

Presentation  
to the

2011 Tennessee Agricultural Hall of Fame Board  
in support of the election of

The Honorable Ed Jones  
April 20, 1912 ~ December 11, 1999  
to the  
Tennessee Agricultural Hall of Fame



Submitted by  
Dr. James A. Culver  
January 6, 2011

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2010 Tennessee Agriculture Hall of Fame Board  
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December 16, 2010

**LETTER TO GOVERNOR BREDESEN AUGUST 16, 2010**

**ED JONES, ALWAYS A FARMER**

**UNIVERSITY OF TENNESSEE: 1932 JUNIOR COLLEGE DEGREE IN AGRICULTURE**

**1934 B.S. IN DAIRY SCIENCE**

**STATE OF TENNESSEE DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE, DAIRY INSPECTOR 1934-1941**

**TENNESSEE DAIRY PRODUCTS ASSOCIATION, SUPERVISOR 1941-1943**

**ILLINOIS CENTRAL RAILROAD, AGENT 1943-1949 AND 1953-1969**

**STATE OF TENNESSEE, COMMISSIONER OF AGRICULTURE**

**STATE OF TENNESSEE, AG STABILIZATION & CONSERVATION SERVICE COMMITTEE CHAIRMAN 1961**

**US HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES 1969-1989**

**COMMITTEE ON AGRICULTURE 1969-1989**

**SUBCOMMITTEE ON DAIRY AND POULTRY, CHAIRMAN 1975-1978**

**SUBCOMMITTEE ON CONSERVATION AND CREDIT, CHAIRMAN 1978-1989**

**CONSERVATION**

**FARM CREDIT**

**FEDERAL CROP INSURANCE**

**COMMODITY FUTURES TRADING COMMISSION**

**COMMITTEE ON HOUSE ADMINISTRATION 1969-1989**

**SUBCOMMITTEE ON SERVICES, CHAIRMAN**

**RETIREMENT 1989-1999**

**FARMER & COTTON GINNER 1989-1999**

**MEMBER OF THE LOWER MISSISSIPPI DELTA COMMISSION 1968-1999**

**HONORS AND AWARDS**

**OTHER MEMBERSHIPS**

**PERSONAL LIFE**

**ED JONES, ALWAYS A FARMER**

August 13, 2010

Governor Phil Bredesen  
Governor's Office  
Tennessee State Capitol  
Nashville, TN 37243-0001

Dear Governor Bredesen,

I am pleased to write to you on behalf of an ad hoc group of Tennesseans who have assembled to propose the Honorable Ed Jones for the *Tennessee Agricultural Hall of Fame*. I am most pleased to author this letter as I was the first staff person Congressman Jones hired in his role as a *Subcommittee Chair* for the *US House of Representatives Committee on Agriculture*. For me, it was the job of a lifetime and Ed Jones was the boss of a lifetime.

Ed Jones served agriculture and Tennessee all of his adult life, even ending his life as a true farmer on his beloved Yorkville farm after serving as Congressman for ten terms.

From the Yorkville Bull Barn and the first artificial insemination for the dairy industry in West Tennessee to the United States House of Representatives Committee on Agriculture, Ed Jones lived on the cusp of representing and nurturing American agriculture and the people involved in the industry. He cared and thought deeply about agriculture, particularly as it related to Tennessee, and always stood tall for agriculture and its people. He was a listener, a worker, and a leader for whom Tennesseans and Tennessee agriculture can and should be justifiably proud.

Dr. Jerry Gresham, Professor and Interim Dean of the College of Agriculture & Applied Sciences at The University of Tennessee at Martin and I have reviewed the Ed Jones Congressional Papers housed at the Paul Meek Library at UT Martin and have interviewed various people regarding his contribution to agriculture in general and specifically to Tennessee agriculture. We and the other members of our ad hoc group would be most pleased to have an opportunity to present our findings to the Tennessee Agricultural Hall of Fame Selection Committee to propose the induction of Ed Jones as a member of that august body.

Based on our review of the requirements for membership in the Tennessee Agricultural Hall of Fame, we believe that Ed Jones is eminently qualified for the honor.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely yours

James A. Culver, PhD  
The Parsons Group International Education, Inc.

Cc: Robert Cashdollar, **Special Assistant to Commissioner Michael Dunn Commodity Futures Trading Commission**  
Dr. Jerry Gresham, Professor and Interim Dean, College of Agriculture and Applied Sciences  
Joe Hill, Member Tennessee Board of Probation and Parole  
Terry Oliver, Deputy Commissioner Tennessee Department of Agriculture  
Tom Womack, Executive Assistant for Public Affairs Tennessee Department of Agriculture

Commissioner Oliver and Board Members,

Thank you for the opportunity to present the Honorable Ed Jones of Yorkville, Tennessee for your consideration for induction into the *Tennessee Agricultural Hall of Fame*. Based on Governor Bredesen's formation of your board in response to the August 16 letter, it is an honor to follow up with this presentation, which is being submitted with love and respect for Ed Jones, the man. Included in those who provided inputs are Jennifer Jones Kinnard, his daughter, numerous former staff members, the UT Martin Library and the Tennessee Commissioner of Agriculture.

Before delving into the substance of this presentation, please understand one caveat. It is focused on the career of Ed Jones in agriculture; however, he was much more than a noteworthy agriculturalist. He was a loved family man, a respected community leader, a member of the Cumberland Presbyterian Church and an accomplished politician who, after his first election to Congress, never again had a close race in his following nine elections. He obviously did a lot of things right, not just in agriculture. We will save everything else for another presentation!

If Ed Jones were to be selected to the *Tennessee Agricultural Hall of Fame*, as we so hope, we plan to arrange a significant event around the unveiling of his bronze plaque. At that time we would expect to have a video presentation covering the life and career of Ed Jones. We are not attempting to do that today, for today we are simply focused on his accomplishments in agriculture.

Ed Jones is no stranger to the *Tennessee Agricultural Hall of Fame*. He would be especially pleased with this meeting today for two reasons: one, that he is being considered, but second, and more importantly, that the *Tennessee Agricultural Hall of Fame* is active and continuing the work that he and others did to re-institute the Hall in the early '50's after several years of inactivity.

This was an important Tennessee institution that Ed Jones went to great lengths to support and to build. Agriculture was the lifelong passion of Ed Jones and honoring those who made major contributions to agriculture in Tennessee was an important part of that passion. When Ed Jones became *Commissioner of Agriculture* under Governor Gordon Browning in 1949, he was determined that the *Tennessee Agricultural Hall of Fame*, which had come about as a result of legislation passed during the first term of Governor Browning in 1937, should take its rightful place among agricultural institutions in Tennessee.

As *Commissioner of Agriculture*, he wrote in his 1951, 1952 report to Governor Browning the following:

HALL OF FAME COMMITTEE BRINGS TO FIVE  
THE NAMES OF THOSE DISTINGUISHED IN AGRICULTURAL ACCOMPLISHMENTS

The law establishing the Tennessee Agricultural Hall of Fame, you will recall was enacted during your first term of Governor in 1937. After some inactive years this Board has come to life - again under your administration - and we now have five Tennesseans in the Agricultural Hall of Fame.

The unveiling of the plaque of Dr. Marion Dorset, October 17, 1949 brought to Nashville representatives of the outstanding manufacturers of hog cholera serum in the United States, some of whom were speakers on the program. The exercise took place in the Assembly Hall of the *Tennessee Senate* and that large room was well filled. Among the guests of honor were Dr. Virgil J. Dorset and his wife and two daughters. Unable to attend was Mrs. Marion Dorset, whose death followed some few months later.

The fourth election to the Hall of Fame honored not an individual but the group that founded the *Goodlettsville Lamb and Wool Club*, thus starting a successful cooperative

movement which has been widely copied; and, as you know, the *Goodlettsville Club* is the oldest livestock marketing association in the United States.

Last to be elected was Dr. Harcourt A. Morgan, the farmer-minded president of the *University of Tennessee* and later head of *TVA*. Due to the scarcity of bronze, the plaques for Goodlettsville and Dr. Morgan have not been made. However funds are available so that as soon as the necessary materials are obtainable, the plaques will be made and a program of appropriate exercises arranged.

Today, we propose that Ed Jones become the thirteenth member of the *Tennessee Agricultural Hall of Fame*. He is a deserving applicant and the hope is that a good case will be presented here. Ed Jones was born a West Tennessee farm boy and died a leader in the area of agriculture in our nation, a leader who left behind a legacy of accomplishments that are often unheralded. And so we begin his story.

### **ED JONES, ALWAYS A FARMER**

Ed Jones was born in Yorkville, Tennessee on April 12, 1912 to Mr. and Mrs. Will Jones. He grew up on a Gibson county farm just outside of Yorkville. He graduated from *Yorkville High School* in 1930 and from *University of Tennessee Junior College* (now UT Martin) in 1932 with a two-year degree in Agriculture. He completed his formal education with a BS in Dairy Science from the *University of Tennessee* (Knoxville) in 1934. For many years he operated a farm in Yorkville while holding other jobs. In 1934 he accepted a job as a *Dairy Inspector* with the *State of Tennessee Department of Agriculture* setting out on a course of public and private service to Tennessee and US agriculture.

The farm Ed Jones grew up on had a strong dairy tradition, especially with Jersey cattle. His father along with Frank Vaughn, the father of one of Ed Jones best friends, Wilbur, initially directed the *Jersey Cattle Shows* held in Yorkville which began in 1928 continuing into the 1960's. This show was at one point the largest Jersey cattle show in the US. This show was held on the farm of Dr. F. E. Wyatt of Yorkville who would become Ed Jones' father-in-law when Ed married his only child, Llewellyn Wyatt. After their wedding in 1938, Ed and Llewellyn moved to the Wyatt farm and the home Dr. Wyatt had built in 1908. It was here that they raised their daughters Mary Llew and Jennifer. It was the farm to which Ed Jones retired. Following his father-in-law's footsteps, he hosted the *Yorkville Jersey Cattle Show* on the farm until its demise in the 1960's and managed the farm until he died on December 11, 1999.

### **UNIVERSITY OF TENNESSEE, AGRICULTURE GRADUATE**

In 1932 Ed Jones graduated from the University of Tennessee Junior College at Martin with a two-year degree in Agriculture. He then proceeded to Knoxville where he graduated with a BS Degree in Dairy Science in 1934.

### **TENNESSEE DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE, DAIRY INSPECTOR 1934-1941**

Upon graduating from UT in 1934, Ed Jones became a *Dairy Inspector* with the *Tennessee Department of Agriculture*. This job allowed him to use his education and to continue to learn the dairy business up close and personal. It appealed to him as it had a technical side, but there was ample opportunity to deal with people, not always under the best of circumstances. It was a great training ground for a "would be politician". The job also allowed him to manage the family farm in addition to his day job.

### **TENNESSEE DAIRY PRODUCTS ASSOCIATION, SUPERVISOR 1941-1943**

In 1941 Ed Jones became a *Supervisor* for the *Tennessee Dairy Products Association*. Here he gained his first supervision experience and continued to build his knowledge of the dairy industry and agriculture, in general. He also continued farming, focusing on registered Jersey cattle.

### **ILLINOIS CENTRAL RAILROAD, AGENT 1943-1949 AND 1953-1969**

Ed Jones was hired by the *Illinois Central Railroad* as an *Agricultural Agent* in 1943. He served in this position until his election to Congress in 1969 except for the period of 1949-1953 when he served as *Commissioner of Agriculture* under Governor Gordon Browning. As always, he continued to manage the farm and the Jersey cattle.

An *Agricultural Agent* was a combination of public relations/external relations to the agricultural community from the railroad. While his job was focused primarily in Tennessee and primarily on dairy, he was involved in other states and other issues, specifically Louisiana sugar issues.

During this period Ed Jones was probably best known for his work in promoting artificial insemination of dairy cattle and his work to support agricultural innovation from dairy industry issues to soil conservation techniques. His efforts were primarily focused on West Tennessee. The founding of the *West Tennessee Artificial Breeders Association* was a direct result of Ed Jones efforts.

Two of his significant responsibilities as an *Agricultural Agent* for the *IC Railroad* were a weekly radio show and a weekly newspaper column. The radio show ran on WHBQ in Memphis and at least some of the time on WSM in Nashville. Other stations carried the show as well. The weekly newspaper column was called *Down on the Farm with Ed Jones*, as we believe was the radio show. Ed Jones would hold this job until he became *Commissioner of Agriculture* for the *State of Tennessee* in 1949 and would return to it when he completed his term in 1953. He stayed in the *IC Railroad* job until he ran for Congress in 1969. And the experience in that job was helpful in his Congressional bid as reported by Ray Lancaster, who worked on Ed Jones first campaign and later became *Administrative Assistant* (later named *Chief of Staff*) in his Congressional Office:

The IC Railroad encouraged its agricultural agents to become as well known as possible within their communities. Consequently, Ed Jones, Wipps (Wilbur Vaughn) and their esteemed colleague in Mississippi who had the tree planting project had early morning farm news shows on local radio - Ed on WRC in Memphis and Wipps in Martin, a show I appeared on once to encourage listeners to support a ballot referendum to raise the Weakley County sales taxes by a half cent to help the public schools.

Ed met Deloss Walker, an announcer at WRC during this time, and Walker became his media consultant for his first campaign and throughout his political career. Walker was still new in the consulting business at the time, having handled the media for Dale Bumpers' gubernatorial campaign and Bill Alexander's first congressional race. I remember when Ed first opened his North Memphis Office during his first year in Congress. WRC sent Ed Craig out to cover the opening and to interview Ed. We had not prepared for an interview and Ed kept asking Craig what kind of questions to expect, and finally Craig said, "Oh hell, Ed, just answer the questions the best you can, and I'll cut out the bad parts." As it turned out, Craig asked only softball questions, but I doubt you'd find such an attitude from the media these days.

By the end of World War II, Ed Jones was a young community leader. At that time Yorkville was an important community in West Tennessee, far surpassing its importance today. Nick Dunagan, retired Chancellor of UT Martin, tells this story of his father, Horace Dunagan, who also grew up in Yorkville and who went on to become the President of the *First State Bank and Trust of Caruthersville*.

This is a story my Dad told me about Mr. Ed. It is not comical, but represents the kind of person Ed Jones was. My Dad came home to Yorkville after WW II and one of the first stops he made was to see Mr. Ed. Mr. Ed asked, "Horace, what are you going to do now that you are home?" My Dad stated that he was going to find a job and maybe finish his final year of high school. Mr. Ed said, "What about college?" My Dad said he wasn't really thinking about college.

At that point Mr. Ed. took my Dad to task and told him that a college degree was going to be very important and he really needed to look at that route and suggested that he take a look at the college in Martin. My Dad told me later that Mr. Ed expressed a lot of confidence in him when no one else was really encouraging him to do anything other than get a job. My Dad did go to UTMB and later earned his Agriculture degree from UT Knoxville. It was definitely a life changing conversation and I imagine that Mr. Ed had a number of these.

When Horace Dunagan received his degree for the *University of Tennessee* in Dairy Science in 1949, he and a group of his graduating colleagues were pictured in the *Tennessee Market Bulletin*, a publication controlled by then *Commissioner of Agriculture* Ed Jones. When you became a protégé of Ed Jones, he kept up with you and was there for you!

The career of Ed Jones, particularly from 1943 forward, was seemingly tailor-made for the role he was later to assume on the *Committee on Agriculture* of the *US House of Representatives*.

### **STATE OF TENNESSEE, COMMISSIONER OF AGRICULTURE**

Ed Jones served two, two-year terms as *Commissioner of Agriculture* for the *State of Tennessee*, from 1949 to 1953. Appointed by newly-elected Governor Gordon Browning, he became the youngest commissioner to serve in that position in the history of the State at the age of 37.

He may have been the youngest, but he was experienced and well-trained for the job. He served at a time of tremendous change in technology and society that were having great impacts on agriculture. World War II spawned massive technological innovation which was applied to agriculture and civilian industries after the war. First, technology brought immense change to agriculture, specifically rapid mechanization and farm consolidation. Secondly, it was a time of societal change particularly in the rural areas of the Mid-South. People left the farms in droves and moved to the towns and cities for off-farm jobs. After exposure to the world during WWII, it was difficult “to keep them on the farm”. Neither society nor agriculture would ever be the same again. In Northwest Tennessee, certain counties reportedly lost as much as a third of their population as people moved from the farms and small towns to the cities for jobs. Also for the first time, large numbers of women began to work off the farm. The period of 1949 to 1953 was at the vortex of that change in Tennessee Agriculture. The idyllic relatively self-sufficient family farm gave way to the larger and much more commercial farm, family-owned or otherwise. While that change was not new and while it continues today, few periods saw such a torrent of change. Ed Jones was in the middle of that change and innovation, doing everything he could to help Tennessee agriculture not only survive, but prosper as well.

Additionally, there were still shortages from WWII and his term as Commissioner was during the period of the Korean War. Often we look back nostalgically at the past as being a simpler time - Ed Jones was not Commissioner during a simpler time!

During much of his term as Commissioner, Tennessee farmers enjoyed relatively high farm prices and unusual crop production and thus farm prosperity. However, by 1951, there was a cotton surplus and in 1952, a serious drought. Ed Jones was there to support Tennessee farmers dealing with both feast and famine.

Highlights of his tenure as *Commissioner of Agriculture* as reported in the 39<sup>th</sup> *Annual Report of the Department of Agriculture* to Governor Gordon Browning, 1951 and 1952 and in the *Tennessee Market Bulletins* from 1949 to 1953 include:

- Ed Jones believed that as Commissioner he should be travelling around the State, talking to farmers and farm groups and participating in agricultural events so that as Commissioner he knew what was going on in agriculture across the state. He reorganized the Department and established the office of *Assistant Commissioner* soon after taking the job. This allowed Commissioner Jones (and subsequent Commissioners) more opportunity to participate in agricultural events around the state while insuring that the department had a senior manager “looking after the store”. Ed Jones became the face of agriculture in Tennessee. From cattle shows & county fairs to 4-H & FFA

programs and visiting dignitaries, Ed was there always to see what the Department could do to better support the various agricultural enterprises in the state, from row crops to livestock to horticultural crops.

- Ed Jones was very active in the rejuvenation of the *Tennessee Agricultural Hall of Fame*, as previously noted. It deserves more than one mention, given the focus of this presentation.
- He was also very active in animal health issues. Commissioner Jones and the Department took an aggressively active role in trying to control and eradicate the many animal disease problems that were rampant in Tennessee during that time. The *Division of Animal Disease Control* was the oldest division in the Department and was a primary focus of Commissioner Jones during his tenure. Some of the notable items mentioned in his report to the Governor included:
  - ✓ Spearheaded adoption of calf vaccination to eradicate Brucellosis
  - ✓ Dealt with an anthrax outbreak in hogs in Lake County
  - ✓ Initiated a mastitis control program
  - ✓ Created a rabies inspection program for the State
- As Commissioner he continued his strong support, guidance and technical assistance by the Department for the adoption of artificial breeding for dairy cattle in Tennessee as a rapid means of dairy herd improvement.
- Ed Jones played a major role in the 1950 campaign *Keep Tennessee Green*.
- Jones took over a newly initiated surplus food distribution program and fashioned a *Division of Commodity Distribution* in the Department. By the end of his term he reported, “As a result of the work of this agency, more than 400,000 children in Tennessee schools now have wholesome lunches during the entire school year. . . A minor activity, but an important one is furnishing commodities for some 40 summer camps who serve close to 6,000 children during the vacation period.”
- During the last two years of his term, the *Commodity Distribution Division*, in cooperation with the *USDA Food Distribution Branch* distributed surplus food valued at \$5,300,000. He and the Department created an innovative system for managing the shipping and distribution of that food by using a series of volunteer coordinators for each of the eight distribution districts in the State.
- Ed Jones was an early innovator in the food safety arena as well, creating the first inspection and grading system for refrigerator food lockers in conjunction with the *Locker Plant Association* to “increase confidence consumers have in the plant where they have stored their food supplies.” Here his experience as a dairy inspector and a supervisor of the *Tennessee Dairy Products Association* served him well.
- He was exposed to the agricultural disaster relief programs during the disastrous drought of 1952, an experience that would strongly impact his later work on the Committee on Agriculture of the House of Representatives.
- Few parts of agriculture interested Ed Jones more than the dairy industry where he appointed a Special Commissioner for Dairy. He notes in his report to the Governor: *Special Commissioner gives exclusive attention to dairy interests, and establishes new standards for dairy products. He further reports: Tennessee is a great dairy state. Its milk cows are valued at upwards of \$120,000,000 and the gross income to our farmers from dairy is in excess of \$100,000,000 annually. In the manufacture of cheddar cheese, Tennessee with an annual output of 40,000,000 pounds—the average for 1949 and 1950—bids fair to supplant New York for fifth place. It is quite proper, therefore supervision of the dairy industry should have its own special Commissioner.* Ed Jones did his best to support that cheddar cheese goal by giving blocks and rounds of Tennessee Cheddar Cheese as Christmas presents for many years.

## **STATE OF TENNESSEE, AGRICULTURAL STABILIZATION & CONSERVATION SERVICE COMMITTEE CHAIRMAN 1961-1969**

In 1961 President John F. Kennedy appointed Ed Jones to chair the state *Agricultural Stabilization and Conservation Service Committee*. This was an important agricultural industry advisory position in the State and one that fit well with his IC Railroad job. Although it was not a full-time position, it was an honor to hold the position. It was also a political statement that moment Ed Jones was acknowledged as an important player in Tennessee agriculture and politics.

## **UNITED STATES HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES, MEMBER 1969 – 1989**

Ed Jones was elected to Congress in 1969 to fill out the unexpired term of Robert A. (Fats) Everett for the *8<sup>th</sup> Congressional District of Tennessee*. He was re-elected every two years through 1986 with only one serious contender over the next nine elections. When he retired from Congress in 1989 he was the Senior Democrat in the *Tennessee Congressional Delegation*.

### **COMMITTEE ON AGRICULTURE**

When Ed Jones, age 57, arrived as a new member of the Committee on Agriculture, then chaired by Congressman W. R. Poage of Texas, he was uniquely qualified for the position. Congressman Poage recognized this quickly and drew Congressman Jones into his inner circle. With a lifetime of agricultural experiences, whose breadth and depth were unparalleled among his contemporaries, The history of Ed Jones appears that it was tailor made to prepare him for the task of being a member and leader in the Committee on Agriculture of the US House of Representatives. He had grown up on a farm, was university trained in agriculture, had been a farmer, a Dairy Inspector with the Tennessee Department of Agriculture, a Supervisor of the Tennessee Dairy Products Association, and an Illinois Central Railroad Agent and Tennessee Commissioner of Agriculture. By the mid 70's Ed Jones was one of the leaders in the Ag Committee, not by seniority so much as by his broad knowledge of all facets of agriculture - something for which his upbringing, education and professional experience had prepared him. Ed Jones had the reputation in Washington of being a true Southern gentleman, and as Bob Cashdollar once declared, "Ed Jones can out-nice anybody."

In all the years of his congressional tenure, Ed Jones worked easily across party lines. The divisions in Congress seem to have been geographical rather than ideological. He worked with Republican Ag Committee staffers Hyde Murray (Minority Counsel), Jack Knebel (who later became Gerry Ford's Secretary of Agriculture) and John Rainbolt (who did most of the legal work to create the Ed Jones-sponsored CFTC legislation) at least as much as he worked with Democratic staffers Bob Bor (Committee General Counsel) and Fowler West (Committee Staff Director).

Over his eighteen years on the US House of Representatives Committee on Agriculture, he served on multiple sub-committees and chaired two:

### **SUBCOMMITTEE ON DAIRY AND POULTRY**

Jones became Chairman of the *Dairy and Poultry Subcommittee* in 1975, after the reorganization of the Agriculture Committee when Congressman Tom Foley of Washington became the Chairman and Congressman Poage reverted to being the Vice Chairman of the Committee. Foley kept the staff for the Committee that had been assembled by Congressman Poage and added a small number of key personnel for the first time for the Committee on Agriculture. In addition, he allowed each sub-committee chairman to have a professional staff person. Congressman Jones, who until then had earmarked one of his office staff positions to support his Ag Committee work, wasted no time in hiring a staffer for his *Subcommittee on Dairy and Poultry*. Jim Culver, a native of the 8<sup>th</sup> Congressional District and then-current PhD student in Agricultural Economics at University of

Tennessee, was the lucky person to fill that job. It was a main building block in establishing his career and is an honor to be involved with preparing this presentation to you thirty-five years later.

As he had done as *Commissioner of Agriculture* in Tennessee, Ed Jones wasted no time in getting out in the country to see what the issues were. The poultry industry was not heavily regulated, at least on the production side. Dairy, however, was another story. Federal programs, both legislative and administrative, were one, if not the major overriding, economic factor in where milk was produced and how it was priced. Jones was unique as a congressman in understanding milk production, pricing structure and federal regulation. Naturally, he was particularly interested in the dairy industry issues. Ed Jones was dedicated to the concept of the family farm and few sectors of agriculture better embodied that concept than the dairy farm. His arrival as Chairman was at a time of particular stress and transition in the family farm structure, particularly dairy farms and the dairy industry itself. Jones sensed that stress and transition from his personal farm ownership, but wanted to feel and see it firsthand. He initiated a series of field hearings in the major dairy producing areas of the country and in Washington, DC as documented in a special supplement to *The Tennessean*. These hearings, while not directly resulting in legislation, formed the basis for much of the discussion and change in both legislative and regulatory government dairy programs over the next decade.

Just as he did as *Tennessee Commissioner of Agriculture*, Ed Jones seemed to soak up the information - whether it was the problems of the small producers in Minnesota or the *Dairy Coop* in Tennessee. Though he later became chairman of another subcommittee, he continued to be particularly active on dairy issues. Until he retired, he was the *go to* Congressman on the House Ag Committee for dairy issues.

#### **SUBCOMMITTEE ON CONSERVATION AND CREDIT**

In January of 1977, Congressman Bob Bergland became *Secretary of Agriculture* and Ed Jones assumed his position as Chairman of the Subcommittee on Conservation and Credit of the House Committee on Agriculture. It was here that Ed Jones would leave his lasting mark on American agriculture and its soil and water. He now rated two professional staff who shared clerical staff with 3 other subcommittees. The two professional staff people were Bob Cashdollar and James Johnson. He served in this position until his retirement in 1969.

The Subcommittee under Jones had oversight and legislative jurisdiction over parts or all of six US Department of Agriculture agencies and two independent regulatory agencies:

- Agricultural Stabilization and Conservation Service
- Farmers Home Administration
- Farm Credit Administration
- Packers and Stockyards Administration
- Rural Electrification Administration
- Soil Conservation Service.
- Commodity Futures Trading Commission
- Farm Credit Administration and the Cooperatively-Owned Farm Credit System

It was this Subcommittee that Ed Jones made his legislative mark in four broad areas:

**#1 CONSERVATION** Of all the areas of legislative responsibility, conservation was always of the utmost importance to Ed Jones. The *Soil and Water Resources Conservation Act of 1977* along with the *Soil Conservation Act of 1984* were seminal pieces of conservation legislation, conceptualized, crafted, dragged, driven, cajoled, and horse traded through the legislative process by Ed Jones. These and other less visible, but no less important conservation legislative initiatives, have had and will continue to have a lasting impact on soil and water conservation in the United States. Bob Cashdollar who staffed this process for Jones said in a recent conversation, “Ed Jones did more on a legislative basis for soil and water conservation in the US than any legislator since the *Dust Bowl* days.”

- The *1977 Soil and Water Conservation Act*, sponsored by Ed Jones, created the legislative framework for public and private cooperation on soil and water conservation. He wrote, “There is a growing demand on the soil, water, and related resources of the US to meet present and future needs; .....in its concern for sustained use of the resource base, *Congress* has through this legislation ensured that the *Department of Agriculture* possesses information, technical expertise and a delivery system for providing assistance to land users with respect to conservation and use of soils, plants, woodlands, watershed protection and flood prevention, water use and conservation, animal husbandry, fish and wildlife management, recreation, community development, and related resource uses; a coordinated resource appraisal program is essential to effective soil and water conservation.”

- Five years later Jones would announce that he and a group of like minded conservationist had created the *National Endowment for Soil and Water Conservation*. Ed Jones modeled this endowment after the *National Endowment for Arts and Humanities*. In a press release in 1982, Ed Jones said, “A national sense of stewardship for the land must be revived – one that can be supported by all Americans, not just the few who work the land. This sense of stewardship is what the new *National Endowment for Soil and Water Conservation* is all about.” Jones was particularly fond of Lester Brown’s quote on the subject: *We have not inherited the earth from our fathers; we are borrowing it from our children.*

- Congress adopted the Ed Jones-drafted *Farmland Protection Policy Act of 1981* with Jones commenting, “The government can justify a more aggressive national program of cropland protection than currently exists. The least that we should do is to seek to achieve the general goal of the *FPPA*, which is to avoid action by federal agencies that cause undesirable farm land conversions. The program was essentially cost-free, is not regulatory, and does not interfere with the private land market.”

- In 1984 Jones again developed and brought to the *House of Representatives* conservation legislation aimed at protecting the country’s soil and water resources while assuring the long run viability and productivity of agriculture. He described the three major provisions of the bill as:

- Eliminate government price supports and similar benefits for crops produced on fragile lands which are put into agricultural production in the future.

- Provide farmers who use soil-saving crop rotation practices with a system to protect their crop acreage planting history so that they will not suffer sharper cutbacks than fence-to-fence farmers when federal acreage reductions programs are in effect.

- Offer farmers cost sharing payments for conservation practices and land rental payments on fragile land which is taken out of crop production under long term Conservation Reserve contracts.

- USDA conservation programs that Ed Jones, acting as *Chairman of the Subcommittee on Conservation and Credit*, was active in either because he brought the program into being through legislation, rejuvenated it from his Subcommittee post or kept a watchful eye on to ensure proper implementation encompass an impressive and far-reaching list:

- |                                   |  |
|-----------------------------------|--|
| ✓ Conservation Reserve Program    | ✓ Great Plains Conservation Program            |
| ✓ Wetlands Reserve Program        | ✓ Resource Conservation & Development Programs |
| ✓ Rural Clean Water Program       | ✓ Environmental Quality Incentives Program     |
| ✓ Water Bank                      | ✓ Wildlife Habitat Incentives Program          |
| ✓ Emergency Conservation Program  | ✓ Agricultural Conservation Security Program   |
| ✓ Forestry Incentives Program     | ✓ Resource Conservation Development Loans      |
| ✓ Conservation Operations         | ✓ River Basin Surveys and Investigations       |
| ✓ Watershed Planning & Operations | ✓ Soil Conservation Service Programs           |

**#2 FARM CREDIT** Ed Jones was intimately familiar with the farm credit issues, both as a farmer and as a member of the board of the *Dyersburg Production Credit Association* when he arrived in Washington in 1969. That knowledge would be severely tested over the more than a decade he served as *Chairman* of the *Conservation and Credit Subcommittee*.

- The changing nature of the credit markets and agricultural credit needs during the two decades that Jones served on the *Agriculture Committee* called up every ounce of ingenuity and foresight that Jones had or could borrow from others. The land price run up of the late 60's, the rising inflation and interest rates mid 70's, and the disasters of the credit markets in the late 70's and early 80's with 15 to 20% interest rates created a credit crisis in agriculture across the nation. It became clear that the structure of the Farm Credit system was outmoded and ineffective under the circumstance.

- The system was not well positioned to raise the necessary funds from the financial markets or to deal with the rapidly evolving structure of an increasingly deregulated financial market to meet the increasingly complex financial needs of agriculture and agricultural producers.

- With the *Agricultural Credit Act of 1978*, Jones set out to remedy that situation. As important as the legislation was and the breadth of the changes made, it was only partially successful as inflation and financial deregulation overwhelmed all of the existing farm credit structures and agriculture itself.

- The *Farm Credit Act of 1980* was a largely successful effort to salvage the viable parts of the Farm Credit system. This act with the additional legislation, the *Farm Credit Act Amendments of 1985* and of 1987 provided the core legislative basis for the Farm Credit system today. The system as we know it today survives largely as a direct result of the work and leadership of Ed Jones and a few of his colleagues.

**#3 FEDERAL CROP INSURANCE** Between the stress of the country's economic woes and their impact on farmers and numerous crop disasters, the farm sector in the US was in dire straits by 1980. Over a five-year period there were tractor-cades, farm strikes, bankruptcies, farm losses and even marches on Washington!

- At the same time there was a recognition by Jones and others that the Federal government could not pay for all of the crop disasters that occurred, and that the system of doing so on an ad hoc basis encouraged farmers to take unreasonable crop risks that were not insurable. Jones tried to strike a workable compromise: private crop insurance, somewhat government subsidized, that allowed workable private insurance at a price that farmers could afford and at a savings to the government compared to the disaster relief programs.

- In 1977, President Jimmy Carter named Jim Deal as head of the *Federal Crop Insurance Corporation* and Bob Bergland as Secretary of Agriculture. Bergland, a former congressman and farmer, was Jones' predecessor as Chairman of the *Conservation and Credit Subcommittee*. President Carter and Secretary Bergland both had definite ideas about what they wanted in the way of a crop insurance program and both knew and worked well with Ed Jones. President Carter did not like free farm disaster programs and Secretary Bergland had often referenced disaster programs as 'too little, delivered too late and of no meaningful value'. Bergland had started work on legislation on the Subcommittee on Conservation and Credit. Ed Jones picked up that work and carried it to fruition.

- Deal and Jones and their staffs would work to develop a meaningful crop insurance program that would be a three way partnership between the farmer, private sector insurance and the government. That work resulted in the 1980 Federal Crop Insurance Act. This act, which has had three major sets of amendments, never-the-less provided the basis for a workable crop insurance program. It took Ed Jones three years to develop and pass the legislation.

- In his comments before the House Committee on Agriculture in July 2010, Deal reviewed the history of Federal Crop Insurance:

*The Passage of the Federal Crop Insurance Act of 1980 marked the birth of the present federal crop insurance program and the start of the public/private partnership that has been the foundation for its success. With the passage of this Act, Congress for the first time embraced the goal of establishing a program that provides protection for all farmers in all regions, the intent of replacing ad hoc disaster programs.....Today this Federal Crop Insurance Program is the envy of the world...it stands second to none as a world-class agriculture risk protection and management tool....A lot of people have contributed to the development and evolution of the modern crop insurance program...*

#### **#4 COMMODITY FUTURES TRADING COMMISSION**

- Ed Jones was involved in drafting and passing the regulatory framework for the *Commodity Futures Trading Commission Act* of 1974, which created *CFTC* as the new independent government agency whose job was to regulate future markets. It also expanded the scope of futures to cover the previously listed agricultural products and “all other goods and articles, except onions, and all services, rights, and interests in which contracts for future delivery are presently or in the future dealt in.” This act was a precursor to the rapid growth and development of the futures industry and to futures moving beyond agriculture to precious and industrial metals, energy products, and financial and securities futures and options.
- When he became Chairman of the *Conservation and Credit Subcommittee*, which had jurisdiction over the agency, Ed Jones was already very familiar with the agency from his legislative work in its creation. He was instrumental in recommending to the President one commissioner, Reed Dunn, and the second Chief Economist.
- Jones orchestrated the passage of two futures acts. The *Futures Trading Act of 1978* and the *Futures Trading Act of 1982* provide the basis for the Commission today. These two acts broadened the scope of the agency and allowed it to dramatically broaden the scope of futures and options that could be traded. He not only helped shape the Commission in its beginnings but the future direction of both the agency and industry.

#### **COMMITTEE ON HOUSE ADMINISTRATION**

Ed Jones’ activities on the Committee, while significant, do not relate particularly to agriculture and as such are not reviewed here. However is worth noting that he was very involved in the administrative activities of the *House of Representatives*. If you ate on the House side of Capitol Hill or parked your car there, you were subject to areas at least partially controlled for many years by Ed Jones. Glamorous, no - influential, yes!

#### **DEMOCRATIC CAUCUS COMMITTEE ON ORGANIZATION, STUDY AND REVIEW**

In addition to his work on the Ag Committee and the House Administration Committee, Ed Jones also served in the mid 70’s on the *Democratic Caucus Committee on Organization, Study and Review*, which was known at the time as the *Hansen Commission*, named for its Chairperson, Congresswoman Julia Butler Hansen of Washington. This committee was responsible for instigating many of the reforms that repaired several weaknesses in the way the *House of Representatives* operated.

One of the major changes was in the seniority system. At that time, at the beginning of each congress, the Senior Member of each committee automatically became chairman. On the recommendation of the *Hansen Commission*, the Democratic Caucus voted to allow the members of the Caucus to elect the chairmen of the committees. It was several years before this ruling resulted in any changes, but ironically the first casualty of this change was Ag Committee Chairman Poage, a close friend of Ed Jones. Poage was replaced by Representative Tom Foley of Washington, who later became *Speaker of the House*. As it happened, he, too, was a good friend of Ed Jones.

## RETIREMENT

### Farmer and Cotton Ginner

In 1969, Ed Jones and *Miss Llew* returned home to Yorkville to their beloved farm. He was active in local agriculture and participated in the building of a new cotton gin in the area.

### Lower Mississippi Delta Commission, Member

Ed Jones was appointed to the *Delta Commission* in 1968. After his retirement from Congress, he participated in the Commission's study of the *Lower Mississippi Delta Region*. Ed Jones understood the legacy of the region's long history, culture, the character of its people and the forces that shaped them. The *Associated Press*, in an article on the Commission's report, quoted Ed Jones: Former Congressman Ed Jones called it *The plantation mentality, an ingrained attitude - a kind of caste system - rooted in the region's history. The landowning rich remain complacently superior. . . The poor, too often, remain apathetic, without any realistic job prospects and are utterly dependent on welfare.*

## HONORS AND AWARDS

- *Progressive Farmer* Man of the Year for service to Southern Agriculture
- Cooperative Hall of Fame
- Gamma Sigma Delta Award for Service to Agriculture
- University of Tennessee Martin School of Agriculture Distinguished Alumnus Award
- 4-H Alumni Award
- FFA Distinguished National Leadership Award

## OTHER

- West Tennessee Artificial Breeding Association, Founding Member
- West Tennessee Artificial Breeding Association, President
- Mid South Fair, Board Member
- Dyersburg Production Credit Association, Board Member
- Yorkville Rural Telephone Cooperative, President
- National Telephone Cooperative Association, Board Member
- Longtime member of the Gibson County Board of Education
- Cumberland Presbyterian Church, Elder and Clerk of Session
- Alpha Gamma Rho Fraternity, Honorary Initiate
- Bethel College Board of Trustees, Chairman

## PERSONAL LIFE

Ed Jones was a native of Yorkville and was reared on his family farm. He attended the University of Tennessee Junior College where he graduated with a two-year in Agriculture and the University of Tennessee, Knoxville, where he graduated with a BS in Dairy Science.

In 1983, he married Llewellyn Wyatt, daughter of Dr. and Mrs. F.E. Wyatt of Yorkville. The family made their home on the farm and in the house where Llew Wyatt Jones was born and grew up. Together they had two daughters, the late Mary Llew Jones McGuire and Jennifer Jones Kinnard, MD. Megan Elisabeth Kinnard is their one grandchild.

While living in DC, they maintained an apartment in the *Methodist Building*, located next door to the *Supreme Court*. Ms Llew was famous for the luncheons for the 'ladies' she often hosted during her caring tenure as *Congressional Spouse!* After retiring to their home in Yorkville, they enjoyed their family and Ed remained active in Tennessee agriculture.

He was a lifetime member of the Yorkville Cumberland Presbyterian Church where he served as Elder and Clerk of Session. Mr. Ed and Ms Llew are buried in Yorkville Cemetery.

## ED JONES, ALWAYS A FARMER.