

December 16, 2011

Originally printed in The Hattiesburg American

## Thank you to the late Richard 'Pepper' Jones

Eddie A. Holloway

It was a shocker to learn of the death of Richard "Pepper" Jones. Over the past four-plus years, we started to talk about life issues - including matters of race, community concerns, political thoughts and hot topics of the day. I am highly interested in politics, public service and current events, especially as it pertains to issues that will enhance life for the traditionally underserved, underachieving and minority populations. Some issues of concern that I shared with Richard was his dream for higher achievement in our public schools, more efficiency in employment, public service and better life positioning for African Americans.

Neither he nor I would become too excited over singular, individual or solo accomplishments. However, any achievement and winning performances are good news for discussions; it is the collective accomplishments that will elevate the cultures and make greater impacts on communities and society. While others talked about individual successes, we talked about dreams of more productive days when we will learn of collective accomplishments in academics, widespread economic gains, more family cohesiveness, racial and class tolerance and understanding and appreciation of political opinions. There are far too many lines drawn in the sand that divides us.

We discussed at length the statewide political elections, their implications, ups and down sides, benefits and their potential sorrows. Richard was savvy, with a keen eye for predictions, foreseeability as well as risks. I think his heart was in the right place for service to others, especially for those people in need of life-building skills. It is often stated that the best of us talk the game, give lip service to topics and conditions of need but Richard "walked his talk." He knew those of us who are "smoke blowers" and those who aim to arouse and ignite the combustible flames of separation and acrimony that divide people - which are certainly not good for "progressive and great communities." The voice of reason describes him best - one of a bridge-building spirit between people.

His leadership brought people to the tables of resolution with higher-order thinking. He navigated with and between political foes and those persons of different socio-economic classes. Simply stated, he was "there" - organized and appreciative of mankind. And he was nobody's "lap dog nor stepin fetchit man." Richard understood the inner workings of the American political system.

Sometimes, I feel unheard and think that I dance to the beat of a different drum, but Richard's opinions and mine seemed to click often. He would say, "Ed, you are right on that point, but others will not see, believe nor appreciate ..." Richard knew the ill effects of the extremist viewpoints that trigger our emotions of the race issues, often saying, "That type of action will produce a major backlash that will hurt us for years to come." He and I were privileged to discuss current intentions by some that say, "We want Hattiesburg to be like Jackson." Well, Richard Jones is not here to speak of this faulty line of thinking, its risks and the ugly backlash that will last in perpetuity, but I am. I cannot think of anything more devastating for Hattiesburg! Look at every quality of life indicator in Jackson in comparison to Hattiesburg.

Hattiesburg, not the perfect city, but examine the quality of life indicators and the standards of which the residents of our city and surrounding communities live and experience. Hattiesburg is on the cutting edge of greatness! It is one of the few remaining cities in Mississippi that is intact and holding firm in high quality of livability.

The content and message of this editorial were framed prior to the death of Richard Jones, but it was fueled by his memory. I was amazed at the depth of his thoughts, insights and service.

For the readers who do not know, Richard served on the board of directors of the United Way, past president of the Lions Club, chairman of the Area Development Partnership, and president of the Forrest County Democratic Party, recognized as a friend of USM, among numerous other community organizations. Additionally, he owned and operated Richard Jones and Associates, a transportation service.

In no way is the aim of this article to present Richard "Pepper" Jones as a perfect and unmarred man, but my purpose is to attest to some of his strengths and contributions to our community. He contributed much by stepping up the plate, taking whacks at the balls that were thrown his way as well as answered the calls for public service. He filled roles, met challenges, performed duties and filled shoes that were historic and uncommon for men like him. Farewell, Richard Jones, and thanks for the many excellent jobs that you did WELL!  
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# Spokes

December 20, 2011

www.hattiesburgrotary.com

District 6840

Club Number 04003

Organized 1918

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2010-2011**
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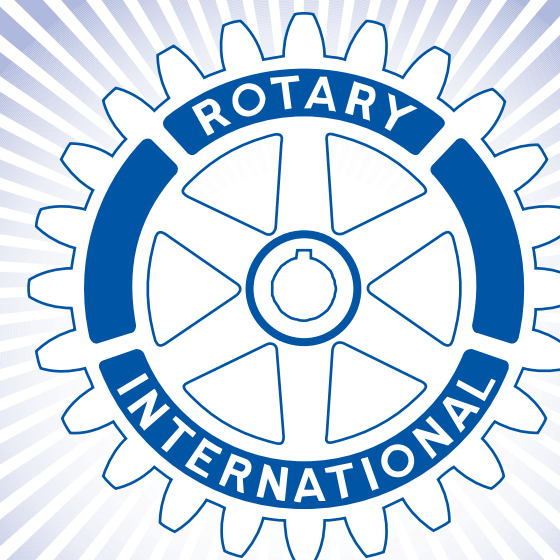
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## ROTARY CLUB OF HATTIESBURG

A CENTURY OF SERVICE

A NEW CENTURY OF SUCCESS



# 100 Years

## “SERVICE ABOVE SELF”



MINUTES FROM 12/13/11

President Robert Cummings, Jr. presided over the meeting.

Thanks to Steve Ramp, who gave the invocation, and to Mike Ratliff, who led the Club in the Pledge of Allegiance. Robert then led members in the Four Way Test. Thanks to today's greeters Chris Price, Walley Weakley, Jaclyn Adams and Steve Ramp.

Sean Priebe noted that due to the large number of visitors attending today's Christmas event that we should welcome them all with a hearty "hello" rather than taking time away from the program. They were then greeted warmly by Rotarians.

Robert sadly announced the death of Rotarian Richard Jones and passed along service information to those interested in attending. He asked that prayers be extended to Annie and the Jones family through this difficulty time.

Robert noted that a couple of additional volunteers are needed for the Salvation Army's bell ringing this Saturday. Anyone interested should see Robert immediately after today's program.

After searching throughout the building Patrick Ward was finally located. Unfortunately today's guest speaker's sleigh crash landed somewhere in the Pine Belt and he was unable to get it back into the air. With a great effort on Patrick's part the sleigh was righted and both Santa and Patrick made it to the meeting.

Santa then gave his classification talk. He basically thanked Rotarians for their generosity and noted that he was a simple toy maker that annually put twinkles in eyes and smiles on the faces of children throughout the world. He noted that Rotarians gave generously throughout their year in a multitude of methods and he was in hopes that our club could step up to the plate and help some local children who are in need of something to keep them warm this winter. He then introduced Lucy Parkman who organized today's Christmas event.

Lucy reported that through the generosity of Academy Sports she was able to purchase, at a discount, fifty-one zippered, fleece hooded jackets. Lucy reported that Janet Baldwin, Executive Director of the Oseola McCarty Youth Development Center had pro-

vided her the names and sizes of fifty-one children at the Center who are in need of a warm jacket. The jackets have been purchased and wrapped and Rotarians are now asked to buy them for \$25.00 each. The money raised from today's event will be used to pay for the jackets and to allow the club to participate in the Christmas party for the Forrest County foster children under the care of the Department of Human Services. If more money is raised than needed for these two projects, additional help to the community can be provided.

Thanks to the elves at each of the tables for helping make the purchase process simple. A total of \$1,400.00 was raised. Ms. Baldwin noted that she has seen the spirit of Christmas at work in today's meeting. Thanks to all who helped and participated.

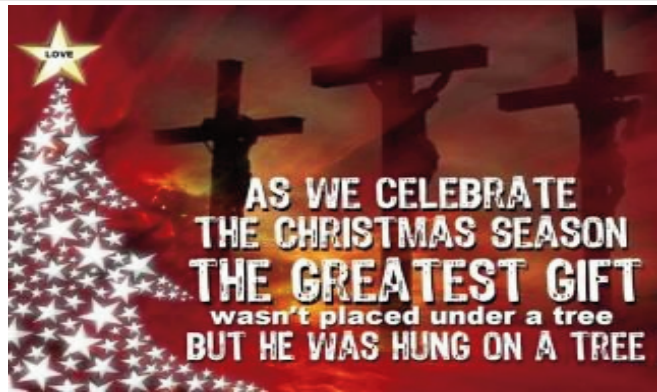
WEEKLY FOOTBALL BOARD GAME

Our football board game has had a couple of rule changes. If the winning square has not been purchased by a player the proceeds will carry over to the following week. Each week's winner will split the cash proceeds with the club which will benefit the Rotary Permanent Fund. The winner will not be announced until the end of the meeting, must be present to win. There was no winner last week so the pot builds!

MARK YOUR CALENDAR

DEC 26 NO MEETING

- Jan 3 - George Bassi w/ Lauren Rogers Museum
- Jan 10 - Carroll Brown - Haiti Mission Trips
- Jan 17 - MS Public Broadcasting
- Jan 31 - Randy Price & Co - History of Hattiesburg Retail



TODAY'S PROGRAM



Biography

Mississippi Army National Guard  
MAJOR GENERAL JAMES I PYLANT



Assistant Adjutant General, Army  
Mississippi Army National Guard

Major General James I. "Ike" Pylant was appointed Assistant Adjutant General, Mississippi Army National Guard in January 2004. As Assistant Adjutant General, he assists the Adjutant General in mission performance, to include a trained and ready Mississippi Army National Guard prepared to support the national military strategy.

General Pylant's military service began when he enlisted in the Mississippi Army National Guard's 890<sup>th</sup> Engineer Battalion in 1966. He completed Federal Officer Candidate School (OCS), at Fort Benning, Georgia and commissioned as a second lieutenant, Ordnance, in 1975. Prior to this assignment, Major General Pylant served as Commander, Army National Guard Training Site, Camp

Shelby. Throughout his 41-year military career, he has served in numerous commands and staff positions, to include Commander, 106<sup>th</sup> Support Battalion, headquartered in Monticello, Mississippi.

EDUCATION:

1989 William Carey College – BA Degree  
2001 United States Army War College – Masters in Strategic Studies

READING BETWEEN THE LIONS LITERACY PROGRAM

Volunteers needed each week on **Tuesday or Friday** mornings at 9:30 to read children's books to Pre-Schoolers. Read for about 20-30 minutes.



The Family Y -  
Veterans Memorial Blvd.  
601-268-0808  
Call Dan Kibodeaux or  
sign up at lunch meetings  
or email  
dan@Unitedwaysems.org  
call 601-545-7141

December Reading Volunteers Needed!

Date	Volunteer	Volunteer
Friday, 12/2 9:30am	Aaron Ladner	Dr. Scott Hummel
Tuesday, 12/6 9:30am		
Friday, 12/9 9:30am	Sean Priebe Jaclyn Adams	Wes Brooks
Tuesday, 12/13 9:30am	Chris Price	
Friday, 12/16 9:30am		
Tuesday, 12/20 9:30am		
Friday, 12/23 9:30am		
Tuesday, 12/27 9:30am		
Friday, 12/30 9:30am		