

The Carl D. Jones Story

At age 67, Carl D. Jones, P.E., Founder, Owner and President of Carl D. Jones & Associates, LLC of Clinton, has built an impressive reputation as the owner of a large asphalt and paving company based in Prince George's County. But he still can't think about full retirement.

It's not because of economics. Collectively, PG Contractors Inc, the paving company he purchased in 1978 and sold to Aggregate Industries in 2003, CDT, Inc., the foundational engineering and soil testing firm he started in 1991 and sold in 1996 and Jabb11, a company that specializes in the use and distribution of



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biosolids, a soil amendment and by-product of the wastewater treatment process, have earned him the right to a financially comfortable exit.

It isn't that Jones, an Upper Marlboro resident, doesn't have good backup. Jason Jones, his only child, graduated from Georgia Tech with a degree in civil engineering and has since earned a law degree and MBA from Georgia State University. Jason is currently a full time employee of his father's company. "I'll let him take over when I'm not around," Jones says of his firm's vice president.

Jones says the biggest obstacle standing between him and full retirement is Dorothy Oden Jones, the homemaker he married 42 years ago. "She won't let me fully retire," Jones says with a laugh. "She gets

upset - she says that I make her nervous if I stay in the house too long."

After watching Jones work from 4 a.m. in the morning until 10 or 11 p.m. at night six days a week for nearly three decades and after watching him pursue one business opportunity after another, Dorothy Jones has the right to question her husband's capacity for full retirement. No matter what his age, Jones is still a politically and financially savvy risk taker who surrounds himself with good advisors and who's still on the lookout for new business opportunities. He's aggressive in his efforts to bring new and varied businesses to Prince Georges County and in his push to improve opportunities for the minority firms operating there.

In 2003, he formed a partnership with an Indianapolis firm that could have given him a majority interest in PG County's Rosecroft Raceway in Oxon Hill and made him the first black in Maryland to have control of a track. That deal, along

with another one that would have given Jones part ownership of a slots casino in Maryland, never panned out. Currently, Jones has an application pending with the Surface Transportation Board that would allow him to run New England Trans Rail, a freight railroad, in the Boston area. There are other real estate deals in the making. "It's mainly real estate," Jones says. "I buy unique assets and get somebody else to manage them."

For Jones, who grew up during the Jim Crow era in Birmingham, Ala, owning his own business was a foregone conclusion. "Back then, we had such limited choices," he said. "The best way to earn money was to either own your own business or become a pro athlete," he said. Although he was a three sport athlete in high school, Jones was also good in math and science. After graduating from high school in

1958, he headed to Howard University to study civil engineering.

At Howard, Jones interacted with some of the most talented African American engineering minds in the country. After graduating in 1963, Jones worked for urban renewal programs in D.C., served in the active reserves and later became a project manager for the Federal Railroad Administration, overseeing construction projects in New York and Philadelphia.

When entrepreneurship called, Jones returned to D.C. and became part-owner of Jones and Artis Construction Co. and Performance Technology with then partner James Artis. In the beginning, Jones and Artis Construction consisted of "one truck and a couple of guys doing small paving jobs," Jones said. That was in 1971. In 1976, they purchased an asphalt plant (Bates Paving).

Business continued to expand. In 1978, Jones and Artis consolidated all their excavation, grading, demolition and paving work in the District of Columbia and Northern Virginia under the name of PG Contractors. "By 1979, we had 600 employees working on major civil public works projects from Baltimore to Atlanta," said Jones, who bought out Artis in 1981. By the time Jones sold PG Contractors in 2003, the firm was generating \$37 million in annual sales. Its reputation for doing quality work won it numerous honors, including the Maryland Highway Administration's Quality Performance Award for Paving 11 years in a row. Today, JABB11, which generates \$15 million in annual sales, markets biosolids for limited agricultural use.

Jones is a member of the Maryland Minority Contractors Association, National Society of Professional Engineers, and is on the board of directors for the Mission of Love Charitable Organization in Seat Pleasant. He also serves on Maryland's Historically Underutilized Business Council. This long time advocate shares his secrets of entrepreneurial success with other up and coming firms. "I tell them the secret to survival is to be able to shrink your company and use the resources you have when times get tough," Jones said. "You've got to anticipate the good times and the bad."