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**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

January 3, 2012  
www.hattiesburgrotary.com

District 6840

Club Number 04003

Organized 1918

**ROTARY YEAR**  
2010-2011

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## ROTARY CLUB OF HATTIESBURG

A CENTURY OF SERVICE



A NEW CENTURY OF SUCCESS

**“SERVICE ABOVE SELF”**

**MINUTES FROM 12/20/11**

President Robert Cummings, Jr. presided over the meeting.

Thanks to Dan Kibodeaux, who gave the invocation, and to Audra Cummings who led the Club in the Pledge of Allegiance. Robert then led members in the Four Way Test. Thanks to today's greeter Gene Owens.

Sean Priebe then introduced today's guests and visiting Rotarians. JoAnn Beck from Winter Park, Florida is visiting today. She is a former District Governor from her area. She introduced her daughter Angela Sorber who is with her today.

It was requested that Rotarians keep the Brian Moore family in their thoughts and prayers. Brian's new has had surgery recently and continues to recover. It was also reported that Aaron Ladner and his wife are the new parents of twins.

Dan Kibodeaux reminded members to sign up for the Reading Between the Lions project for January reading times.

Patrick Ward then introduced today's guest speaker, Major General James "Ike" Pylant. He was appointed Assistant Adjutant General to the Mississippi Army National Guard in January 2004. He began his military service when he enlisted into the Mississippi Army National Guard back in 1966.

General Pylant noted that the United States Army just celebrated its 325th birthday. However, the National Guard celebrated its 375th birthday on December 13th. He noted that the National Guard was established in the U.S. Constitution when the original militia was established.

The Mississippi National Guard was established in 1798. The Guard's first mission is that of the Governor. Its second mission is to the President to defend the homeland. Currently the MS National Guard has 98 armories and 3 air guard facilities in Mississippi. Additionally two camps are operated in Mississippi including Camp Shelby. The Guard has approximately 4,000 employees throughout the state.

Those enlisted in today's National Guard are often called on to serve the country on foreign soil. Some Guardsmen have served six one-year tours in Iraq and or Afghanistan. Guard duty is supported by

Mississippi employers. General Pylant noted that two Mississippi employers supplement active duty guard pay to make sure the employee doesn't lose income during his or her service. Those employers also keep the employee's medical insurance active while they are serving their country.

Camp Shelby is the only active combat training camp in the country. It encompasses 136,000 acres of land, most of which is United States Forest Service Land. The State of Mississippi owns approximately 8,000 acres of Camp Shelby land. Three active duty unites are currently stationed at Camp Shelby. Although a very large training camp, General Pylant reminded members that during World War II Camp Shelby consisted of more than 560,000 acres.

General Pylant encouraged members to tour the Armed Forces Museum at Camp Shelby. He also suggested that anyone interested should call 601-558-2000 and request a tour of Camp Shelby.

**MARK YOUR CALENDAR**

**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**

**April 17 Night In Italy - Southern Oaks**

**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!

**Top five Rotary stories of 2011**

By Arnold R. Grahl  
Rotary International News -- 20 December 2011



From the tsunami in Japan to the launch of strategic partnerships that will help Rotary expand its reach, 2011 was an eventful year for Rotary International and Rotarians. As the year winds down, we share our list of the top five Rotary news events of 2011.

**1. Tsunami strikes Japan**

Rotary clubs and districts worldwide mobilized to bring aid to victims of the devastating earthquake and tsunami that struck Japan on 11 March. The 9.0-magnitude quake, the strongest in Japan's history, and the resulting tsunami caused widespread destruction, paralyzing much of the northern coast.

In response, The Rotary Foundation established the Rotary Japan 2011 Disaster Recovery Fund, which has raised almost US\$6 million for long-term recovery projects.



Top: Damage from the March tsunami that devastated parts of Japan. Photo courtesy of Naoko Kurauchi Bottom: RI President Kalyan Banerjee unveils the 2011-12 theme during the International Assembly in January. Rotary Images

Read more on this story at [rotary.org](http://rotary.org)

**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**

**January Reading Volunteers Needed!**

Tuesday, 1/3 9:30am	Conrad Welker	
Friday, 1/6 9:30am		
Tuesday, 1/10 9:30am		
Friday, 1/13 9:30am		
Tuesday, 1/17 9:30am		
Friday, 1/20 9:30am		
Tuesday, 1/24 9:30am		
Friday, 1/27 9:30am		
Tuesday, 1/31 9:30am		