



Don William Jones

February 3, 1940 - February 9, 2026

My father, Don William Jones, departed this life on February 9, 2026, after a battle with Alzheimer's. He was 86. My father was preceded in death by his wife, Marilee Templeman Jones; his mother and father, Arthur Albert and Wilma Davies Jones; his brother, James Arthur Jones; his mother and father-in-law, Robert and Virginia Templeman; and his brother and sister-in-law, Robert and Ann Felsted. He is survived by his son, Brian Christopher Templeman Jones and his wife, Kandy; his grandchildren, Victoria Kathryn Blackwood, her husband, Noah, and Brian Christopher Templeman Jones, II; his nephews, Bradley Pierce Jones and Gregory Arthur Jones; his niece, Kathy Felsted Usher, her husband, Tom; and their extended families.

There will be a celebration of his life on March 6, 2026, from 6:00 p.m. to 8:00 p.m. in the SportsMED Stadium Club at the Trash Panda stadium at Toyota Field. In lieu of flowers, please consider a contribution in his name to Hospice of Limestone County.

My father was born on February 3, 1940, in Centralia, Illinois, to a very close-knit family. He rose from humble means to landing a man on the moon through hard work and an unbelievable amount of luck.

When my father was twelve, he began to sneak out of the house at night and hitchhike to a neighboring town to work at Pino's bar and grill. His job was to grab the cash register and run out the back door when the fights began. By the time he was thirteen, he had saved enough money to buy a car which he used quite effectively to terrorize the police department's night shift.

After high school, my father had an appointment to attend West Point. When it was time to get on the bus, he didn't go because "he didn't feel like it." That decision saved his life.

Instead, my father attended the University of Missouri School of Mines and Metallurgy at Rolla to study engineering and live the good life on the third floor of the mortuary which backed up to sorority row where he and his best friend Russ Rainey would spend countless hours drinking beer and watching the sorority girls shower through the open windows on the second floor.

I am not sure who was a more effective servant of mischief, my dad or Russ. Nonetheless on a whim, my father and Russ decided to hitchhike from Rolla, Missouri, to Denver, Colorado, in the dead of winter to see Russ' girlfriend Fran. Fran was my mother's roommate, and the two women soon found themselves being wined and dined and shown about the town. At the end of the date, my mother had to sell my father's clothes to pay the tab...

Now you would think that going on a blind date with a lanky kid from Rolla who wore jeans and was so broke that he had to hitchhike and sell his clothes to buy dinner would deter any type of long-term romance. Ironically, this chance encounter lasted fifty-five years.

My mother and father were married in Bethany, Missouri, on September 5, 1964. The day of the wedding brought epic rains to such extent that the church flooded, prompting my Grandmother Templeman to exclaim that "even God is against this wedding." Other family members, however, were more optimistic, as wagers were placed that the marriage would last no more than six weeks. As a honeymoon, "fat boy and sweetums" drove to their new home and new jobs in Huntsville, Alabama.

It is in Huntsville that my father began his career at IBM. It was at IBM that he worked to land a man on the moon, and where he would begin to make friends that would last a lifetime. As a newly married couple, my parents entertained a lot and began to build a network of friends who, as they read this column, will surely reminisce of the good times they had when they were all "just starting out..."

My father relished being an engineer. After retiring from IBM, he went on to careers at Campbell Engineering, Mesa Associates, and finally, Arthur Jones Associates, Inc.

On November 1, 1967, my father embarked on his most challenging and rewarding endeavor that weighed ten pounds and was twenty-four inches long. I am an only child, so I guess my parents got it right the first time. Both my parents spent the rest of their lives making sure I was prepared for life's ups and downs. My mother was a feminist and as her only male child she was determined to teach me the more genteel aspects of life.

My father, on the other hand, espoused more spirited advice: "Don't do that, I've already done it, and I used up all the family luck". "Shake a man's hand with a firm grip". "You can do that standing on your head" were phrases aimed at me quite frequently, but my favorite of all time was "women are like buses, you can always catch another one". Now some of my father's insight into the universe didn't really stick in my realm of understanding until I had a child in college and I was paying the bill. DO NOT sign up for ballet to meet hot girls. DO NOT drop out of law school with a semester left to "find yourself". What seemed like pretty good whims at the time were in fact lousy ideas that my father crushed with a lot of yelling and a mastery of profanity that I can only hope I can emulate as Christopher gets older.

My father had a tremendous impact on my life as my Scoutmaster. He really enjoyed camping and led Troop 399 on some epic adventures as he guided countless scouts through the lessons they would use to lead successful lives as grown men. I am an Eagle Scout, a college graduate, a law school graduate, and the District Attorney because of my father. I truly understand the meaning of "On my honor, I will do my best to do my duty to God and my country..." because of my father.

My father was something special. Anyone who knew him can tell you. He loved his family and he was very proud of me. He loved his friends and cherished the memories as each friendship threaded its way through his life.

He really enjoyed a good party, a cold Bud Light, and the Chicago Cubs. Despite being ill in the end, my father lived a very full life. I am very thankful that Kandy and my father's relationship blossomed in his later years. I am very thankful for the care my father received at Elk River Nursing in Ardmore, Limestone Lodge, Limestone Health Facility, and especially those angels at Hospice. I am eternally grateful to Jerry, Bill, Marilyn, and Bill who were there for him until the very end.

Most importantly, I am very thankful that despite my hard head, I got his message. My father's eternal legacy will be the recording in my head that I repeat almost daily to my children, and in time, they to their children. It is almost impossible to summarize a person's life in a single column. That's where every person who reads this or hears my voice is going to help me spread his legacy. Tell the funny stories that I couldn't put in print. Tell the not so funny stories because life is full of both. Cherish my father's memory. Hug your mother and father and tell them you love them. Hug your spouse, your children, and your grandchildren and tell them you love them too. Life goes by pretty fast, so pay attention and don't miss it...

I love you, Dad.

Previous Events

Celebration

MAR 6. 6:00 PM.

Sportsmed Stadium Club - Trash Panda Stadium