

COMMEMORATIVE SUPPLEMENT

MILWAUKEE COURIER



VOL. LXI NO. 28

"THE NEWSPAPER YOU CAN TRUST SINCE 1964"

SATURDAY, JULY 26, 2025

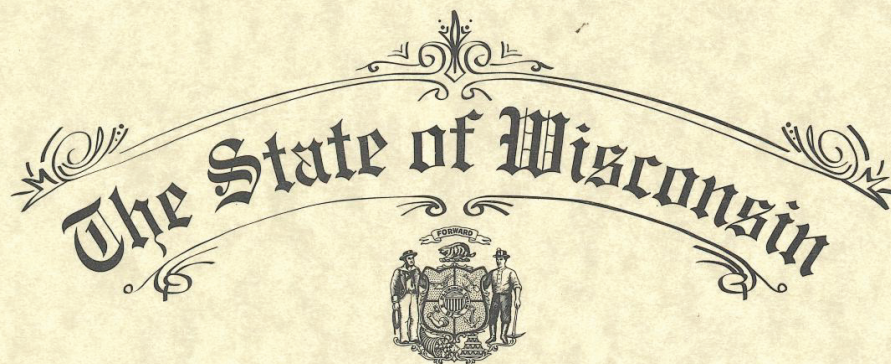
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— CELEBRATING —

Dr. Ferrel W. Jones

1939 – 2025



**OFFICE OF THE GOVERNOR****IN MEMORIAM****HONORING*****Dr. Jerrel W. Jones***

WHEREAS; Dr. Jerrel W. Jones, esteemed journalist, pioneer, and friend to many, passed away in June at the age of 85; and

WHEREAS; a pioneer at the forefront of local media, Dr. Jones proudly served as CEO of Courier Communications Corp., the operating corporation responsible for the Milwaukee Courier, WNOV, and Madison Times for more than six decades; and

WHEREAS; committed to uplifting the voices of Black Wisconsinites, Dr. Jones was the first Black man to concurrently own a radio station and newspaper, and under his leadership, Courier Communications Corp. successfully established itself as a trusted and engaging source of news, information, and entertainment; and

WHEREAS; further, Dr. Jones was recognized in 2022 with an honorary Doctor of Humane Letters degree from Cardinal Stritch University for his numerous contributions to his field; and


WHEREAS; a man of many talents, Dr. Jones was a certified pilot, gifted chess master, avid swimmer and lifeguard, black belt in Tae Kwon Do, and possessed a keen aptitude for politics and civil rights, always remaining involved in local, state, and federal affairs; and

WHEREAS; a leader, mentor, and inspiration to many, Dr. Jones will be remembered for his wisdom and willingness to support and uplift others, and the impact of his contributions will continue to live on for generations to come;

AND THEREFORE, I, Tony Evers, Governor of the State of Wisconsin, do hereby send my deepest condolences to the family and friends of Dr. Jerrel W. Jones.

He will not be forgotten, and he will be missed.

DONE ON THIS 17TH DAY OF JULY 2025.


TONY EVERS
GOVERNOR



250 E. Wisconsin Ave. STE 950
Milwaukee, WI 53202-5818
(414) 297-1140



2245 Rayburn Building
Washington, D.C. 20515
(202) 225-4572

July 27th, 2025

Dear Beloved Family of Jerrel W. Jones,

It is with a heavy heart that I write to extend my deepest condolences on the passing of the iconic Jerrel W. Jones. I am proud to have called him my friend, and I speak for many when I say that his loss will be profoundly felt. Mr. Jones had a rare gift for connecting with others and always made those around him feel valued, heard, and seen. His presence impacted any room, and his legacy of strength and integrity will continue to inspire all who had the privilege of knowing him.

Mr. Jones leaves behind a legacy that will endure. He will be remembered as a profound innovator and trailblazer within our community. As the founder of *The Courier*, Mr. Jones used his wisdom, intelligence, and compassion to shine a light on the needs of the Black community, advocating for justice, amplifying voices, and building a powerful sense of connection and belonging in Milwaukee. I am honored to celebrate his enduring mentorship and unwavering love for his community.

Beyond his public impact, Mr. Jones' love for his family and friends was steadfast. He consistently made time to nurture those relationships with kindness, generosity, and warmth. His devotion to his loved ones was evident in all he did; he remains a cherished husband, father, family member, and friend to many.

On behalf of the people of the Fourth Congressional District of Wisconsin, my staff, and myself, we honor the life, leadership, and service of Jerrel W. Jones. May you find comfort in knowing that he was respected and cherished by many, and that the impact of his dedication will continue to be felt for generations.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "Gwen Moore". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "Gwen" and last name "Moore" clearly distinguishable.

Gwen Moore
Member of Congress
GM/CM



Executive Proclamation

WHEREAS, Dr. Jerrel W. Jones, a Milwaukee journalism trailblazer and bold leader in our community and beyond, passed from this life at the age of 85 on June 5, 2025; and

WHEREAS, Dr. Jones launched the Milwaukee Courier in 1964, later adding the Milwaukee Star and Racine Courier, and eventually winning the Russwurm Award, the most prestigious and highest award of the National Newspaper Publishers Associations' (NNPA); and

WHEREAS, active in the Civil Rights Movement from its onset, Dr. Jones was instrumental in political campaigns from local offices to the presidency for decades, generously sharing his insight and perspective with leaders from the business sector and civil and social organizations alike; and

WHEREAS, in the 1970s, Dr. Jones expanded his company beyond print to the airwaves, purchasing WNOV 860 AM, becoming the first Black owner of a newspaper and radio station in the United States and later adding a simulcast of 106.5 FM, and was one of the first to give airtime to Marvin Gaye's album "What's Going On," as well as promoting the art of thousands of Black artists who were unable to break into mainstream markets; and

WHEREAS, Dr. Jones continued supporting Milwaukee County's Black community by producing the Negro Business Directory, as well as working in conjunction with the state to publish Wisconsin Tourism Guides until 1990; and

WHEREAS, a true renaissance man, Dr. Jones somehow also found time among his impressive professional ventures to pursue his many passions, including earning his pilot's license, becoming a nationally and internationally recognized chess master, being an avid swimmer, and achieving a black belt in Tae Kwon Do; and

WHEREAS, Milwaukee County extends sincerest condolences to the loved ones of Dr. Jerrell W. Jones, an essential figure in Milwaukee's political and media landscape and a trailblazer for civil rights and equality for Black Milwaukeeans, whose leadership and presence will be deeply missed; now, therefore

I, DAVID CROWLEY, County Executive of Milwaukee County, do hereby proclaim this day, July 30, 2025, to be

Dr. Jerrel W. Jones Day

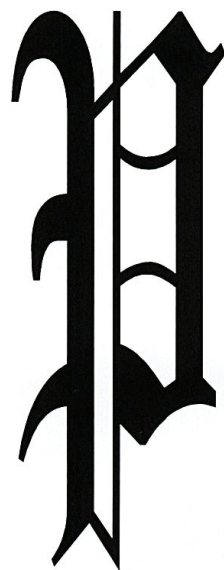
across Milwaukee County, calling on our community to honor his legacy by embracing bold leadership, advocating for equality, and fostering innovation for generations to come.



David Crowley
Milwaukee County Executive

Office of the Mayor

CITY OF MILWAUKEE



Proclamation



hereas:

The City of Milwaukee joins family, friends and community members in celebrating the life and legacy of Dr. Jerrel W. Jones; and,

WHEREAS, Dr. Jerrel W. Jones was a renaissance man who pursued his pilot license, became a chess master winning national and international matches, was an avid swimmer and earned a black belt in Tae Kwon Do; and,

WHEREAS, Dr. Jerrel W. Jones launched the Milwaukee Courier in 1964, later adding the Milwaukee Star and Racine Courier, eventually winning the Russwurm Award, which is the National Newspaper Publishers Associations' (NNPA) most prestigious and highest award; and,

WHEREAS, Dr. Jerrel W. Jones produced the Negro Business Directory and began publishing Wisconsin Tourism Guides in conjunction with the state until 1990; and,

WHEREAS, Dr. Jerrel W. Jones, in the 1970s, expanded his company beyond print to the airwaves, purchasing WNOV 860 AM, becoming the first Black owner of a newspaper and radio station in the United States and later adding a simulcast of 106.5 FM; and,

WHEREAS, Dr. Jerrel W. Jones has been a strong presence in shaping both politics and culture over the last six decades, being one of the first to give airtime to Marvin Gaye's album "What's Going On," as well as promoting the art of thousands of Black artists who were unable to break into mainstream markets; and,

WHEREAS, Dr. Jerrel W. Jones was active in the civil rights movement from the onset and was instrumental in political campaigns from local offices to the presidency for decades, generously sharing his insight and perspective with leaders from the business sector and civil and social organizations alike; and,

NOW, THEREFORE, I, CAVALIER JOHNSON, Mayor of the City of Milwaukee, do hereby express gratitude and appreciation for the extraordinary manner in which Dr. Jerrel W. Jones lived his life.

CAVALIER JOHNSON
Mayor

May the legacy of Dr. Jerrel W. Jones live forever—in the people he led, the lessons he taught, and the change he sparked.



**Your leadership guided us.
Your sacrifices strengthened us.
Your teachings shaped us.
Your legacy lives within us.**

FROM THE FRIENDS OF 2ND STREET

Teachings that will forever be with us...

“

In all your gettin', get
some understanding.

”

“

Anything the mind can
truly believe & conceive, it
can indeed achieve.

”

“

Gratitude gives you the
latitude to face life with
the right attitude.

”

“

A man is what he thinks
about — his thoughts
shape his world.

”

A poem Dr. Jones carried in his heart and
recited to so many of us from memory.

If you think you are beaten, you are
If you think you dare not, you don't,
If you like to win, but you think you can't
It is almost certain you won't.

If you think you'll lose, you're lost
For out of the world we find,
Success begins with a fellow's will
It's all in the state of mind.

If you think you are outclassed, you are
You've got to think high to rise,
You've got to be sure of yourself before
You can ever win a prize.

Life's battles don't always go
To the stronger or faster man,
But soon or late the man who wins
Is the man who thinks he can.

-Walter D. Wintle

PRO SECURED SYSTEMS

Pro Secured Systems honors the life and legacy of Dr. Jerrel W. Jones. A champion for truth, progress, and the power of community, Dr. Jones led with purpose and passion. His legacy will continue to inspire us to lead with integrity and serve with heart.

With gratitude and respect,
The Pro Secured Systems Family

SECURING
TODAY,
PROTECTING
TOMORROW



Contact Us
414-839-6175

WWW.PROSECUREDSYSTEMS.COM



DR. JERREL W. JONES: LIFE AND LEGACY

Dr. Jerrel W. Jones was born in Milwaukee, Wisconsin in 1939. He was raised by his mother Mary Ellen Shadd Strong, his father, Jesse Jones and step-father Lawrence Shadd. He spent his childhood in Milwaukee, Oshkosh and Racine. He attended North Division High School in Milwaukee. During his high school years, he also worked various jobs including lifeguarding. Soon after high school he married and started a family.

Growing up, he was exposed to business ownership through his mother and step-father. His mother began her life as a serial entrepreneur by publishing the Milwaukee Defender newspaper and the Wisconsin Negro Business Directory. His step-father owned a number of businesses including a movie theater and grocery store. Influenced by their successes, he began publishing the Milwaukee Courier Newspaper in 1964.

The Milwaukee Courier quickly became known for its award-winning editorial integrity and bravery. The Courier was also known as a training ground for journalists who would become lauded locally and nationally.

In 1972, his company Courier Communications purchased WNOV Radio Station from the Chess brothers, thus making him the first Black man in the United States to own both a newspaper and a radio station.

In addition to the Milwaukee Courier and WNOV, he operated several other businesses throughout his life which included other newspapers (The Milwaukee Star and the Racine Courier), directories (Negro Business Directory in 1965 and Wisconsin Tourism Directories throughout the 1980's and 1990's.), a magazine (Black Family Magazine), a lounge (the Towne House) and real estate in Wisconsin, Illinois and Georgia.

Throughout his life and career, he was also heavily involved and influential in the political world. He strongly impacted local, statewide and pres-

idential campaigns for six decades. In addition to his business and political accomplishments, he was also a master chess player who won national and international matches, a black belt in Tae Kwon Do and he also pursued his pilot license.

Jones often credited his success to

his role models and support system. He would say that Earnestine Jones, his wife of 66 years, is most responsible for these accomplishments and his longevity. A close second was his mother, fathers, 15 uncles and his mentors, S.B. Fuller and Dr. Carlton Goodlet. He would also cite the many

teachers throughout his life and, of course, all of the people who worked with and for him over the past six decades.

Dr. Jerrel W. Jones leaves a legacy of resiliency, generosity, bravery and ingenuity that is unmatched.

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Building a community of possible.

U.S. Bank strives to make a positive impact in the community. That's why we support community events that bring us together for the greater good. When we work together, anything is possible.

U.S. Bank is proud to celebrate the accomplishments and legacy of Dr. Jerrel Jones.



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We honor the incredible life and work of Dr. Jones, a pioneer in journalism and news media in Milwaukee. We are grateful for everything he did and honor his life's work that shined a light where others would not look.

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THE DEMOCRATIC PARTY
OF WISCONSIN

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A TRIBUTE TO A TRUE FRIEND

By Dorothy R. Leavell
Editor and Publisher
Crusader Newspaper Group
Chicago Crusader, Chicago, IL
and Gary Crusader, Gary, IN

There are times that the words flow freely when writing about someone you know and have known for more than five (5) decades. That has not been the case when I have struggled to say goodbye to a friend, a real friend.

That's exactly what Jerrel Jones was – A REAL FRIEND!!

I met Jerrel when we were both young Black newspaper publishers. I had become publisher of the Crusader newspapers upon the death of my husband in 1968, and he had become publisher of the Milwaukee Courier being inspired by his moth-

They decided that the young publisher to be elevated in NNPA would be Jerrel Jones. Quickly he was elected 1st vice president and shortly after serving as vice president he decided to run for president.

er, Mary Ellen Shadd. He had a lot of nerve because his mother was a tough act to follow. Her reputation as a savvy businesswoman was well known around the country, Chicago included.

Little did I know that the apple did not fall far from the tree. It was around 1970 when I first met Jerrel. It was a National Newspaper Publishers Association (NNPA) meeting on the west coast. He came with several associates and employees, all young like him and already exhibiting innovative ideas and running a successful publication. It was at an outing to the Grand Canyon that Jerrel found out I had a real fear of flying. By the time we deplaned at the Grand Canyon

he needed to dry the arm of his shirt which I had held tightly as my hand sweated profusely on the small airplane, and we found ourselves seat mates on the flight.

Before the end of the conference, we found ourselves joined by another young publisher named William (Bill) Lee, publisher of the Sacramento

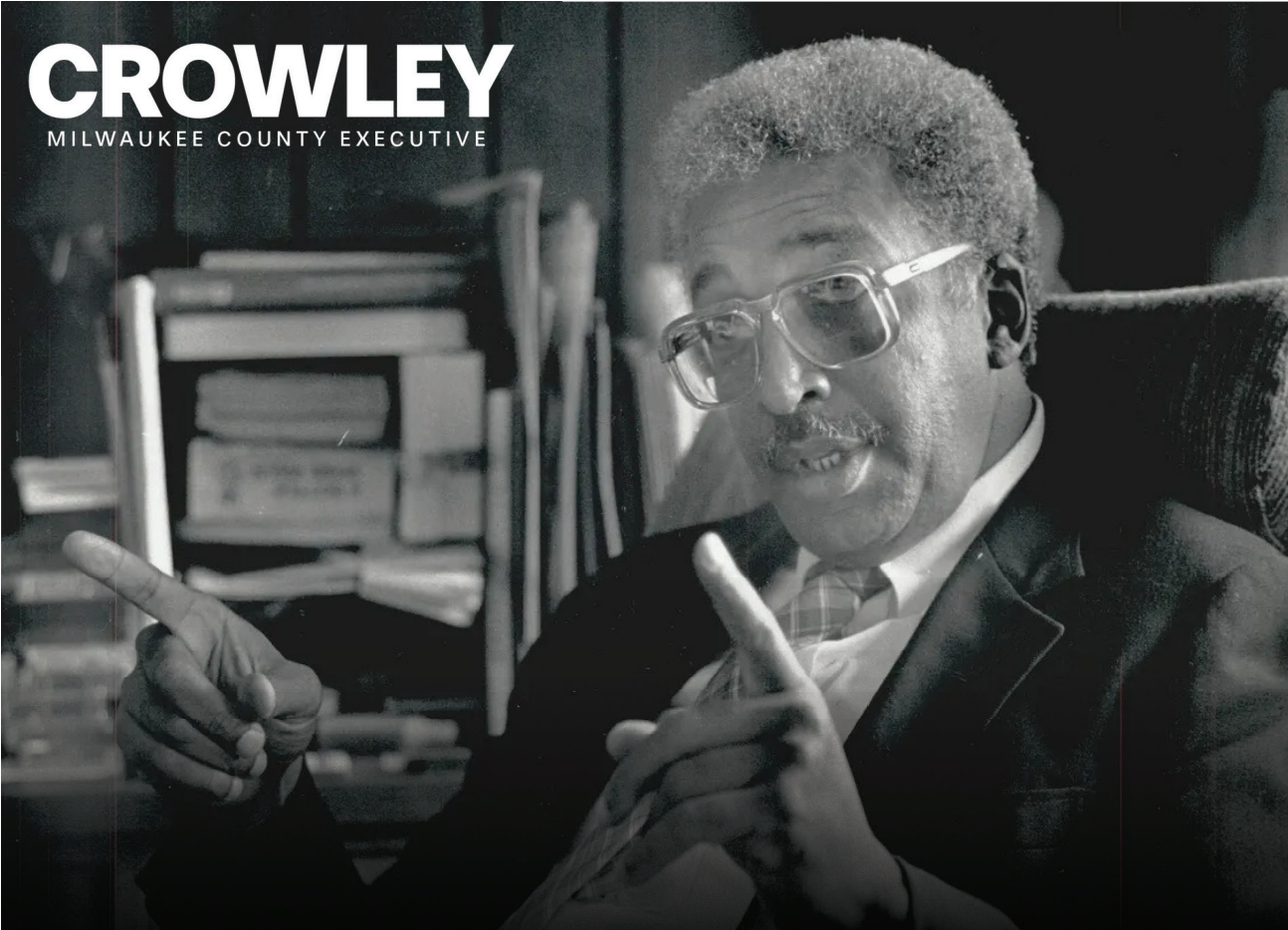
Observer in Sacramento, California.

By Thursday evening of the conference we sat by the pool disillusioned and wondering if we would have an opportunity to fully participate in the organization. You see, we were all leaders, and we thought we could contribute something to an established organization of outstanding

and well-known publishers.

Before we left the pool that evening it seemed the established and well-known publishers decided to pick one of the three of us for a fast-track leadership position. They decided that the young publisher to be elevated in NNPA would be

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CROWLEY
 MILWAUKEE COUNTY EXECUTIVE

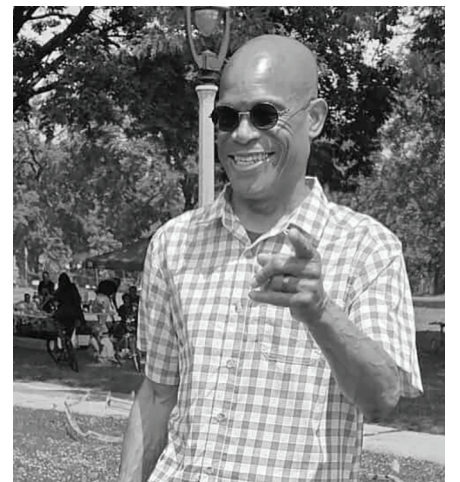
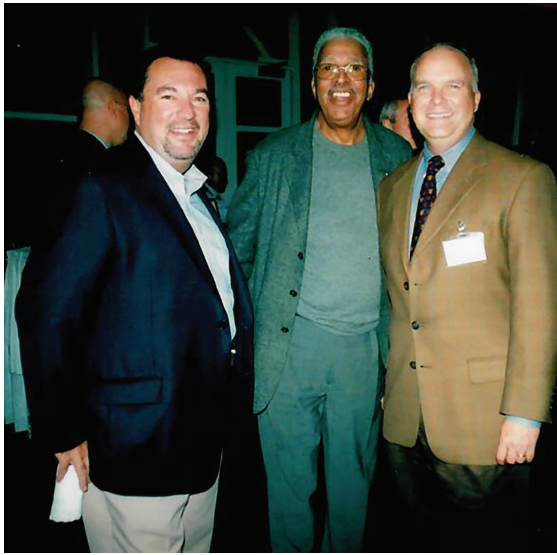
Jerrel Jones believed in this community and made it possible for so many of us to find our voice and our power. He loved Milwaukee enough to demand more from it—and from us.

Mr. Jones, you've earned your rest. But your voice, your work, and your spirit are still with us. And we will carry them forward.

-David Crowley

Paid for by Crowley for County Executive.







GINGRAS THOMSEN & WACHS LLP LAWYERS

Gingras, Thomsen & Wachs, LLP is honored to participate in celebrating the life of Dr. Jerrel W. Jones, a media pioneer committed to the truth, to the fight for true equality, and tirelessly fought for the African American community. Dr. Jones reflected the best of our mutual humanity, and his passing leaves a profound tear in the fabric of our lives.

**Thank you, Dr. Jerrel W. Jones,
for all you have done for all of us!**

**Bob
Gingras**



**Mark
Thomsen**



**Paul
Kinne**



**Dana
Wachs**



ALL IN TO WIN®



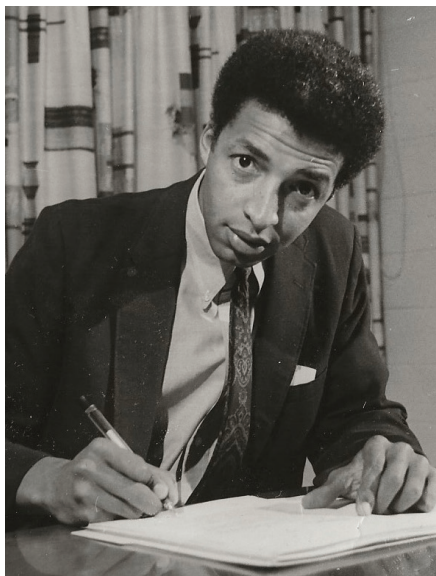
In Memoriam
Dr. Jerrel Jones



“A powerful voice for truth, justice, and Black Milwaukee. His legacy endures.”

— Mayor Cavalier Johnson

The Evolution of Journalism in Print Media



The history of journalism spans the growth of technology and trade, marked by the advent of specialized techniques for gathering and disseminating information on a regular basis that caused, as one history of journalism surmises, the steady increase of “the scope of news available to us and the speed with which it is transmitted”. Before the printing press was invented word of mouth was the primary news source.

The word-of-mouth transmission of news was highly unreliable and died out with the invention of the printing press.

Newspapers (and to a lesser extent, magazines) have been the primary medium of journalists since the 18th century.

The Milwaukee Courier used Cold type typesetters, who could type the text without worrying about the letter spacing, save copy to a tape drive and print out later, and other similar not-quite-computing advantages.

As the body text process improved, so did the process for producing headlines, ad text, and so on. There were a variety of machines that used photo-negative fonts, with lenses to change sizes, to create headlines,

and such.

The computing industry was beginning to blossom, and it went from paper tape with holes to floppy disks, to building phototypesetting that calculated lines.

Most newspapers used their dark room, the Milwaukee Courier advanced to using a dark room.

In the past 60 years technology has improved with the transmission of news and the Milwaukee Courier has

continued to advance with the times, informing the Milwaukee community and its readers.

Milwaukee Courier continues to be known as “The Newspaper You Can Trust”.



The first step can be hardest.

We're here to make it easier.

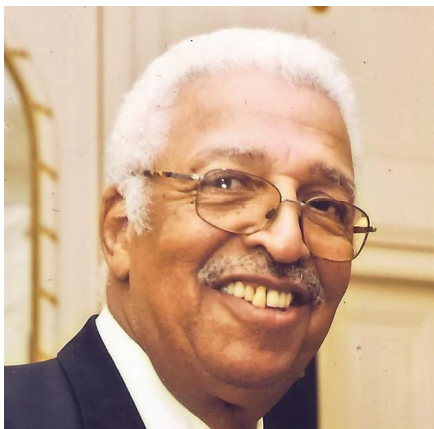
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Dr. Jerrel Jones dedicated his life to ensuring our communities were rooted in access and care. His legacy calls us to continue the work.



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ASCENSION WISCONSIN IS HONORED
TO PARTICIPATE IN CELEBRATING THE LIFE OF
DR. JERREL W. JONES

A Conversation With Founder Jerrel Jones, a Visionary, Activist and Maverick 60+ Years-Strong

By Sydney G. Barnes

We sat down with living legend Jerrel W. Jones, a civil rights warrior and unparalleled media pioneer, in celebration of a 60 year long and meaningful career. A Milwaukee native, and recipient of a 2022 honorary doctor of humane letters degree from Cardinal Stritch University, Jones' largest looming accomplishment is the founding of historical Black newspaper, Milwaukee Courier.

While Jones is modest about his legacy, his 60 years of activism have been integral to the civil rights of black Americans. The impact of Mr. Jones' work and influence cannot be understated. Through his leadership of the Milwaukee Courier and WNOV, he helped develop multimedia communications industry professionals in Milwaukee and Wisconsin. Many within the African-American community have long recognized that the Milwaukee Courier and WNOV give voice to their culture. The Courier went on to earn the prestigious Rasmus Award presented by the National Newspaper Association (NNPA).

Given his strong presence in the Black community over the last six decades, he has played a major role in shaping politics and culture. Mr. Jones' interest in print media came from his mother, Dr. Mary Ellen Strong, who owned the Milwaukee Defender weekly newspaper — the only newspaper "of and by" the African-American community during her time. When asked why it's important to continue the tradition of Black news by and for Black people Jones passionately expresses how often the majority mainstream media can become clouded in ignorance, both willfully and otherwise.

He noticed how often Black people were the subject of scrutiny in news

media, while rarely being the commentators. "We are the news. We are everywhere, in everything," he declares definitively. "We need to be

the ones to tell our stories."

Jones knew from a young age if he wanted to do something right he'd have to do it himself. As soon

as he garnered readers, he used his influence for political campaigns from local offices to the presidency for
Continued on page 22

Carter Creations

**Celebrating the life and legacy of
Jerrel Jones**



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In loving memory of



Dr. Jerrel Jones

Thank you for all you did to
move Wisconsin forward.

Sincerely,
Mike Tate & Thad Nation



Gary Officials and members of the National Newspaper Publishers Association (NNPA) Site Selection Committee attends a meeting at the Gary Crusader Newspaper office in 1983. (Seated, Left to Right): Atty. Douglas Grimes, Business Partner in the Gary Sheraton Hotel, Imogene Harris, Publisher of the Gary Info Newspaper and NNPA member; Kenneth Stanley, Louisville Defender Newspaper, Louisville, Kentucky, NNPA Member and Site Selection Committee Member; Colonel Steve Davis, Executive Director of NNPA; James Holland, Deputy Mayor of the city of Gary; Dorothy R. Leavell (standing), Editor and Publisher of the Gary Crusader Newspaper, and NNPA Member; Charlene Crowell, Press Secretary to Gary, Mayor Richard G. Hatcher; Jerrel Jones, Publisher of the Milwaukee Courier, NNPA member and Site Selection Committee Member; and Indiana State Senator Carolyn B. Mosby. The first meeting in NNPA's history, was to ascertain if Gary was suitable for a NNPA Convention. An invitation was submitted two years prior by Dorothy R. Leavell and Imogene Harris, host publishers and was challenged by NNPA officials. Gary city officials gave strong support and welcomed the committee. The Committee unanimously recommended that Gary, Indiana was indeed suitable to host the 1983 convention.

A TRIBUTE TO A TRUE FRIEND

Continued from page 11

Jerrel Jones. Quickly he was elected 1st vice president and shortly after serving as vice president he decided to run for president. Not so fast young man the elders seemed to say as his campaign was not successful. While he never became President he continued to participate and support others. Bill Lee, a real suave and articulate publisher, never became the head of NNPA and frankly told me that he did not believe that I could win. Jerrel supported me in 1995 when I ran for President, and I won. I cannot recall any time that I called on Jerrell that he did not respond positively.

When I naively sought to host the convention in Gary, Indiana in 1983 Jerrel was my supporter. He traveled to Gary in a first-of-its-kind-ever Site Selection Committee and NNPA publishers came to Gary that year. It was a nearly two-year fight, and Jerrel did not falter or fail me in my desire to host the convention.

When he did not actively support me personally, he urged Carole Geary, his trusted associate to work and support me, representing the Milwaukee Courier.

We fought many other battles for the good of the Black Press. It is hard to often find such support from anyone, but as I titled this tribute Jerrel was A REAL FRIEND!!




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The Medical College of Wisconsin Cancer Center proudly joins the community in honoring the life and legacy of Dr. Jerrel Jones, an extraordinary leader whose voice shaped a movement and whose impact will be felt for generations.

Dr. Jones was more than a media pioneer. He was a force for justice, equity, and truth, a champion for Black Milwaukeeans whose influence extended far beyond the pages of the Milwaukee Courier.

At the MCW Cancer Center, we are deeply inspired by his unwavering commitment to community. As we work to eliminate cancer disparities in our neighborhoods and far beyond, we walk in the path he helped pave, lifting up every voice, confronting injustice, and building a healthier future for all.

We extend our heartfelt condolences to the Jones family and the Courier community.

His legacy lives on in every life he touched.



A Conversation With Founder Jerrel Jones, a Visionary, Activ- ist and Maverick 60+ Years-Strong

Continued from page 19
decades, and shared his insight and perspective with leaders from every business sector and civic and social organization. This attitude is emblematic of his paper's motto, 'The newspaper you can trust'. He wanted to impact his community with the plain and simple truth.

Despite maintaining print through the rise of electronic distribution, Jones is not opposed to the use of technology in his reporting, stating the effect of the internet in news is simply evolution. "We used to paint on rocks."

Jones embraces a lot about the new age of news media, however he does feel we've strayed from core values on a global scale. While frustrations with outlets more for profits than meaningful impact or sharing the truth with the general population are not unfounded, he still has hope for the next generation of young and hungry Black journalists around the country, "We make the world go round. Don't let them tell you you don't."

In Memory of *Dr. Jerrel W. Jones*

Founder of the Milwaukee Courier
and WNOV 860 AM
The first African American to own
both a newspaper and radio station.

A visionary. A voice for the people. A lasting legacy.

Thank you, Dr. Jones.
You will never be forgotten.



Thank You For Your Support

ICRC

Inner City Redevelopment Corporation (ICRC)

“Our Struggle is for Genuine Equality,
Which Means Economic Equality.”

– Dr. Martin Luther King, “Strength to Love”, 1963

*Thank you, Jerrel W. Jones, for your valuable support
for affordable housing in Milwaukee, Wisconsin!*



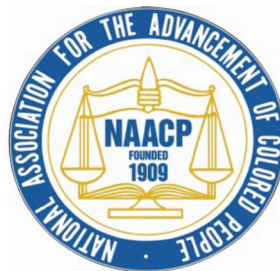
Congresswoman Gwen S. Moore
4th Congressional District of Wisconsin

PLEASE JOIN ME IN CELEBRATING HIS LIFE & LEGACY
Dr. Jerrell W. Jones

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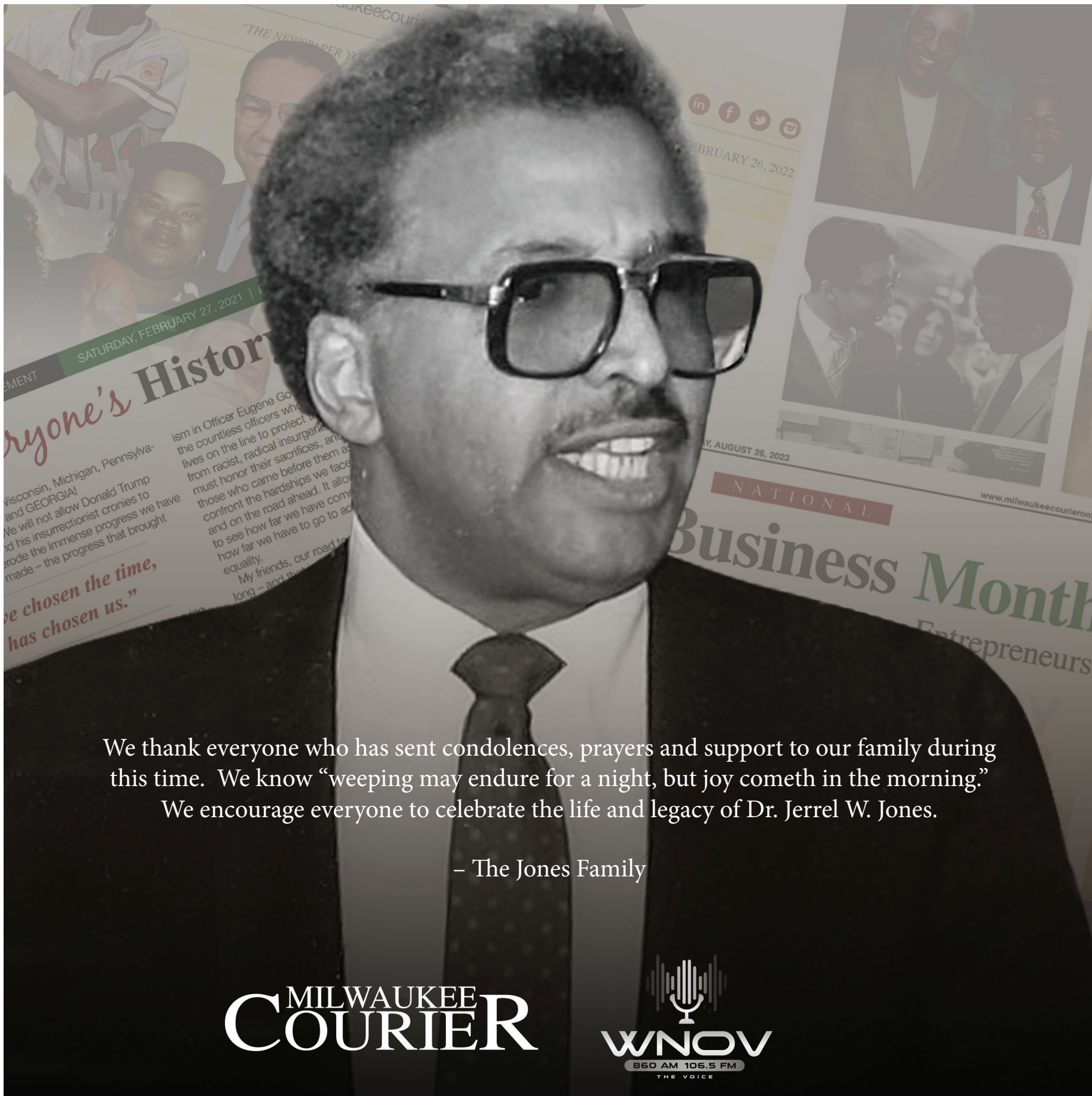
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We thank everyone who has sent condolences, prayers and support to our family during this time. We know “weeping may endure for a night, but joy cometh in the morning.”

We encourage everyone to celebrate the life and legacy of Dr. Jerrel W. Jones.

– The Jones Family

MILWAUKEE
COURIER

WNOV
860 AM 106.5 FM
THE VOICE