

DENISE JONES, ENTERTAINMENT INDUSTRY TRAILBLAZER LEAVES UNPARALLELED LEGACY OF AFRO-CARIBBEAN CULTURAL ACHIEVEMENTS IN CANADA AND ABROAD

Co-Founder of Jones & Jones Productions, JAMBANA™ One World Festival and Managing Five-Time Juno Award Winner Exco Levi Amongst Jones' Many Accomplishments

The Canadian, Jamaican and global entertainment industry is mourning the untimely passing of wife, mother, daughter, sister, and cultural icon Denise Jones. The tenacious CEO and co-founder of Jones & Jones Productions passed away on Thursday, December 3rd, surrounded by her family, after being diagnosed with brain cancer in June 2019. She leaves behind her husband, Allan Jones, co-founder of Jones & Jones, her sons Jesse and Jerimi and a wealth of family, friends, professional associates and admirers of her unwavering devotion to God and passion for elevating Afro-Caribbean culture and artists around the world.

Jones, a native of the parish of Portland, Jamaica, and notable actress, emigrated to Canada in the 1980s and after earning her BA in Communications and Theatre from the University of Windsor, served as the executive director for the Peel Multicultural Council and as a theatre critic and arts reporter for CBC Radio in Sudbury, ON where she and Allan first resided before eventually moving their family to Scarborough and later to Brampton. It wasn't long before Jones' entertainment roots, tenacity, leadership skills, and passion for championing both underrepresented artforms and artists sparked the creation of Jones & Jones Productions in 1987 and the Rhythm Canada Talent Agency three years later.

"I have always been impressed with Denise's commitment to promoting Jamaica and its culture, and the passion she displayed throughout all of her endeavours to "get it right" and to make people enjoy themselves," said The Honourable Olivia "Babsy" Grange, Minister of Culture, Gender, Entertainment, and Sport.

From its inception, Jones & Jones was heralded as one of the premier music promotion and brand marketing companies in Canada, producing over 30 concerts and plays annually, as well as a talent search competition, while simultaneously forging mutually beneficial alliances between Caribbean performers and corporations seeking to make more meaningful connections with the community.

Long before diversity, equity, and inclusion were en vogue, Jones' ingenuity and indomitable spirit moved politicians, business leaders and the media to acknowledge and value Black excellence and entertainment in various forms, especially Reggae music. From establishing JAMBANA™, One World Festival - the second-largest Afrocentric cultural event in Canada - which at its height drew over 45,000 attendees and was named one of Ontario's Top 100 Festivals in 2015, to serving as the Founding Chair of the Reggae Category for the Canadian Academy of Recording Arts and Sciences' Juno Awards and managing five-time Juno Award winner and Brampton Walk

of Fame inductee Exco Levi, Jones was widely regarded as the preeminent voice in Reggae music promotion and advancement across the nation.

“[She was] my brilliant manager, friend, mother, and teacher for almost 10 years,” said Levi. Who also noted that his Juno and Harry Jerome Awards, and Walk of Fame honour were all “under the skilful guidance of Denise.”

Jones’ Lifetime Achievement Award from the Urban Music Association of Canada, Bob Marley Memorial Award for work in Entertainment, and Toronto Star “People with Clout in Entertainment” designation all bear witness to her stellar music industry reputation; but her influence and expertise extended far beyond the performing arts, earning her countless accolades for her advocacy work, including a Government of Ontario Community Service Award, a Ministry of Citizenship Ontario Government Award, an African Canadian Achievement Award, a Harry Jerome Award and most recently she was named one of 100 Accomplished Black Canadian Women.

Never content to rest on her laurels and always eager to expand the scope of her contributions, Jones was instrumental in the Peel District School Board’s establishment of Black History Month celebrations, served as a board member for the Brampton Board of Trade, Obsidian Theatre Company, Canadian Independent Record Producers Association, and Helping Hands Jamaica Foundation of Canada which builds houses and schools in Jamaica. As VP, Marketing and VP, Education for the Canadian Society of Professional Event Planners she lent her time and talent to promoting and teaching the finer points of producing high calibre events.

Since her passing, tributes to Jones’ tremendous legacy have been pouring out across social media, including a message from Prime Minister Justin Trudeau, who called her “an incredible advocate for Caribbean arts and culture [who] contributed so much to our country.”

Prior to her diagnosis, Jones had embarked on the next phase of her illustrious career, teaching at Ryerson University. As a professor for the Concert & Festival Management course, she thoroughly enjoyed imparting the pearls of wisdom she had amassed over the years. Her well-known sayings like -“*Don’t let your address define you, choose your career from what you love and know that change is OK. Not one but five careers are possible for your generation.*” - undoubtedly leaving an indelible mark on all those fortunate enough to have learned from this master of her craft and true class act.

Source: [New Haven Funeral Centre Inc.](#)