business with Gaston. They said it was a David and Goliath situation—that Gaston would always come out ahead—but I decided to do it. I left his name on the restaurant and lounge marquees and menus, but I wrote ‘Paul’s’ boldly above it. Suppliers would call and say, ‘Is this Gaston?’ and I’d say, ‘Yes, would you deliver tomorrow and bill me at the end of the month?’ They would all agree, and that way I never had to borrow money or use any of my own to get the business up and running.”

It was at about this time that the famous Montgomery bus boycott was taking place.

“There was talk of the Southern Christian Leadership Conference coming to Birmingham,” Jones says, “There was some resistance among some blacks in the city, led by A.G. Gaston. They said we didn’t need outsiders, that we could solve our own problems. A group of leaders would meet weekly in a local church and would discuss which stand we wanted to take.

“One week, they called me and indicated that the next meeting was going to be a showdown. They felt that if Gaston didn’t go along with the majority, there might be a run on his savings and loan association. They were going to consider canceling insurance policies with his insurance company, withdrawing business from his funeral home and shutting down the local business school that his wife was operating.

“I went to this showdown meeting, listened a while and then walked very deliberately up to the front. I stressed to them that there was just too much at

stake for us to be bickering. That put a bit of a damper on any explosion that might have taken place, and the way was open for the Southern Christian Leadership Conference to come into Birmingham.

“My restaurant and lounge (and the motel in which they were located) was the only place in town where civil rights activist whites from the North—those helping the SCLC—could stay and eat. Despite segregation ordinances, I fed both blacks and whites without incident.

“When the national news media began airing footage of police using dogs and hoses to subdue black demonstrators, it turned the tide of the movement. The SCLC held its first national convention in Birmingham, across the street from my business. They contracted with me to cater the event to an integrated audience. In spite of the fact that we had a mysterious fire in the restaurant that day, we pulled it off without a hitch.

“Then, King and other movement leaders moved into the motel and took their meals at my restaurant. They were in and out—Martin Luther King, Wyatt T. Walker, Andy Young, Hosea Williams and many others. Some of my regular customers would now order their food ‘to go’ because of my ‘activist’ clientele and fear of consequences.”

Of all the people he met during that time, Jones says he was most impressed by a young minister, the Rev. Wyatt T. Walker.

“I consider him an unheralded hero of the civil rights movement. I believe he’s now pastor of a church in New York. Sometimes, I find it interesting that people run for office on the basis that they ‘knew’ Martin Luther King, that they ‘marched’ with him or were ‘with him’ when he was assassinated. Another young minister from Birmingham, Fred Shuttlesworth, took his children, day in and day out, to enroll in a whites-only school. He was jailed often, but he was a real hero with the Alabama Christian Council. He finally went to court and prevailed.”

And, finally, it was time for Jones to go back to court, too.

The West Coast Beckons

Nudging the local federal court for an appointment finally paid off for Jones. In 1963, the chief probation officer called. He said with his integrated caseload that he still didn't see any way he could bring him, a black, onto his staff, but he had received a call from a colleague in San Francisco who was considering putting a black on his staff. Jones was recommended for the job. It was a whole new adventure for him, working in San Francisco as a federal probation officer and attending the University of California to work on a doctoral degree.

It was a post he would hold with distinction for nearly three years.

Making a Difference

In San Francisco, a high-powered team came through recruiting people for the newly created Community Relations Service, an arm of the Department of Justice and Commerce, charged with bringing about compliance with the nation's new civil rights legislation. Jones was hired immediately, and he flew to Washington for a one-day briefing. The next day, he was dispatched to the country's hottest spot—Selma, Ala.

“When I got to Selma, I couldn't find the other federal team members. It turns out the team was in Greensboro, where they were attempting to settle a conflict. Jim Clark, the infamous Selma sheriff who had led troopers across the bridge to block the attempted march to Montgomery, remembered me. I went to his office seeking information on the federal workers' whereabouts.

In talking, the sheriff suggested that, if Paul Jones had been there handling

negotiations from the beginning, there would have been a different Selma story. Local lawmen felt they had been double-crossed by the president's representative, former Florida Sen. Leroy Collins, the first member of the Community Relations Service in Selma. He had apparently promised things to both sides and couldn't pull them off. Clark thought the Selma story might have been written differently if we had been assigned there earlier

"I soon became the mediator between the sheriff's office and the members of the Community Relations Service. I also became the first black to register and spend the night in the Holiday Inn in Selma. Eventually, I was part of the team that brought federal registrars to Selma and Dallas County to register blacks to vote."

The Community Relations Service was a quietly effective agency, Jones said, that recognized that often Southerners favored doing business with blacks from the South more than whites or blacks from the North.

"Key to my approach was to give everyone a way to comply and save face. For instance, in Birmingham, the courthouse had elevators marked 'white' and 'colored only.' A group of people was going to take concerns to the county government— a potentially explosive situation."

Before the meeting, Jones went up to the commission chair and talked to him, suggesting that he might seek to resolve the issue quietly to avoid adverse publicity. The chairperson told Jones to give him a few days to look into it and then meet with him again.

"When I walked in the building for the second meeting, I noticed a nice little clean spot on the wall where the sign used to be," Jones said. "I went up to the chairman's office and he took the sign out of his desk drawer and handed it to me. He'd had a janitor quietly take down the sign. It was taken care of quietly and effectively. That's how states that have had Confederate flags flying over the capital could have taken care of things today."

Jones also was called in to mediate problems in Natchez, Miss., where blacks were boycotting downtown stores and businesses.

“This was serious business. Charles Evers, brother of Medgar Evers, and some ministers would have people report at mass meetings in the churches and give out names and the telephone numbers of persons who had been observed breaking the boycott. Often, members of the congregation would call them late at night. They organized coffee talks in people’s homes to get the word out about the boycott and to strategize. Mamie Mazique was magnificently effective in providing leadership.”

The Natchez Chamber of Commerce members met with Jones searching for an easing of the boycott and asked him to seek interpretation of the demands of “freedom now.”

Basically, Jones knew they wanted the stores to hire blacks in cashier positions and they wanted black customers addressed like white customers—called Mr. and Mrs. They also wanted blacks on the police force and in the sheriff’s department.

“Along with the boycotting group, we developed a list of 10 demands, and I met with the Chamber of Commerce representatives again. I’d been given a list of five ‘must’ demands, and these were agreed to immediately, with the promise to investigate the other five later. We were able to break the impasse. It was a win/win situation that resulted in better jobs for blacks and a restoration of business for merchants. Two solid men, the Abrams brothers, helped reach these solutions.”

But, by now, trouble was brewing outside the Tuskegee Institute.

“In downtown Tuskegee, an older man in his 70s got into an argument with a student buying gas. The service station operator shot the student. I was called in with my friend and partner, Fred Miller, an ‘old redneck’ sort of guy. More than 1,000 Tuskegee Institute students wanted to march to the town square

and pay tribute to their slain brother, but the highway patrol, police and sheriffs weren't letting them in town, fearing destruction of property and damage to businesses.

"The president of the college apparently had tried earlier to handle the matter, but he had been shouted down, discredited. Some reportedly called him an 'Uncle Tom,' and he had left the scene of the confrontation.

"We drove to the scene and I walked around among the students, and it didn't take long to figure out who the leaders were. I took them aside and found out they wanted to march downtown. I suggested they might accomplish their goal by walking quietly on the sidewalks, two-abreast in an orderly fashion. They said officers wouldn't allow that. I talked to the head of the highway patrol. "'We've got to protect the merchants,' he said, and I suggested to him that he insist on them marching on the sidewalks. e'd said they'd never do that. Well, they did just that, with a police escort. We had our march.

"Everything went well—until one of the students decided to sit down in the town square, and others followed suit. So, the police came to me. I asked 'What's the matter now?' I negotiated with the students again, and soon broke the impasse. They walked peacefully back to the campus.

Later, the president of Tuskegee, dealing with an emotional and divided faculty, called a summit meeting of faculty and local leaders and requested that Jones and Miller attend.

"It's interesting," Jones says. "The secretary went in to announce us and told the president, 'Mr. Jones and Mr. Miller are here. Mr. Miller is white, and Mr. Jones is black.' He said he'd speak to the head of the team. When I went in, he had his back to me, looking pensively out the window, and he turned and said, 'Hello, Mr. Miller.'

"At the meeting, it was decided to honor a one-week moratorium on

activity to calm things down until we could talk to everyone and meet back to make consensus recommendations. Afterwards, I said to Fred, 'Let's not make efforts to talk to anyone in particular, just come back with some appropriate recommendations. We basically know what they need.'"

And, that's what they did.

"We returned to the table with the president, faculty and community leaders, and I said, 'Now, we've talked to just about all of you and here are our recommendations based largely on those talks.' There was relief, and they agreed to all the suggestions. When we left the conference room, everyone was convinced that we had talked to everyone but them, and thus came the solutions."

During that week between meetings, Jones and Miller ate in at least two formerly whites-only restaurants.

"One night, we'd been working non-stop. It was about 2 a.m. and we were hungry. The nearest safe places to eat were restaurants 40 miles away in Montgomery. We'd heard of a 24-hour café and truck stop on the outskirts of Tuskegee, but the rumor was that they had machine guns inside and would gun down any blacks who set foot on the premises," Jones says. In spite of that, Jones and Miller boldly decided to give it a try.

"I wasn't really afraid. When you live in that milieu, you have to learn to operate in it," he explains.

The two went up and knocked on the restaurant door. A white woman answered it and asked, "What can we do for you boys?" She yelled toward the kitchen, "Nellie! Whip up a fresh batch of biscuits for these boys!"

Emboldened by that experience, the next day, the two decided to try another whites-only restaurant. This one was located downtown off the square and was frequented by local folks stopping in for coffee and breakfast and to talk.

“We walked in, and things got a little quiet,” Jones says. “Eventually, a waitress come over and we had decent service. I suggested we leave a good tip—2 or 3 dollars each. In fact, a few days later, one of the guys on the city council with whom we had a good relationship said we had put the rest of them in an awkward spot. He said as soon as we left, the waitress discovered the tip, held up the money and yelled, ‘Look at this tip! You guys drink coffee here 365 days a year and never leave anything—not one red nickel!’”

Jones was highly regarded by his superiors at the Community Relations Service and was their choice for work in many troubled hot spots around the nation. In Greensboro, Ala., he met with the mayor and others to resolve problems stemming from blacks attempting to march to town daily. The highly quoted local publisher aided in things coming together. Jones later called him “Cousin.”

In Bogalusa, La., when an armed group calling themselves the Deacons marched daily downtown, Jones was dispatched to handle things. When he couldn’t get a room in either of the city’s two motels, the FBI filed suit and, based on Jones’ efforts, the motels were ordered to integrate by the U.S. District Court.

When riots broke out in the Watts section of Los Angeles, it was Jones who was quickly dispatched to assess the situation and negotiate between the Community Alert Patrol, a watchdog group of activists monitoring the activities of the local police and assisting blacks in Watts. Police, in turn, ticketed the “patrol” excessively. Jones’ efforts brought resolution—peacefully.

Although he got a sustained superior performance award and commendations from Attorney Gen. Ramsey Clark, Jones found promised promotions slow in arriving and was classed two grades lower than comparable whites in the agency. Eventually, he resigned from the Community Relations Service.

The Collector

He next went to work for the highly touted Model Cities Program, administered by HUD and started under the Johnson administration. His first assignment was to Atlanta and it was there, in the mid-1960s, that Jones began to develop an interest in art collecting.

Ben Apfelbaum, who curated the exhibition “Paul Jones Collects” at the Tubman Museum in Macon, Ga., writes, “Early in the ‘60s, Paul Jones bought his first art at a low-end shopping mall—three small scale prints—one each of works by Toulouse-Lautrec, Degas and Chagall. He then bought three unstained frames, a paintbrush and paint to prepare them for his walls.”

On the heels of that first purchase, Jones learned about Hale Woodruff and the national juried show of African-American art at Atlanta University.

“The Atlanta University annual event was of immense importance for the field in general, and in the case of Paul Jones, for the collector as well,” Apfelbaum writes.

Although it was tradition for the university to purchase the work judged best of show, other sales were rare, and it became tradition for organizers to call Jones to let him view both the juried art and the works that had not been selected for the show.

Over the years, both his collection and his reputation grew, and soon artists were beating a path to Jones’ door. During those years, as he decided to focus on young and mid-career African-American artists, Jones says he was part collector and part social worker.

“During the 20 years that I have known him, Mr. Jones has been more than the source of next month’s rent or the next meal, but also the sole provider of a reason why, at a critical moment, an artist decided to continue in the

profession,” Amalia Amaki, artist and art historian, wrote in the Tubman catalog.

“For an artist, being in the Paul Jones Collection is meaningful, whether your reputation is local, regional or national. In addition to countless opportunities to have your work appear in exhibitions mounted from the collection nationwide, presence in his home alone offers tremendous exposure of the work of an artist to museum staff, gallery owners, art historians, fellow artists and other collectors,” Amaki writes.

In his own words, Jones says, “Early on, I had to determine a focus for my collection and sought to fill the gap created by museum that were not acquiring art by African Americans. With the exception of a blockbuster African-American show once every five years or so, American galleries were not including the works of artists of color in their exhibitions.

“I decided to focus on those artists—to give their art work exposure and, hopefully, impact their futures.

“Pretty soon, I had art on my walls, in closets and under the beds. Before I knew it, I had a couple hundred pieces, then I had 500 pieces and now, heavens to Betsy, here we are with 1,000 pieces of art—drawings, paintings, three-dimensional works and a large body of photography.

“I’ve loaned my art frequently, so others have had their appetites whetted to collect. It’s given artists exposure and made some of the galleries more inclusive. One of my goals has been to see African-American art woven into the fabric of American art so that at places like Christie’s and Sotheby’s these works can bring their just due.”

As any collector might, Jones winces when he talks about “the one that got away.”

“One year, someone introduced me to a new artist who wanted to go home for the holidays and needed an airline ticket. He came over and unrolled his

canvasses and said ‘I’ll give you any two for a round-trip ticket to California,’” Jones recalls.

The collector replied, “Give me three, and you’ve got a deal.” Although the bargaining continued, the artist held fast.

“Well, that was the bird that got away,” Jones laments. “Later I went to California, and there in the window of a gallery, was one of the canvasses I didn’t get. Many years later, I bought some of his works, but I didn’t get the early ones. That was artist Koffi Bailey.”

More Government Service

Professionally, he began to develop the citizen participation component of the Model Cities Program and went on to become one of the country’s first directors of the demonstration program in Charlotte, N.C., one of the first cities awarded funds.

“I like to think that the work we did back then was the effective catalyst in helping Charlotte become an All-American City and the banking center that it is today. We had some very innovative approaches to service delivery: free child care, free neighborhood bus service, a public boarding school where students would be inside and off the streets with structured times—eating, sleeping, studying properly and watching only appropriate television programs.

When HUD called all of the directors of the Model Cities Programs together in Washington, Jones defeated the Chicago Daley Machine director and was overwhelmingly elected the first national president of the organization. In that position, he traveled throughout the country, speaking about the Model Cities Program and writing several published articles on its potential for inner cities.

From there, Jones became national director of the Civil Rights Division of the U.S. Department of Transportation's Highway Safety Program and was detailed to the White House in domestic affairs. Shortly after that, he received an appointment to the Peace Corps staff.

Foreign Service

When Jones became interested in the Peace Corps, politicians struggled to find a spot that would accommodate a black professional. He had turned down offers to serve in the African region. They eventually settled on Thailand, where Jones served as deputy director.

He studied Thai in D.C. and at the University of Hawaii's language school and then went to work. He was soon embraced by the members of the staff and the volunteers and more importantly by the country's ministers of government and their teams.

While on that assignment, Jones was offered the directorship of the Fiji Islands program, but at the same time, with the 1972 presidential election looming, he was approached by the Committee to Re-elect the President (CREP). Jones was about to be an eyewitness to history once again.

The Nixon Years

"The committee to re-elect was interested in getting an increased portion of the black vote," Jones recalls. "Jeb Magruder was heading things at that time, and Attorney Gen. John Mitchell was running it out of his hip pocket while still at the Justice Department. I was interviewed by both of them." At the end of the interview, an impressed Mitchell picked up the phone and issued the order, "We've got our man! Get Jones back from Thailand ASAP!"

“The excitement was overwhelming. I hit the ground running. I settled into my office quickly. They located a stranger in the office next to mine. It was Gordon Liddy. James McCord and John Dean were already aboard. Things geared up very fast.

“I was national director of the black vote division, looking at the task of getting increased black endorsements of Nixon—not to see how many persons we could recruit for the Republican Party, but how many we could bring together to support a winner and benefit from it. If they weren’t dyed-in-the-wool Republicans, we wanted them to be Democrats for Nixon. We also targeted independents and those blacks who had previously benefited from the Nixon administration’s policies and programs, specifically those who got grants from the Office of Minority Business Enterprise (OMBE) and the Small Business Association (SBA).

“I spent time going around the country—feeling the pulse, establishing campaign organizations in each state, with the message that Nixon was going to be a winner and we should never be without access to the White House.

“Many bought my philosophy that it was time to see blacks involved in politics as contributors, not just people who received a handout for their vote. In the past, politicians of color often sought pay to ‘deliver’ votes and, as a result, there was little black influence after candidates had been elected. They had been paid off. I wanted blacks to add to the political coffers even if, as in this case, the party really didn’t need any more money.”

To that end, Jones organized the first-ever Washington, D.C., weekend gala and fundraiser specifically for black Democratic, Independent and Republican voters. Three thousand prominent blacks of all political persuasions from across the country came to the nation’s capital for an unprecedented gala weekend of political dialog, parties and a black-tie dinner.

“For the first time in a presidential election, people of color were paying en

masse for a fundraiser and committing to endorsing a candidate upon returning to their own state,” Jones says, “In the end, the president won with a somewhat broader base and made some few appointments from among those who were involved. It was a turning point in American politics.”

Jones felt that two things were important—money and votes. And, he and his team delivered them both.

One memory of his days at the committee to reelect involves Jesse Jackson.

“One day, I was called to the Executive Office Building of the White House to discuss a late-breaking event. Word had just been received that Jesse Jackson was considering supporting Nixon. My reaction was that we didn’t need his endorsement. McGovern was already losing, and I felt we had the election in the bag.”

Apparently, when McGovern flew into Chicago campaigning, he went directly to visit Mayor Daley and not Jackson, who had been the leading man in the state getting delegate votes for him. Jackson was disappointed with McGovern.

Jones and White House staffers visited Jackson, and he indicated that, if the administration would respond with certain grants to his People United to Save Humanity (PUSH organization, he would consider making a statement favorable to Nixon or needling McGovern.

“That is so typical of what takes place in politics. It’s part of the unwritten history of many campaigns. There were a number of persons active in the civil rights movement who sought to jump on the Nixon bandwagon in exchange for some sort of benefits.”

In the end, when the reluctant Jones did join in the visit with Jackson, he urged him to re-assess his commitment to McGovern and to consider switching active support to Nixon.

Understandably, when people find out Jones worked at a high level in the

1972 campaign, they are full of questions about the various players in Watergate. Jones did testify at the Watergate hearings, but had no direct involvement in the break-in.

Does he know who Deep Throat was?

“I saw groups of people with the president at the White House and at Camp David,” he says, with a wink. Whether he seriously thinks Deep Throat was there is anybody’s guess.

“The times I entered the Oval Office and interacted with the president, I found him receptive, willing to listen. He came across as candid and honest. Much of the time, I worked with special assistant Robert Brown and developed recommendations that would work their way up toward the president’s level. Brown was a strong professional.”

Jones says he respected James McCord and still has regard for him, and that he had limited contact with John Dean, finding him to be a “person of decency and strength.”

He had some contact with John and Martha Mitchell and has a thank-you letter from Mrs. Mitchell, congratulating him on the history-setting weekend he organized for black voters.

“It turned out to be the last note Martha Mitchell ever wrote on her special stationery,” Jones says. “Shortly after that, there were reports that she had been silenced.”

Of Erlichman, Haldeman and Colson, Jones says, “There was always the feeling that whatever was done was done in the name of what’s good and best for the country. It seemed they often sheltered the president and made decisions that sometimes did not go all the way to the top. The presidency is so big and so complex. It’s always more than just one man; it’s also the people he appoints. A president is no stronger and no better than the people with whom he surrounds himself.”

Home again

After the election, with the specter of Watergate hanging over the country, Jones accepted a nomination to be southern regional director of a federal agency in Atlanta. “I was offered the San Francisco regional office first, but I wanted to return South,” he says.

“I was the regional director of ACTION—the umbrella agency for all federal volunteer programs—ACE, the Peace Corps, VISTA (Volunteers in Service to America), SCORE (the Service Corps of Retired Executives) and UIA (Universities in Action).

“I worked closely with mayors and governors and heads of non-profit organizations, making sure they had technical assistance for grant applications. I developed one of the two largest ACTION regions around.”

He also was charged with elevating the use of federal programs in areas of the South that were used to turning their backs on the federal involvement.

Mississippi, for example, had blocked the placement of VISTA program volunteers when the first white volunteers from the north became what one governor considered too friendly with the blacks with whom they worked. Jones had a major meeting with a later governor, who immediately agreed to set machinery in motion and to clear the way for the program. Jones had accomplished the impossible. The Washington headquarters of ACTION was elated with his success.

“There were lots of things we were able to do to bring blacks and whites together in ways that hadn’t worked before,” Jones says. “I like to think we laid some of the groundwork that carried over as southern mayors and governors integrated their staffs, and blacks gained non-traditional positions and elective offices.

Many first-time black mayors sought technical assistance from ACTION, and Jones worked closely with the Southern Conference of Black Mayors.

“So many times, when a white mayor was voted out of office and a black would come in, he’d find all the files gone, all the money spent,” Jones says.

First-time black mayors needed help writing grants and in understanding the infrastructure of towns and cities. Jones came to the rescue.

When the federal government proposed doing away with ACTION, Jones was the key member of an influential team that lobbied Congress to keep it. Although his efforts were successful, on a personal note, Jones found himself excluded by white congressional liaisons who were arranging the hearings. As a result, he threatened to leave the agency.

The P. H. Polk Connection

During a stint as public information officer for Tuskegee Institute, Jones met and became friends with the famous photographer P.H. Polk. Polk was Tuskegee’s official photographer and had spent a lifetime chronicling its famous faculty—including George Washington Carver—and the many dignitaries who visited the campus. He also had numerous photos of the famous Tuskegee airmen.

Polk sparked Jones’ interest in photography as an art form and was commissioned to make a set of his prints of George Washington Carver for his new friend. Today, Polk photographs, along with others by prominent American photographers, comprise a significant part of the Paul Jones Collection, as Jones also has been a patron of local and regional photographers.

After an interim job as regional director of the Minority Business

Development Agency, Jones opened Paul Jones Enterprises, a real estate company based in Atlanta, in 1978.

A run for Congress

In 1982, Atlanta Republicans needed a candidate for a newly created congressional seat. They approached Jones, who was running for the state house at the time. He entered the congressional race at the last minute and made Georgia history as the first black to win a primary over two old-line white candidates—after a forced runoff election. He also became the first black candidate ever endorsed by a state Republican chairman.

“I had to face the incumbent, whose district boundaries had been changed,” he says. “I saw it as an opportunity for Atlanta blacks, who traditionally voted Democratic, to support my candidacy and gain influence on the national level. But, most blacks at the time were very anti-Nixon and anti-Republican. There also was an Independent in the race who took away some of the support I would have had, but in the end, the election had made its mark.”

The Paul Jones Collection

Since then, Jones has concentrated on increasing his real estate holdings and, of course, his art collecting, for which he is nationally recognized.

“The art has set the conditions on where and how I live,” he says. “Over the years I’ve had to juggle funds. I was not born rich, and my jobs made me comfortable, but didn’t make me rich. I’ve made most of my sacrifices with cars. Instead of new ones, I bought late model used ones and put the savings toward buying more art.

“I’d have been content to live in a two- or three-bedroom condo in the heart of Atlanta on Peachtree, but for the art, I needed to have more wall space. As the collection has grown, the home I lived in for the last 10 years, the one I always thought would be my last house, grew too small. My current home is considerably more ideal in terms of wall space. I can see my art as often as I want. I can see much of my art when I wake up; I can commune with it each evening. All of us can live under one roof—like family.

“One of the things I seldom talk about is the effect the art collection has had on me. The sensitivity that has gone into creating each work, the interactions I’ve had with artists, have made me a much more sensitive, caring, loving person, with a strong appreciation for art in all forms.

“It’s led me to serve on the boards of arts-related organizations. Now, instead of just having a black person speak during Black History Month activities, we have people of color on boards of directors and on acquisition committees. We’ve achieved a great deal, and we can achieve a great deal more.”

Jones has served and currently serves on the boards of museums, historical societies and arts funding agencies, including the Georgia Museum of Art in Athens, the Marietta-Cobb Museum, the High Museum of Art, the Atlanta History Center and the Metropolitan Atlanta Art Fund .

Many regard him as the Rockefeller and Mellon of the African-American art world. He lobbies constantly to see the art world weave African-American art into American art, with the desired results of art historians writing about it, scholars and students studying it and the public enjoying it.

Jones is dedicating his UD donation in memory of his parents and his beloved sisters and in honor of his only child, a son, P.R. Jones, a computer programmer and trouble-shooter, who divides his time between homes in Los Angeles and Atlanta.

Paul R. Jones

EXPERIENCE

1978–Present	Paul Jones Enterprises	Atlanta, Ga.
1984–85	U.S. Department of Commerce <i>Regional Director, Minority Business Development Agency</i>	Atlanta, Ga.
1978–79	Tuskegee Institute <i>Director, Office of Public Information</i>	Tuskegee, Ala.
1973–79	ACTION (federal agency) <i>Regional Director</i>	Atlanta, Ga.
1972–73	ACTION <i>Staff Assistant for Domestic Affairs</i>	Washington, D.C.
1970–71	United States Embassy <i>Peace Corps Deputy Director</i>	Bangkok, Thailand
1970	U.S. Department of Transportation <i>Director, Office of Civil Rights, National Highway Safety Bureau</i>	Washington, D.C.
1968–70	National Model Cities Association <i>Executive Director, National Chairman, Model Cities Program</i>	Charlotte, N.C.
1967–68	U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development <i>Citizen Participation Adviser detailed to Washington, D.C.</i>	Atlanta, Ga.
1965–67	U.S. Departments of Justice and Commerce <i>Community Relations Specialist</i>	Washington, D.C.

1963–65	U.S. District Court <i>U.S. Probation Officer</i>	San Francisco, Calif.
1962–63	Paul Jones Public Relations & Restaurant	Birmingham, Ala.
1957–62	Juvenile/Domestic Relations Court <i>Probation Officer and Referee</i>	Birmingham, Ala.
1954–56	Birmingham / Jefferson County <i>Executive Secretary, Plan/Coordinate First Statewide Race Relations Institute</i>	Birmingham, Ala.
1951–53	Johnson Publishing Co. <i>Public Relations Field Representative</i>	Chicago, Ill.

EDUCATION

1973	M.A., Governor's State University
1964	Doctoral Work, University of California
1963	Federal Probation Training Institute, University of Chicago
1958	Alcohol Studies Program, Yale University
1955	Race Relations Institute, Fisk University
1951	Political Science Study, Queens College
1949 - 50	M.A. Coursework Complete, Howard University
1949	B.A., Howard University
1945 - 47	Alabama State College
1945	Graduate, Dunbar High School, Bessemer, Ala.

RESEARCH AND PUBLICATIONS

Collaborated in the Publication of Art Exhibition Catalogs for Marietta/Cobb Museum of Art, Emory University/Schatten Gallery and University of Delaware Museum Gallery, 1990-99.

"Key Man in Model Cities Strategy," Health Education at Work, Volume 20, 1969.

"Model Cities: Approaching the American Dilemma," Journal of Social and Behavior Sciences, 1968.

"Police-Community Relations Study," Office of the Mayor, Tuskegee, Ala., 1966.

"Alcoholism: The Deviant Behavior Problem," Alabama State Teachers Association Journal, 1960.

"The Attitudes of Informed Opinion Concerning the Working of The Legislative Reorganization Act of 1946," 1950.

BOARDS AND COMMITTEES

Atlanta History Center

Georgia Museum of Art

Metropolitan Area Art Fund

University of Delaware Visual Arts Visiting Committee

Atlanta Judicial Commission

High Museum of Art (former)

Twentieth Century Art Society (Past President)

Multicultural Committee (Past Chair)

Art Papers (former)

Park Pride (former)

Stillman College Trustee (former)

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