
“Being so far away from home, I felt strange at first, but my professors helped me adapt and I was treated pretty well overall.” Among several mentors was English Professor John Burke, who once gave Jones a ride home to New Jersey. “That’s an example of the type of relationships I developed,” he said.

“Assumption laid the foundation for my career,” said the foreign affairs major. “What my degree has done for me is immeasurable.” For the last 20 years, Jones has served as director of community and economic development for the city of Long Branch, NJ.

At Assumption, Jones led the Greyhounds to a 25-2 record and the NCAA Regional championship as a senior and was a two-time, first-team All-American. Drafted by the Philadelphia 76ers, Jones played for one year in the NBA before beginning his post-basketball career. He was a teacher, basketball coach, human services administrator, retail salesman and insurance adjuster before settling into his current position.

Now Jones writes grants and facilitates programs to update Long Branch’s infrastructure, improving parks, housing production and rehabilitation. “It’s a blessing to be in a position to help people and allocate funding to support local development,” he explained. “I couldn’t ask for a more rewarding situation.”

He and wife Geraldine have three children – Godwin, Paul and Jacob Jr. Jones is proud to also serve as a deacon at the Good Samaritan Bright Star Church, which his father built years ago.

Before graduating Assumption, Jones was asked by his basketball coach, Joe O’Brien ’57, if he would be helping his father out at the church. “Absolutely not,” said Jones. “I had been forced to go to church all my life and wanted a break.” After his father died, Jones found himself gravitating back to the church. All 10 of his brothers and sisters are involved – his sister Ann is pastor and four of his siblings serve as ministers. “It’s a major part of my life and always will be, because it brings balance.”

Inducted to the Assumption Alumni-Athletics Hall of Fame in 1977, the humble Jones has earned numerous awards for his community involvement, but credits his parents, mentors and staff for their contributions to his accomplishments. “For me, Assumption was a major catalyst in helping me find happiness and contentment in my life.”