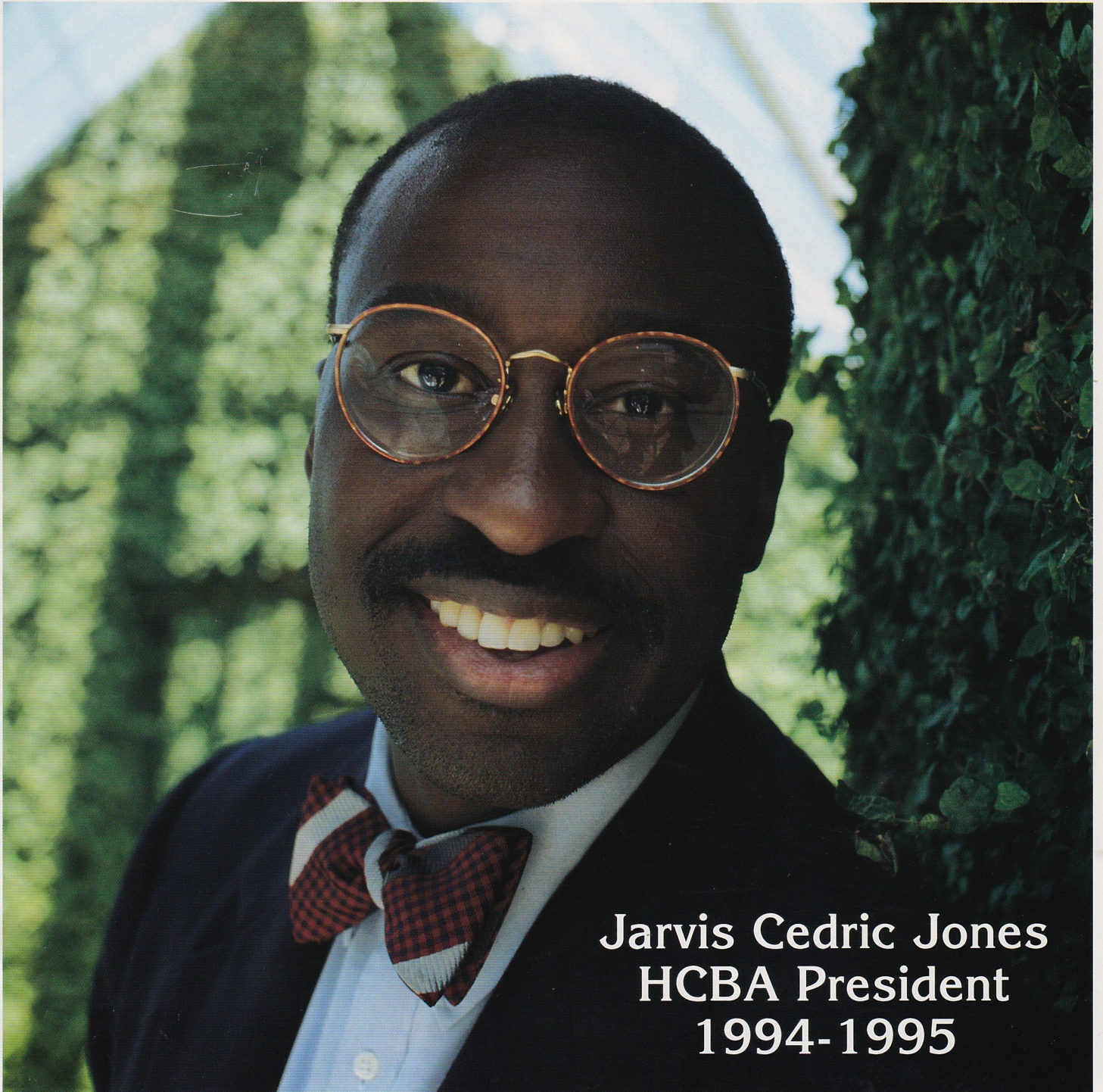


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Jarvis Cedric Jones
HCBA President
1994-1995

Jarvis C. Jones HCBA President 1994-1995

By Angela Allen

"I believe that taking myself out of inner-city Chicago and persevering to become what I am today was a true accomplishment. I am reminded of the obstacles that I had to overcome when I return home. My greatest accomplishment, however, is to come. At this point in my career, the greatest satisfaction will come from being able to return as much as has been given to me."

These words describe some of the things that have shaped, and continue to drive, the Hennepin County Bar Association's 76th president, Jarvis Jones. Mr. Jones comes to his presidency with a great vision for the bar, excitement about the law, and concern for the greater community.

THE ROAD TO MINNESOTA

Jarvis Jones was born and raised on the south side of Chicago, where he resided until he finished high school. Concerning his move to Minnesota, Jones states, "I just decided I wanted to go to school outside of Chicago. I felt there had to be a bigger world outside my Southside Chicago neighborhood." The pastor of the Lutheran Church that Jones attended in Chicago encouraged him to enroll at St. Olaf. Jones believes the contrast between St. Olaf and his upbringing in Chicago prepared him for a much different world. He graduated from St. Olaf in 1981, and from there he went on to William Mitchell College of Law.

TRAVELS THROUGH THE LEGAL PROFESSION

After graduating from William Mitchell in 1985, Jarvis Jones practiced corporate law with the United Health Care Corporation. This corporation manages HMOs. From United Health Care he went to the law firm of Fetterly & Gordon, where he practiced products liability and fire litigation. In this capacity he spent eight months in Puerto Rico, representing the San Juan Dupont Hotel, the site of a huge fire in 1986. The claim involved 97 deaths and 200 injuries. Jones remained with Fetterly & Gordon for two years, at which time he started his own practice.



Outgoing president Denver Kaufman congratulates Jarvis Jones at the passing of the gavel during the 1994 annual meeting of the HCBA.

Jones continued to work in the area of insurance defense while a sole practitioner. One of his clients was St. Paul Companies. Impressed with his abilities, the insurance company extended Jones an offer to join the company in 1991. Jones initially worked in lobbying and governmental affairs. He dealt with matters that were regulatory or legislative in nature.

More recently, Jones has crossed over to the Medical Services Division of St. Paul Companies. His tenure with the organization has been rewarding and challenging.

THE PATH TO THE PRESIDENCY — HENNEPIN COUNTY BAR ACTIVITIES

Asked how he got involved in the Hennepin County Bar Association, Jones states, "I think it seems like it was longer ago than it was. I was co-chair, along with Glenn Oliver, of the Minnesota Minority Corporate Council program. One of the organizations we reached out to was the

Hennepin County Bar Association. Through this process I got to know Jane Schoenike, the executive director of the bar association, quite well." He notes that a relationship of mutual respect developed and he felt that there was an opportunity to expand the Hennepin County Bar and get more involved in different types of bar association activities.

Jones served on the Governance Committee and ultimately became co-chair of that committee. He was elected treasurer of HCBA in 1991. In 1992 and 1993, he was "consumed" with the Glass Ceiling Task Force, which he co-chaired. During this one-year project, the committee looked at women and people of color who are affected by the "glass ceiling."

While working on the Glass Ceiling Task Force, Jones was also president of the Minnesota Minority Lawyers Association. After serving as president-elect, Jones became president of the Hennepin County Bar Association on July 1, 1994.

VISION FOR THE HENNEPIN COUNTY BAR ASSOCIATION

When asked about his goals and objectives for the Hennepin County Bar Association, Jones laid out the following:

- **To broaden the association's outreach into the Minnesota community by having it play a greater community leadership role.** Jones is interested in exploring both pro bono and nontraditional ways the legal profession can address the needs of the Minnesota community. As an example, Jones cites the successful efforts of past bar presidents Denver Kaufman, of HCBA, and Roger Stageberg, of MSBA, in putting together the Summer Youth Intern Program. In this program, over 100 high school students from inner-city high schools work for law firms and other employers during the summer to become familiar with the professional environment. Executive Committee member Denver Kaufman will serve as the liaison to the program's task force. Jones has established and will chair the Ad Hoc Community Outreach Committee to accomplish the association's further outreach into the Minnesota community. Jones says the committee will explore such ideas as establishing a "Know Your Rights" legal column in local community papers, and will also explore the feasibility of establishing a community-based lobbying initiative that would assist the community not adequately represented in the Minnesota Legislature. In addition, Jones established the Ad Hoc Legal Services Committee chaired by Executive Committee member James Baillie. This committee will assess what pro bono services are being offered in the Minnesota community and then look at what additional needs exist.
- **To strengthen the visibility of the association by growing in membership and by increasing its members active participation in HCBA committees and sections.** HCBA has more than 40 sections and committees that put on over 100 free CLE credits programs each year. Jones views these committees and sections as the "life blood" of the association. "The HCBA is truly a committee- and section-driven association assisted by Jane Schoenike's capable staff." Jones believes the association does not need any new programs to attract new members and to establish more active participation on its committees and sections. "We simply need to do a better job of promoting existing programs and services, such as our free CLE courses, free membership on committees and sections (some bar associations charge), free

subscription to *The Hennepin Lawyer*, our Lawyer Referral Service, a legal fee arbitration board, and a support staff legal placement service, among others." Jones has established the Ad Hoc Membership Committee chaired by Executive Committee member Brad Thorsen to accomplish this goal.

- **To continue the association's efforts of diversifying its membership and creating a legal system more reflective of the society we live in.** Jones states that "there can be no real or perceived justice unless all members of our society are represented thoroughly throughout our legal system." Many organizations have issued reports in the last few years, such as the Minnesota Supreme Court on how racial and gender bias affects the legal system; the Minnesota State Bar Association on the inequalities women and lawyers of color face in the legal profession; and, more recently, the Hennepin County Bar Association's Glass Ceiling Report. "The last thing we need is another committee or report on this issue. It is time for action. In 1994-95, the bar will focus on execution and implementation of the recommendations generated by these groups for improving diversity and parity." To further this goal, Executive Committee member Trudy Halla will serve as liaison to the minority and women lawyer associations and to the HCBA Diversity Committee, co-chaired by Judge Tanya Bransford and Tom Garrett.

PERSONAL INTERESTS AND PHILOSOPHY

When not participating in his numerous bar activities and representing the interests of the St. Paul Companies, Jones likes being out in nature. "I really enjoy the peacefulness and solitude of just being there. It's very relaxing to me. I am usually moving at a hectic pace and really enjoy just getting away." Jones also enjoys all sports, particularly biking, but he has not had a chance to do much of this lately.

When asked what he does with his "leisure" time, he pauses, and then notes with some surprise/concern, "Until the last nine months, my life has been filled with some type of bar-related activity. More recently, my leisure time has been consumed with my new position and wedding plans." Jones was married on June 18, 1994, to Laura Kaplan.

When asked how his personal background and experiences have affected his philosophy on life and practice of law, Jones indicates, "My parents instilled in me the premise that you must be focused, have determination, know where you want to go, and be willing to sweat to get there. Deal with the hurt and obstacles whenever



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they come, but be willing to sweat."

He believes that his parents' influence affected his ability to leave Chicago and go to a land far away called Northfield, and then on to William Mitchell. His belief in himself and his focus and determination contributed to his accomplishments. Most of his success he attributes, however, to his upbringing and the values his parents instilled in him.

JARVIS JONES: A DIFFERENT TYPE OF LEADER

Jarvis Jones believes there is some significance in the fact that he is the first African-American president of the Hennepin County Bar Association. He notes that this is an "indication of the bar's willingness and desire to open its doors to people of color. It is also a recognition by the bar that there is a need to have different faces in the legal system in order for it to work properly."

In his opinion, justice requires that people of color be involved in every aspect of the legal system. Whether they be president of the bar association, judges, bailiffs, attorneys, or social workers, all segments of society must be involved. Jones brings his fresh outlook and true concern for diversity to the bar association.

Justice Alan Page of the Minnesota Supreme Court describes Jones as "a focused leader; he has a vision of where he wants to go and a plan to get there." John Holden, an attorney at Canadian Pacific Legal Services and a long-standing colleague of Jones, addresses his commitment stating, "Jarvis is extremely dedicated; he lives by the principles of honesty and integrity, and his tireless efforts to bridge the gap between diverse sectors of the community are to be admired." The Hennepin County Bar Association has much to gain from Jarvis Jones' perspective, creativity, and vision. ■