

RAMSEY COUNTY History

A PUBLICATION OF THE RAMSEY COUNTY HISTORICAL SOCIETY

"We Learn What We Live and Live What We Learn"

Growing Up at 1022 Rondo Avenue

MARION JONES KENNON, PAGE 13



Fifty Years of Friendship Connected in Community Service

The Minneapolis-St. Paul (MN) Chapter of The Links, Incorporated

MARION JONES KENNON, PAGE 1

By the Numbers . . .

In 1946, nine African American women from Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, formed a volunteer service organization to enrich friendships and help their community, with a focus on civic, educational, and cultural solutions in the fight for civil rights and against racial injustices.

The number of members of The Links, Incorporated across 292 chapters:
16,700

The number of documented hours of community service annually:
Over \$1 million

Since its founding in 1979, the amount The Links Foundation, Incorporated has contributed to charitable causes:
Over \$25 million

The amount donated to Historically Black Colleges and University (HBCU) scholarships and endowments between 2019 and 2021:
\$1.5 million

The number of scholarships awarded to students attending HBCUs between 2019 and 2021:
Nearly 3,000

The Minneapolis-St. Paul (MN) Chapter of The Links, Incorporated celebrates its fiftieth anniversary this year. See *"Fifty Years of Friendship Connected in Community Service: The Minneapolis-St. Paul (MN) Chapter of The Links, Incorporated"* by Marion Jones Kennon on page 1.

SOURCE: Mwika Kankwenda with The Links, Incorporated, email correspondence with editor, January 10, 2022.

ON THE COVER



Charter members of the Minneapolis-St. Paul (MN) Chapter of The Links, Incorporated at their first official meeting in 1973. *Courtesy of Minneapolis-St. Paul (MN) Chapter of The Links, Incorporated.*

NOTE: To see the names of the women in this photograph, go to endnote 1 on page 10.

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Message from the Editorial Board

At times, many of us have observed our chaotic world and asked, "How can I make a difference?" But how many have acted on this question—fanning a spark of hope and growing an idea into something bigger?

This issue of *Ramsey County History* features writings by someone who did fan that spark: Marion Jones Kennon. Her desire to address the challenges facing local African American families led her to invite fifteen like-minded women to join the Minneapolis-St. Paul (MN) Chapter of The Links, Incorporated as charter members. The community work by this group of leaders focuses on helping youth, promoting the arts, and addressing national, international, and health concerns all while celebrating the lives of women and nurturing the joy and strength found through friendship. In a second, more personal, article, Mrs. Kennon shares her memories of her upbringing in St. Paul's Rondo neighborhood. The love and lessons her parents instilled in her and her siblings helped the young Jones children become changemakers in their communities.

Another person who spent her formative days in Rondo was Scottie Primus Davis, the first African American woman to graduate from the University of Minnesota. A century on, author Steve Trimble followed a few scant leads to fill in details of the nearly forgotten life of this formidable scholar and educator.

The racial injustice faced by African Americans is undeniable. Here, we celebrate the progress and impact made against great odds and recognize how much more work there is to do. We offer testament to how sparks of hope, family, friendship, and service can build strong communities and make a difference.

Anne Field
Chair, Editorial Board

Corrections in the Fall 2021 Issue: In "Tikkun Olam: Jewish Women Serving Their St. Paul Community," a quote associated with endnote 61 on page 19 should be attributed to Rhoda Redleaf. In "Closing the Book: The James Jerome Hill Reference Library, 1921-2021," Samuel Pepys was misidentified. He was a seventeenth-century diarist during the English Restoration.

The Ramsey County Historical Society thanks former Board Member James A. Stolpestad and affiliate AHS Legacy Fund for supporting the updated design of this magazine. Publication of Ramsey County History is also supported in part by a gift from Clara M. Claussen and Frieda H. Claussen in memory of Henry H. Cowie Jr., and by a contribution from the late Reuel D. Harmon.

“We Learn What We Live and Live What We Learn”

Growing Up at 1022 Rondo Avenue

MARION JONES KENNON

Rondo, a thriving African American neighborhood in St. Paul, Minnesota, spanned University Avenue to the north, Selby Avenue to the south, Rice Street to the east, and Lexington Avenue to the west and cradled 80 percent of the city’s African American population in the early and mid-twentieth century. It was a domain of well-kept homes, churches, schools, community centers, and businesses. The community exuded an energy of connectedness. It was the place we proudly called home.

The Robert Archie and Mary Alice Toliver Jones home at 1022 Rondo Avenue was the childhood setting of unforgettable, spontaneous, and practical experiences that we, their six children—Julia, Roberta, Robert, Harvey, Diane, and I (Marion)—savored and carried with us into our adult lives. Our parents instilled core principles through spoken words, extended conversations, and positive reinforcement.

Meet the Family

Our father, Robert Sr., was born on June 5, 1900, in Thoroughfare, Virginia. His father, whose first teacher was Booker T. Washington, became an educator and was Daddy’s first teacher. At sixteen, Daddy attended the famed Paul Laurence Dunbar High School, a college preparatory institution for high-achieving African American boys in Washington, DC. Classmates there included anthropologist W. Montague Cobb, who became a distinguished professor of anatomy at Howard University, and William Hastie, a federal district judge, governor of the US Virgin Islands, and dean of Howard University School of Law.¹

After completing high school in two and a half years, Daddy briefly attended Wesleyan University in Middletown, Connecticut. Then, it was on to New York University, where he majored in the sciences. That led him to the Twin Cities, the University of Minnesota, and the pursuit of a degree in medicine.²

Our mother, Mary Alice, born in Rock Island, Illinois, in 1904 to James and Julia Terrell Toliver, moved to St. Paul with her parents when she was about four. The Tolivers settled in the Rondo neighborhood, first at 605 West Central Avenue and then at 702 Carroll Avenue. Mother’s father worked as a redcap porter at the St. Paul Union Depot. Mother attended McKinley School and graduated from Central High School. Her idol, Nellie Griswold Francis, a suffragist and community leader, lived nearby. Mother matriculated at the University of Minnesota, studying home economics and dietetics. She met Daddy on campus, and they fell in love. Financial constraints precluded Daddy continuing his pursuit of a medical degree. This reality led to a stable career at St. Paul’s main post office, where he later became a supervisor.³



Robert Archie Jones Sr. and Mary Alice Toliver married in 1932 and made their home in St. Paul. *Courtesy of Marion Jones Kennon family archives.*



The Jones children loved spending time with their father. Here, Roberta, Daddy, and Julia get ready to take a spin around the block on their bikes. When Marion Jones Kennon was little, she rode in a basket her father attached to the front of his bike. She looked forward to the day her own two-wheeler would appear, and it eventually did. *Courtesy of Marion Jones Kennon family archives.*



The home in which the Jones children grew up still stands today on what is now called Concordia Avenue, although the house, yard, and neighborhood no longer reflect Marion Jones Kennon's childhood memories. This sketch is meant to recapture the earlier days. *Original illustration courtesy of Jeanne Kosfeld.*

My older sisters Julia Elizabeth (1932), Roberta Alyce (1933), and I, Marion Carol (1936), were born at Bethesda Hospital and lived at 605 West Central. Our family eventually became members of St. Philip's Episcopal Church on the corner of Aurora Avenue and Mackubin Street. We moved to 305 North Chatsworth Street in 1940. There, our parents' first son was born and named Robert Archie Jr. (1940) to honor his father. Shortly thereafter, Mother became ill with rheumatoid arthritis and was bedridden for six months. Daddy hired a housekeeper and child-care provider. Mrs. Carson arrived early each morning with a cheery disposition and engaging smile. Eventually, Mother recovered with no residual aftereffects except for achy knees. Life returned to normal. Four years later, Harvey Cecil (1944) joined our special world, exuding boundless energy and a magnetic personality. Mother and Daddy knew they needed a bigger house, and they had one in mind less than a block from the west end of the community.

The owners, George and Cora Grissom, were friends with Mother and Daddy. I remember visits to the Grissom house. After Mr. Grissom passed away, his wife invited our parents to stop by. Knowing they were interested in purchasing the property, she announced her decision to move. In the spring of 1945, the home at 1022 Rondo—simply referred to by our friends over the years as 1022—was ours. Our youngest sister, Diane, was born two years later in 1947.⁴

Making a House a Home

When people ask what life was like at 1022, there is only one word that aptly describes it: FAMILY. Mother and Daddy were a team and superb day-in-and-day-out role models—Daddy as the breadwinner and Mother incorporating her background in dietetics, home economics, and nursing into running the household. They were always attuned to our health, safety, self-esteem, happiness, and comfort—their lives revolved around ours.

Our big, inviting backyard was visible from the kitchen, where Mother spent much of her time. A lovely lilac bush along with bridal wreath bushes lined the east side, with a huge, ages-old oak tree and a driveway to the west. Each spring, fragrant pink, red, and white peonies and delicate Asian

bleeding hearts stood on display along the brick backyard walkway, defining the green lawn. In the winter, we had a small rink on which to skate when it was too cold to walk to the Dunning Field rink and warming house. What a great space for us to enjoy the fresh air, spend time with our friends, and play our favorite games, including kick the can and flashlight tag. Hopscotch was a favorite front sidewalk game. Receiving our two-wheeler Schwinn bikes was also cause for celebration.

Friends were always present at 1022.⁵ Mother and Daddy loved seeing us interact with our peers on home territory. This, of course, included our front porch which, in the summer months, was dubbed “Jones Beach.” Yes, there were times when Daddy would pretend to complain, “My Goodness! I can’t even sit on my own front porch. It’s always full of kids!” He and Mother always greeted the neighborhood children and offered refreshments of fresh lemonade and whatever homemade cookies were in the jar while, at the same time, respecting our space.

Later, when we girls were in high school and college, a ritual developed. If our dates met Daddy’s approval, he would invite them to sit in the kitchen and chat—usually on the favored stool. This, the boys knew, was a good sign.

Some of those same boys (now elders in their communities) still speak fondly of feeling welcomed and heard by our involved parents.

An Emphasis on Education

School for me began at the historic Hallie Q. Brown Community Center, where one of Mother’s dearest friends, I. Myrtle Carden, established a nursery school.⁶ I loved it there and vividly remember interacting with classmates, the unforgettable aroma of the green liquid soap in its dispenser, delicious hot casseroles for lunch, my woven rug used at naptime, and the myriad lessons learned in a comfortable setting where everyone looked like me.

Each morning when we scampered downstairs, Mother was dressed for the day with her favorite apron tied at her waist and a complete breakfast sitting on the kitchen table. With full tummies, we said goodbye at the backdoor, cut west through the alley to Oxford, and walked five



Children gather to celebrate sister Roberta’s birthday in 1940. *Back Row (L-R):* Janice Boyd, unknown child, Barbara Fields, Myrrhene Allen, Kathy Coram. *Middle Row (L-R):* Donald Williams, Earline Neil, Joan Howell, Connie Brown, Johnny Lee, Marcheta Allen, Patty Dodd, Julia Jones (sister), unknown child, Walter McFarland, and Ronald Winston. *Front Row (L-R):* Earl Neil, Marion Jones (sister), Patty Brown, Beverly Kirk, Norma Jean Howell, Nina Toliver (cousin), Joan Francis Washington, Myrna Bruce, Roberta Bruce, Jimmy Toliver (cousin). *Seated:* Roberta Jones (sister). Photograph by Gordon Parks, courtesy of Marion Jones Kennon family archives.

blocks south to James J. Hill Elementary School with the help of school patrol for safe crossing, of course. Classes ran from 9 to 11:30 am, with a long lunch break at home. We knew something delicious would be waiting for us—Mother’s homemade vegetable beef soup, tuna or grilled cheese sandwiches, made-from-scratch macaroni and cheese, or hot chocolate with marshmallows. Mother would hear about our first half of the day while we ate. We returned to class for the afternoon session, nourished and ready to learn more.

After school, unless we had Scouts or sports, we started homework while Mother prepared dinner. Then at six o’clock—“Mary, I’m home!” Daddy’s daily greeting meant it was time for our evening meal when we reconnected as a family. Each of us shared stories from our day. If there was something less pleasant to discuss, it waited until after dinner—respect for everyone mattered. Our parents helped with homework. They wrote beautifully,⁷ and, so, were eager to critique assignments or quiz us as we prepared for tests. Daddy was also a math and science whiz. No topic stumped him.

Mother and Daddy stayed in touch with our teachers, writing notes and making calls when needed, and they contacted the principal if something seemed amiss—academically, socially, or racially. Daddy never hesitated to visit the principal without an appointment if racism was sensed. He knew not all faculty were bias-free, and he was good at “getting to the bottom of things.” I later learned that staff members were sometimes heard announcing, “Here comes Mr. Jones,” as he walked purposefully up the long outer flight of stairs to reach the administration office.

Because of this unyielding support, we felt free to be who we were at school and to keep our parents apprised of the happenings at our home away from home. With six children, it must have been an enormous task to parent so many ages, personalities, and talents and attend all of our school conferences and extracurricular activity events. They also supported the faculty. I remember when most St. Paul teachers went on strike in late 1946 to demand improved classroom conditions and better pay. Mother baked cookies our teachers could enjoy during breaks from the picket lines.⁸

Reading Is Paramount

We knew early on that books were important by virtue of the filled bookcase in our foyer, one in the dining room, and another at the top of the second-level stairs. The daily *St. Paul Pioneer Press*, the *Chicago Defender*, the *New York Post*, *Life* magazine, and the *St. Paul Recorder* and *Minneapolis Spokesman* were ever-present in our home.

Our parents believed strongly in exposing their children to positives at an early age. This included trips to what I saw as a majestic downtown white-marbled St. Paul Central Library—one of my favorite places. There, we sat on the floor, and Mother read us *Goldilocks and the Three Bears* or nursery rhymes from *The Real Mother Goose* before checking out more books to take home. The *Bobbsey Twins* series was another favorite as I began to read on my own. Later on, when old enough to take the St. Paul Stryker streetcar by myself, I chose my books carefully and sat among the stacks to read. It was a special place, and getting our own library

cards was equally special. This took place as soon as we could print our names.

Etiquette, Arts, Civics, and Service

Sunday dinners were the highlight of the week as we moved from the kitchen to the dining room with the fine crystal, silver, and Haviland china. Each of us had a requisite place at the table. Except for holiday centerpieces, there was always a fresh flower arrangement at the table's center. We all dressed up. Daddy carved the roast while we conversed about current events—the John F. Kennedy family was not novel in that regard—and everyone had his or her turn in the conversation. Mother and Daddy's objective was to make sure that we practiced the art of conversation so to be comfortable and poised when away from home or giving a speech.

The meal was usually accompanied by classical symphonic music. Often, the music of internationally known African American contralto Marian Anderson kept us engaged. I felt it an honor to have her name. We also listened to violinist Jascha Heifetz, soprano Leontyne Price, and singer Paul Robeson. The Boston Symphony Orchestra, the New York Philharmonic, and the London Symphony Orchestra were Daddy's favorites. Decades on, I frequently have the local classical station playing in my car. It is often said, “We learn what we live, and we live what we learn.” I love classical music.

Each of us took music lessons. Julia, Roberta, and I played the piano. A Mr. R. Nelson Barber came to the house to give lessons each week. Robert played the trumpet, and Harvey took up the drums. Later, Diane would take piano lessons, as well. Roberta was also a student of the violin and played in the school orchestra. I did not choose a second instrument but, instead, developed an interest in sewing from a home economics class. As a result, my older sisters teased that I also “played” the sewing machine. Beginning in high school, Julia, Roberta, and I sang in the choir at St. Philip's. Mother and Daddy joked that they had enough children to start their own orchestra.

Community involvement was key. At the appropriate time, we older girls joined Brownies and Girl Scouts. Robert and Harvey were Cub and Boy Scouts. Diane became a member of

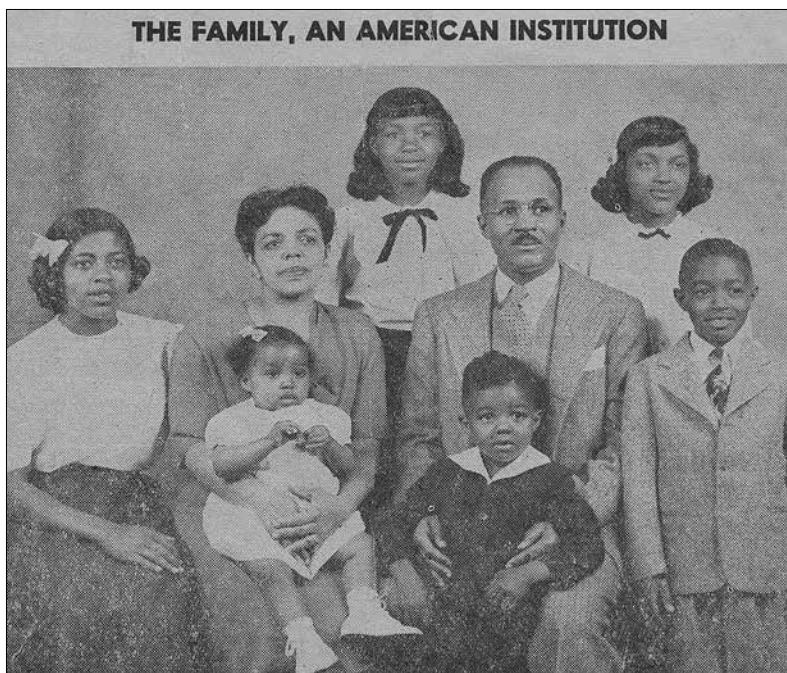
the Camp Fire Girls. And when we were a little older, especially during the war years, our parents signed us up to roll bandages for the Red Cross as a means of giving service and negating too much “idle time.”

One-on-One Time with Mother and Daddy

With a family of six, our parents thought it important to afford us one-on-one time with them—more so with Daddy because he was away during the day. We’d take turns accompanying him to work or out in the community. He wanted us to experience the goings-on in the outside world in the safety of his company. I began to realize that he wished us to learn that the rudiments of interacting, exchanging ideas, taking facts to a conclusion, and affecting action were parts of a crucial process to begin perfecting at a young age. Daddy was always presenting teachable moments even if it was just while we were driving to our next destination. It made me feel special.

He liked to say, “Be who you are, and be the best you.” After Cecil Newman, a friend of Daddy’s and godfather to Harvey, started the *Minneapolis Spokesman* and *St. Paul Recorder*, he asked our father to head up the papers’ advertising department (a part-time job in addition to Daddy’s work at the post office). This job came with perks—for Daddy (sports and theater tickets, dinners at fancy restaurants, etc.) and for me. When the late pianist Hazel Scott, wife of New York politician Adam Clayton Powell Jr., came to the city to perform, Daddy arranged for me to interview her for Mr. Newman’s newspaper. It was an article about Bach, Beethoven, and the blues, as the pianist played all three. When Burl Ives came to St. Paul to play the guitar, I got to do that interview too. These were two important and unusual opportunities for a sixth-grade student.

Daddy always had his briefcase in one hand when he conducted his advertising business. I’d hold his other hand as we visited banks and companies. I would be proudly introduced to presidents and owners, which, to me, seemed a very normal situation as long as I was with Daddy. It amazed me that each of us children, regardless of age and place, felt the favored one



This photograph of the Jones family ran in the *St. Paul Recorder* in 1949 and referred to the children as “future builders of St. Paul.” Robert Archie Jones Sr., was in charge of advertising sales at the paper. *Back Row (L-R):* Marion, 13, in eighth grade at Hill School, and Roberta, 15, a sophomore at Central High School. *Front Row (L-R):* Julia, 16, a junior at Central High School; Mary with Diane, 2, in her lap; Robert Sr., with Harvey, 4, standing in front of his father; and Robert Jr., 9, a fourth-grade student at Hill School. *Courtesy of Marion Jones Kennon family archives.*

in the family. Through childhood into adulthood, my siblings and I felt cherished because of the individual attributes that we brought to the family circle that were highlighted by our parents.

Although Mother was always accessible, it was nice to spend time alone with her, too. I enjoyed sitting in the cheery kitchen painted a creamy white watching how she made her delicious banana nut bread, rolls, braided coffee cakes, pies, jellies, and jams from scratch. She always knew how to combine just the right ingredients for her delectable vegetable soup, and each fall, she canned peaches, peas, tomatoes, and applesauce and prepared homemade cucumber pickles.

She also made a big deal of birthdays and holidays to “put us in the moment.” Christmas was unequaled. I still marvel how our parents found the time to shop for six children with the lists each of us created, hide the gifts sufficiently until they could be wrapped, and take us to select the best tree ever or go downtown to

Marion Jones Kennon around the time she wrote some "guest articles" for the *St. Paul Recorder*. She still has the article she wrote about Hazel Scott, who performed here in 1950. Photograph courtesy of Marion Jones Kennon family archives. News article in *St. Paul Recorder*, April 21, 1950, 6.



HAZEL SCOTT APPEARS ON INSTITUTE PROGRAM

By Marion C. Jones

Hazel Scott, pianist, was the guest artist on the Women's Institute program Wednesday night, April 12, at the St. Paul auditorium.

She played to an audience of 10,000 people, who insisted on encores from Fats Waller's "Rhapsody in Blue," and the "St. Louis Blues." Her program consisted of music from Bach's classics to the three B's (as Miss Scott called it) —Blues, Boogie Woogie and Bop.

The second half of the program included one of her own compositions which she calls "How Blue Can I Get?"

Miss Scott made a striking appearance in a red net ankle length dress, with draping neckline and lace back. She wore red satin slippers and a platinum mink coat.

Due to an attack of the flu, she did not give as many encores as the audience requested and gave very few autographs.

Miss Scott, besides making concert tours, appears on radio and television shows. Meeting her was one of the greatest thrills of my life.

Schuneman's or the Emporium for our annual visit with Santa.

For Mother, Christmas season included shopping for that perfectly depicted greeting card to send to relatives and friends. I never forgot her sharing that the inside message was as important as the picture on the front. Several boxes were necessary to include those individuals and families near and dear to her and Daddy. I enjoyed watching as she signed and inserted each one in its envelope, sealing and addressing them in her beautifully refined handwriting. I had the assigned job of moistening and affixing a stamp to each envelope. To this day, one of the holiday practices I enjoy the most is shopping for that perfect card with the perfect picture on the front and the inside text that resonates with

a unique Yuletide greeting. This special ritual always takes me back to the days at 1022.

Paving the Way for Our Future

Exposing us to new experiences was important to our parents—Daddy, especially. He expected us to learn from our early years how the workings of the business world took place—not from the polished showcase perspective but, rather, from the genesis of a matter. This included attending the Ringling Bros. and Barnum & Bailey Circus performance, but, as well, rising early in the morning when the train of circus cars arrived with the animals, performers, and all the equipment to set up the tents along University Avenue. We watched them unload, witnessing what took place behind the scenes before

attending the big show later that evening. This gave us a clear perspective about what the circus was all about—that it was much more than sitting and enjoying the “Greatest Show on Earth.”

We also went to baseball games, saw Jesse Owens outrun a horse when he was in town, and attended the Minnesota State Fair each year, including mandatory trips through the Agriculture Horticulture Building. Our parents wanted us to see and understand the “why” of the fair, which was about much more than just the mid-way rides.

Life Wasn't All Fun and Games

Our parents also did their best to assuage our fears during World War II. This extended to the air raid drills that were frightening experiences for young children. Families in the neighborhood identified a safe area in their homes in which to position themselves during the drill. Ours was between the refrigerator and a nearby wall. This was scary even when we knew the dates the drills would occur. Eventually, the abnormal became normal, but the first time I saw a blimp moving slowly across the sky above our house, I just knew the world was going to end. I still recollect running into the house, sitting at the piano, and composing a song called, “This Is the End, Goodbye!” I did not know at the time that the other-worldly sight was actually being used to advertise the Goodyear Tire & Rubber Company.

Just as our friends were always welcome at 1022, so it was with neighbors and acquaintances who sometimes visited our parents for enjoyment and other times to discuss more serious matters. Often, the discussions centered around issues of discrimination and civil rights. There also was talk of a freeway being constructed that would separate our community by disconnecting Rondo and St. Anthony Avenues. At first, the rumors seemed no more than just that—insidious innuendoes. Then, the buzz grew louder, with emerging details lending more substantive credence to the possibility of such an occurrence.

This dastardly political and race-laden decision was one that would have a lasting physical, visual, and emotional impact on our thriving community that had, at the time, such a promising future. More than 600 homes and 300



businesses would be condemned, razed, or moved.⁹ Mother and Daddy hosted several discussions with Roy Wilkins, noted journalist Carl Rowan, Stephen and Betty Maxwell, Jimmy and Edna Griffin, James Bradford, local NAACP and Urban League officers, pastors and priests of neighborhood churches, columnist Estyr Bradley Peake, Bob and Eula Mitchell, and others.¹⁰ Even as teenagers, we were sometimes sheltered from conversation that might upset us. However, on occasion, we tiptoed down the stairway and sat quietly on the steps to listen.

A Lifetime of Memories at 1022

Though we, the children of Robert Archie and Mary Alice Toliver Jones, certainly enjoyed the essential and material comforts in life, we grew to appreciate that our parents provided us the most valuable of all gifts—the things that money cannot buy. We learned by example that a strong household must have a strong foundation on which to stand. Instilled was an appreciation for a solid education and value system with unyielding parental support. What we took from our growing up years in Rondo is priceless. We, indeed, “learned what we lived and, then, lived what we learned.” Here’s to our parents and a truly memorable life at 1022 Rondo Avenue.

Afterword

Mother and Daddy were proud to send all of their children to college: Julia earned a BA in sociology from California State University;

Twenty-seven family members from across Minnesota, four states and Washington, DC, gathered in 2015 to march in the Rondo Days parade and celebrate their community with family and friends.
Courtesy of Marion Jones Kennon family archives.

In 2015, St. Paul Mayor Christopher B. Coleman proclaimed July 16 of that year Jones-Toliver Day. To see the proclamation, go to <https://publishing.rchs.com/publishing/magazine/ramsey-county-history-magazine-volume-56-4-winter-2022/>.

Roberta studied sociology at the University of Minnesota; Marion earned a BA in elementary education from Omaha University and a master's degree in educational psychology from the University of Minnesota; Robert graduated with a bachelor's degree in business administration from Morehouse College and an MBA from the University of Denver. He first marched with Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. in 1960; Harvey earned a BA in psychology from Morehouse College; and Diane, who was St. Paul's first Black princess in the Winter Carnival in 1972, attained her BA in education from the University of Minnesota. Robert passed away in 1975 from leukemia.

Marion Jones Kennon and her extended family continue to lead and serve in their beloved Rondo community. She has worked with longtime Rondo activist Marvin Anderson and many other dedicated leaders to share their community's rich narrative and celebrate its history and residents through programs at the Rondo Commemorative Plaza, Rondo Days celebrations, and future projects that will continue to revive and restore the beloved neighborhood for all who live and visit there. See a short bio on page 10.

NOTES

1. Kenneth Alphonso Mitchell Jr., "The Story of Dunbar High School: How Students from the First Public High School for Black Students in the United States Influenced America" (master's thesis, Georgetown University, 2012), ii. Dunbar High School (named after poet Paul Laurence Dunbar) in Washington, DC, opened in 1870 as the Preparatory High School for Colored Youth. It was the first public high school for Black children in DC and the nation; Carrie L. Thornhill with Dunbar Alumni Federation, Inc., email correspondence with editor, November 17, 2021; African American History Program, "W. Montague Cobb (1904-1990) Anatomist," National Academy of Sciences, accessed November 17, 2021, <http://www.cpnas.org/aahp/biographies/w-montague-cobb.html>; Robert Penn Warren, "William Hastie," *Who Speaks for the Negro? An Archival Collection*, accessed November 17, 2021, <https://whospeaks.library.vanderbilt.edu/>.
2. Amanda Nelson, University Archivist with Wesleyan University, email correspondence with editor, December 3, 2021; "Jones, Robert A.," *The University Address Book 1928-1929* 31, no. 54 (Minneapolis, University of Minnesota, October 28, 1928), 104.
3. "Toliver, Mary A.," United States Federal Census, 1920 and 1930, ancestry.com; "Toliver, Mary A.," *The University Address Book 1928-1929*, 223.
4. "1022 Rondo," building permit, Ramsey County Historical Society. A permit was taken out on October 20, 1913, for a 1.5 story house (24 x 24 x 25 feet), valued at \$ 2,400. E. S. Walton Agency, a real estate firm, had it built and sold it to George Grissom in 1914. Grissom worked as a dentist. His wife, Cora, sang with the Folk-

Song Coterie of Saint Paul. See "Nellie Griswold Francis, the Women of Rondo, and Their Suffrage Crusade," *Ramsey County History* 55, (no. 2): 4.

5. Friends often at the Jones home included Walter McFarland, Clarence Taylor, Wilma Allison, Mary Ellis Manning, Darlene Kemp, James Milsap, Dick Blakey, Kermit and Donald Wheeler, Charles Schuck, and many others.

6. "I. Myrtle Carden," obituary, *The Minneapolis Star*, August 24, 1950, 23. Ms. Carden served as the first director of Hallie Q. Brown Community Center for twenty-one years before she retired. She died in 1950.

7. Mrs. Jones and her daughter Marion were both privileged to have the same English teacher at Central High School—Alice F. Rosenberg, who taught classic English.

8. See Cheryl Carlson, "Strike for Better Schools: The St. Paul Public Schools Teachers' Strike of 1946," *Ramsey County History* 43, no. 2 (Summer 2008): 10.

9. See "Interstate 94: A History and Its Impact," MNDOT and TPT: Twin Cities PBS, 2017, <https://www.tpt.org/interstate-94-a-history-and-its-impact/>.

10. Roy Wilkins grew up in St. Paul, attended the University of Minnesota, wrote for *The Appeal*—a local Black-owned newspaper—worked for the NAACP, and served as a longtime leader of the civil rights movement. Carl Rowan was a nationally known journalist, who also attended the U. He went on to serve in the US Department of State and was the first Black director of the United States Information Agency (USIA). Most of the others in attendance at the meetings were local activists and leaders in their community.

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RAMSEY COUNTY History

A PUBLICATION OF THE RAMSEY COUNTY HISTORICAL SOCIETY

Preserving our past, informing our present, inspiring our future.

The Ramsey County Historical Society (RCHS) strives to innovate, lead, and partner in preserving the knowledge of our community, deliver inspiring history programming, and incorporate local history in education.

The Society was established in 1949 to preserve the Jane and Heman Gibbs Farm in Falcon Heights, which the family acquired in 1849. Listed on the National Register of Historic Places in 1974, the original programs told the story of the Gibbs family. In 2000, with the assistance of a Dakota Advisory Council, RCHS also began interpreting Dakota culture and lifeways, now telling the stories of the remarkable relationship between Jane Gibbs and the Dakota people of Heyáta Othúnwe (Cloud Man's Village).

In 1964, the Society began publishing its award-winning magazine *Ramsey County History*. In 1978, the organization moved to St. Paul's Landmark Center, a restored Federal Courts building on the National Register of Historic Places. An expansion of the Research Center was completed in 2010 and rededicated in 2016 as the Mary Livingston Griggs & Mary Griggs Burke Research Center.

RCHS offers public programming for youth and adults. Visit www.rchs.com for details of upcoming History Revealed programs, summer camps, courthouse and depot tours, and more. The Society serves more than 15,000 students annually on field trips or through school outreach. Programs are made possible by donors, members, corporations, and foundations, all of whom we appreciate deeply. If you are not a member of RCHS, please join today and help bring history to life for more than 50,000 people every year.

Diversity, Equity, Accessibility, & Inclusion

RCHS is committed to ensuring it preserves and presents our county's history. As we continue our work to incorporate more culturally diverse histories, we have made a commitment to diversity, equity, accessibility, and inclusion that is based on this core idea: RCHS exists to serve ALL who call Ramsey County home. To learn more, please see www.rchs.com/about.

Acknowledging This Sacred Dakota Land

Mnisóta Makhóche, the land where the waters are so clear they reflect the clouds, extends beyond the modern borders of Minnesota and is the ancestral and contemporary homeland of the Dakhóta (Dakota) people. It is also home to the Anishinaabe and other Indigenous peoples, all who make up a vibrant community in Mnisóta Makhóche. RCHS acknowledges that its sites are located on and benefit from these sacred Dakota lands.

RCHS is committed to preserving our past, informing our present, and inspiring our future. Part of doing so is acknowledging the painful history and current challenges facing the Dakota people just as we celebrate the contributions of Dakota and other Indigenous peoples.

Find our full Land Acknowledgment Statement on our website, www.rchs.com. This includes actionable ways in which RCHS pledges to honor the Dakota and other Indigenous peoples of Mnisóta Makhóche.

R.C.H.S.
RAMSEY COUNTY HISTORICAL SOCIETY



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Forgotten to Time?

The Search for Scottie Primus Davis

STEVE TRIMBLE, PAGE 21



With degrees from the University of Minnesota and Harvard University, former St. Paulite Scottie Primus Davis was a lifelong learner and strict and well-respected educator. Courtesy of Jefferson County Public Schools, Louisville, Kentucky.