

Anne Jones remembered for community service volunteer work

By Margaret Claiborne

Ithaca Journal- July 29, 1994

Anne Jones was a tenacious worker on behalf of human services, a stalwart of the Republican Party, and champion of the homeless.

Her contributions will be sorely missed in the Ithaca community, friends and colleagues said Friday.

The 70-year-old Jones worked on volunteer projects up until the week before her death Jan. 22 at Tompkins Community Hospital.

“She was incredibly reliable. If you wanted something done, all you had to do was get Anne involved. Sometimes heads would roll, but Anne would make things happen,” longtime friend Eva Mae Musgrave, said. “She was a unique and much-needed individual in this community, a real mover and shaker.”

One of the founders of the Human Services Coalition, Jones was active in the Ithaca community of more than 34 years on a number of boards. She was the driving force behind the Housing Task Force, which established the Red Cross Emergency Shelter for the Homeless, and helped establish the Supportive Apartments for Homeless Youth, administered by the Family and Children’s Service.

In addition, she was elected to Common Council and ran unsuccessfully for mayor and for the Tompkins County Board of Representatives.

Reflecting on Jones’ service, Jim Johnston, director of the Family and Children’s Service, said, “Anne was typically quiet and thoughtful. When she spoke, it was obvious she had thought through what she was saying. She was to the point. Her positions weren’t always admired, but she was clear about them.”

Musgrave learned a lot from Jones in their 25-year friendship, she said. “She taught me how to be patient, how to compromise, how to handle things both politically and humanely.”

But Jones was outspoken and opinionated, and she did disregard a lot of what other people thought, Musgrave said. “She and I seldom disagreed, or if we did. I didn’t say so... The bottom line for Anne’s outspokenness was the betterment of people.”

Jones’ daughter, Louise Jones, agreed. “She was a pretty even-handed parent. She did have opinions of what was right and what was wrong, though, and talking her out of that was pretty futile.”

Still, her mother wasn’t nearly as stern as she pretended to be, Jones said. She remembers how outdone her mother was when the family bought George, the golden retriever. “My father said the puppy wouldn’t grow up to be big because he had small feet and my mother just looked at him and said, ‘I know when I’m being sold something.’”

George grew up to be something just short of a Shetland pony, Jones said. She remembers overhearing her mother talking to George at breakfast one day: “And would George like another piece of my English Muffin?” she cooed.

“She was a very well-balanced person,” Musgrave said. “She was about a lot more than civic work. She made time for her family and children and friends. We went antiquing. And she was always taking people out to lunch when she thought they needed a little perk.”

Louise Jones’ earliest memories are of visits with her mother to City Hall and licking stamps and envelopes for political campaigns.

“If you were a member of the team, you were a member of the team,” Jones said. “I always had the feeling I was supposed to be doing something. If you were twiddling your thumbs, you weren’t much use... When I decided to go back to school and get my librarian’s degree while I was working, my mother supported me. She didn’t see anything unusual in that.”

Marge Dill, director of the Human Service Coalition, said Jones had a reputation of being a tough lady. “Other times when she was in the hospital, she’d be on the phone and work from her hospital room,” she said.

Jones served on the review committee for the Human Service Coalition until the time of her death. The committee’s job was to screen agency requests for funds and grants. Musgrave said Jones’ questions were especially incisive.

“At one of our meetings, Anne wasn’t there. At the end of questions period, we looked at each other and said, ‘Guess we’ll have to ask the Anne Jones question,’” Musgrave said.

In truth, it was the make-or-break question of the interview: “What will you do if you don’t get this grant?” Musgrave said.

Brenda Wallace, a friend who worked with Jones on the Women’s Community Building board and the Arts Council, said, “Anne did things so very quietly and without fanfare. She was so very loyal to the community.”

Reflecting on Jones’s contributions Dill said, “Anne Jones epitomized the volunteer for this community.”

Jones was a graduate of Vassar College and the Yale University School of Nursing. She is survived by her husband, Barclay G. Jones III of Locust Valley, and daughter Louise Jones of Philadelphia.