

# Dorothy Gardner Jones

By Louise Pettus

“In the fall of 1943 World War II Winthrop’s Dean Mowat Fraser, acting as interim president, needed to fill a position in the sociology department. He hired a young woman who had gotten her PhD from the University of North Carolina the previous year and who was then an “Associate Rural Sociologist” at the Virginia Agricultural Experiment Station. The young woman was Dorothy Jones and she was to be at Winthrop for the next 35 years.

The 29-year-old’s credentials included degrees from Randolph Macon and William and Mary in Virginia. At age 19 Dorothy had begun a teaching career at Misses Herndon’s Private School in Virginia. Years later she was to admit that it was not a happy experience and that she turned to graduate work in sociology in something akin to desperation to get into a field in which she felt she would be better suited.

Obviously she chose the right field. In 1966 when Dr. Jones was chosen as Winthrop’s Distinguished Professor, among her accomplishments was the statement that she “enjoys the unusual distinction of having submitted a doctoral dissertation of such significance that its publication preceded the awarding of the degree.” In addition to producing numerous scholarly papers, articles and research she co-authored a book with Dr. Allen Edwards, a departmental colleague and also was a translator of Latin literary works. She also did further study at the University of Edinburgh.

Scholar that she was, her colleagues and her students were also aware of another Dorothy Jones as not only a warm friend and a concerned teacher but as a fun-loving person who enjoyed life to the hilt. In 1969 Dorothy Jones told a student reporter of *The Johnsonian* that the first year she was at Winthrop she joined a student club that sunbathed in the gutters of Joynes Hall (Joynes then served as a coed residence hall for single faculty). She was also seen on top of a roof patching its leaks.

The *Johnsonian* article was a part of a series in which each issue presented a “Mystery Professor.” The intention was that the article would present clues and the students were to then decide who the professor might be. The clues included her starting to school at the age of four and at ten years delivering a morning newspaper. When she was a college freshman the mystery professor had to ride for an hour on a train, followed by forty-five minutes on a street car and a walk of about a mile in order to get to an eight-o’clock class.

Dorothy also divulged why she always wore white shoes. She said that “Dark shoes depress me.” She is also remembered for her colorful collection of hats.

While she had felt herself a failure in the elementary school classroom, she said she loved Winthrop and Rock Hill from the first day. One of the courses assigned her was a marriage and family course. She was single which did not qualify her 100% for such a course but she defended herself with the remark that most of her students “didn’t even know the simplest facts of life.”

Dr. Jones believed in field trips. In those days the college had a limousine and driver mainly for transportation of visiting dignitaries. Pres. Charles S. Davis permitted Jones to use the limousine to transport students to cotton fields. She would ask the chauffeur to let them out at the edge of woods so that they could walk through the fields to the primitive housing of the pickers.

Jones participated in the Winthrop Lecture Series. Records show her citing the crucial issue of revamping the national welfare system and starting a "War on Poverty," supporting President Nixon's Family Assistance Plan (which included food stamps, work training and a guaranteed minimum wage). She also prepared a directory of social resources of York County.

Dr. Jones was born Nov. 20, 1912 and now lives alone in her hometown of Ashland, Va.\* She's blind but cheerful on the phone and writes wonderful thank-you notes."

\* Dr. Dorothy Gardner Jones passed away on November 14, 2006.

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