



## Dr. Edith Irby Jones

December 23, 1927 - July 15, 2019

Edith Irby was born on December 23, 1927, in Mayflower, Arkansas, to Mattie Buice Irby and Robert Irby. From the humble beginnings of being the daughter of a sharecropper and domestic worker, Dr. Irby Jones rose above her adversities. At the age of five, her father was killed by a horse, leaving her mother to care for three children alone. Her mother was forced to give up the family farm and possessions and move to Hot Springs Arkansas where Dr. Irby Jones grew up. Her older sister died at 12 years of age from typhoid fever. Both her father's and sister's deaths planted the seed of determination for Dr. Irby Jones to be a physician. She saw that when the injured and sick had access to good medical care, they had a better chance at survival. Most people of color did not have access to a doctor or quality medical care.

As a young child, Dr. Irby Jones suffered from rheumatic fever, preventing her from attending school until she was 9 years old. Her mother taught her at home and encouraged her to excel. Although Dr. Irby Jones entered school late, she accelerated and graduated from Langston High School in 1944. Her high school teacher, Mrs. Margaret Martin helped her attend Mrs. Martin's alma mater, Knoxville College, in Knoxville, Tennessee. Dr. Irby Jones did not have the money for tuition but she received a scholarship and she worked in the President's office as his assistant using her outstanding short-hand and typing skills. Requiring three names at graduation, Dr. Irby Jones took the middle name of "Mae" and became Edith Mae Irby.

After graduating in 1948, Dr. Irby Jones applied to medical schools and completed a graduate course at Northwestern University in Evanston, Illinois in preparation for medical school. University of Arkansas Medical School accepted Dr. Irby Jones and she became the first African American to be admitted to a white medical school in the South. Union Missionary Baptist Church took up collections to help with her tuition and living expenses. This is the church where Dr. Irby Jones accepted Jesus Christ as her Savior when she was a little girl. This is also the church that nurtured her faith, self-esteem and social skills throughout her childhood.

Mrs. Daisy Bates, a Civil Rights Activist, with her husband, L.C. Bates supported Dr. Irby Jones throughout her studies and ran a campaign in their Arkansas State Press to financially help Dr. Irby Jones pay her tuition. Mr. and Mrs. Bates became lifelong friends. Dr. Jones received a lot of encouragement but also threats. The harsh realities of segregation dictated that Dr. Irby Jones could not use the same bathroom, library or cafeteria as her fellow students. Dr. Irby Jones did not become bitter but used her notoriety to speak to African American students in the area to urge them to not be limited in their aspirations. Dr. Jocelyn Elders, former Surgeon General of the United States remembers being one of those students and being inspired to become a physician. During her time at the medical school, Dr. Irby Jones also made secret trips with teams of workers from the NAACP to enroll members for the organization and to register voters. She was a member of the "Freedom Four" along with Attorneys Floyd Davis, Harold Flowers and Bob Booker.

During her second year of school, Dr. Irby Jones' mother died. Dr. Irby Jones continued her studies despite her loss. That same year, she married Dr. James B. Jones, a professor at Arkansas Agricultural, Mechanical & Normal College (Arkansas AM&N) in Pine Bluff, Arkansas. They had three children and formed a loving partnership that lasted until Dr. J.B. Jones' death in 1989. Together, the doctors acquired property to provide affordable housing to struggling families and helped numerous students to go to college and find employment.

In 1952, Dr. Irby Jones received her Doctor of Medicine degree, as the first African-American graduate from University of Arkansas for Medical Sciences and was accepted to complete the first residency by an African American at a hospital in Little Rock, Arkansas. Dr. Irby Jones opened her family practice in Hot Springs, Arkansas, serving all who needed medical care regardless of ability to pay.

In 1959, Dr. J.B. Jones was offered the associate dean position at Texas Southern University and the family moved from Hot Springs to Houston, Texas. They joined Antioch Missionary Baptist Church where both doctors were active in the church. Dr. Irby Jones was a Golden Member at Antioch and a member of the Priscilla Circle and Golden Saints. The Women's Ministry worked with Dr. Irby Jones to provide needed aid to her clinic in Haiti. In 2016, she was honored at the church's 150 Anniversary Celebration.

Dr. Irby Jones completed an internal medicine residency at Baylor College of Medicine, becoming the first African American female resident at Baylor College of Medicine Affiliated Hospitals in Houston. In 1960, Dr. Irby Jones opened her private practice in the heart of Third Ward and continued caring for anyone who needed medical care until her

retirement in 2013. She was appointed a Clinical Assistant Professor of Medicine at Baylor College of Medicine and at the University of Texas Medical School. Many medical students were privileged to experience a medical office dedicated to the community in which it was located. Dr. Irby Jones was involved in various professional organizations such as the Houston Medical Forum, Lone Star Medical Society, Harris County Medical Society, Houston Chapter of the American Heart Association and the American Medical Association. She was a charter member of Physicians for Human Rights, which won the Nobel Peace Prize in 1997 and a founding member of the Association of Black Cardiologists. She accepted many leadership roles, serving on a variety of committees. In 1985, She was elected the first female president of the National Medical Association. She traveled to Cuba, Mexico, China, Russia, Liberia and Ghana to exchange medical knowledge and to help establish clinics in Vaudreuil, Haiti and Veracruz, Mexico.

Dr. Irby Jones was also very active in the community organizations such as Eta Phi Beta, Houston League of Business and Professional Women, Dorothy Heights Chapter of the National Council of Negro Women, Top Ladies of Distinction, Houston Metropolitan Alumnae Chapter of Delta Sigma Theta Sorority, Grand Court of the Order of Calanthe and the Links, Inc.

Dr. Irby Jones was recognized for her hard work and dedication. Here is just a sample of her numerous awards: In 1986, the City of Houston declared an Edith Irby Jones Day. In 1988, the American Society of Medicine named her Internist of the Year. In 1993, the American Gerontology Society recognized her for Great Contribution in the field of Medicine in the area of Gerontology. In 1998, President William Clinton issued a Presidential Citation to Dr. Irby Jones, honoring her with the Outstanding Achievement Award. In 2001, She received the Oscar E. Edwards Memorial Award for Volunteerism and Community Service from the American College of Physicians, American Society of Internal Medicine. In 2002, she received the Quentin Mease Community Service Award from the Houston Area Urban League. In 2007, she was named a Master by the American College of Physicians. In 2014, the University of Arkansas at Little Rock placed her marker on the Arkansas Civil Rights Heritage Trail. Dr. Irby Jones was awarded Doctorates by Missouri Valley College (1988), Mary Holmes College (1989), Lindenwood College (1991) and Knoxville College (1992).

Dr. Irby Jones loved many and was loved by many. She is predeceased by her husband, Dr. James B. Jones and her granddaughter, Safir Romain. She is survived by her three children: Gary I. Jones, Myra Jones Romain and Keith I. Jones (Kimberly Wright Jones), her grandchildren: Gamal Jones, H'Dari Jones, Johari Williams, Kani Romain Meyer, Aita Romain and Kenneth Jones, her 10 greatgrandchildren and a host of nephews, nieces

and cousins.

In lieu of flowers, donations can be made in honor of Dr. Edith Irby Jones to:

<http://www.ABCCardio.org>

ABC Trainee/Fellow Cardiovascular Career Development Program

Donations can be made online: <https://abccardio.kindful.com/?campaign=1027453>

Antioch Educational Scholarship Foundation

[AESFonline.org](http://AESFonline.org) or AESF, PO Box 981, Houston, TX 77002 (memo Dr. Edith Irby Jones)

Houston Metropolitan Alumnae Chapter Physical & Mental Health Program (Dr. Edith Irby Jones In memo). Payments can be made via PayPal: [treasurer@hmacdelta.org](mailto:treasurer@hmacdelta.org) or HMAC, c/o Dr. Edith Irby Jones PMH, PO Box 57108, Houston, TX 77256.

# Events

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**JUL 26 Visitation** 11:00AM - 04:30PM  
Rose Chapel @ Mabrie Memorial Mortuary  
5000 Almeda Road, Houston, TX, US, 77004

**JUL 26 Wake** 06:00PM - 09:00PM  
Antioch Missionary Baptist Church  
500 Clay Street, Houston, TX, US, 77002

**JUL 26 Omega Omega Service by Delta Sigma Theta Sorority, Inc.** 07:00PM  
Antioch Missionary Baptist Church  
500 Clay Street, Houston, TX, US, 77002

**JUL 27 Visitation** 10:00AM - 11:00AM  
Antioch Missionary Baptist Church  
500 Clay Street, Houston, TX, US, 77002

**JUL 27 Celebration of Life Service** 11:00AM  
Antioch Missionary Baptist Church  
500 Clay Street, Houston, TX, US, 77002

**JUL 29 Celebration of Life Service** 11:00AM  
Union Missionary Baptist Church  
219 Gulpha Street, Hot Springs, AR, US, 71901

# Comments

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“ An external video has been added.



**Mabrie Memorial Mortuary** - July 17, 2019 at 02:22 PM



“ Dr. Edith Irby Jones, remarkable woman pioneer extraordinaire

**Deborah Fields Harris** - July 19, 2019 at 09:01 PM



“ From labour to reward! Well done Dr. Edith Irby Jones...Your legend continues

**Evonne Crane** - July 21, 2019 at 06:34 AM



“ She was the sweetest most generous and loving person. She loved her work and her patients and was a blessing to all. You will be missed!

**Mary** - July 21, 2019 at 08:51 AM



“ Thank God for Dr. Jones. I remember you encouraging and helping everyone. Encouraging education and its importance.

Your time and patience you have me will remain in my heart.

I can visually see you moving about as you did with such a fast pace, with that white coat flashing as you moved, when you hear your name you would stop, "Yes" always with that golden smile and acknowledge that caller.

God bless you

You are our special Angel

**Beatrice Marie Burrell** - July 23, 2019 at 07:42 AM



“ DR JONES WAS MY PHYSICIAN FOR OVER A DECADE.SHE WAS ALWAYS VERY POSITIVE,I WILL NEVER FORGET HER CONTAGIOUS SMILE.DR JONES WAS VERY TRULY A QUEEN....

**SHIRLEY SIMMONS** - July 25, 2019 at 06:47 PM

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“ The family of Mrs, Lillian Outley,a longtime neighbor,would like to thank Dr. Jones for saving our mothers life so many years ago frome a poisonous snakebite. Withut Dr. Jones expertise and knowledge she would have died since non of the doctors before her could discover after two months of high fever, confusion and really scarey moments Dr Jones was greatly respected and loved . She will be missed. Thank God for her.



**brenda brown** - August 09, 2019 at 05:28 PM

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“ One of the first things that Dr. Jones would say -after she greeted you) when she entered the exam room(every time ) in an “oh so humble and pleasant demeanor” was “What can I do for you today?” Thank you Dr Jones for being an “humble servant!” You will be missed. RIP  
My deepest and most sincere condolences to her family. ~Gwendolyn Latulas

**Gwendolyn Latulas** - August 06, 2019 at 11:14 PM

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“ Dr. Jones was one of my favorite former members. She bought the stars down from the sky for all to see and know all things are possible if you only believe. God bless you family.

**Pastor Otis B. Winkley Jr.** - July 26, 2019 at 09:59 PM

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“ DOROTHY SIMMONS lit a candle in memory of Dr. Edith Irby Jones



**DOROTHY SIMMONS** - July 25, 2019 at 06:52 PM



“ SHIRLEY SIMMONS lit a candle in memory of Dr. Edith Irby Jones



**SHIRLEY SIMMONS** - July 25, 2019 at 06:48 PM

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“ Dr. Edith Irby Jones,

I remember her very well. My mother like your mom was the first black nurse in Lufkin, Tx. As a nurse my mother worked with Dr. Jones and other black doctors in our community and hospitals, Riverside and Mercy hospital that was on Cullen Blvd. just to name a few. Through that affiliation Dr. Jones was my mother's physician as well as my two brothers and myself. I was the oldest. A handsome young man I was, a young child under her care. I remember that lady: "That's that lady with them needles."

Being the handsome young child that I was, mothers protect their little ones. I had a great hiding place, under my mother's dress. If I was afraid of someone or something, I would run to my mother, raise her dress up, wrap my arms around her leg covering myself with her dress to hide for safety. Well Dr. Jones took my hiding spot. When we visited Dr. Jones office, she would say "well I'm going to give a shot". I would see Dr. Jones raise my mother's dress and give her a shot in her thigh. Then I would shout "shot, shot I don't want no shot" as I would quietly back out open the office door, run out the building and into the neighborhood. Well, Dr. Jones had Supermen and Wonder Women for staff members. Now I was very fast, but that staff would: chase me around, through the neighborhood, and around the doctor's office, corner me, wrestle me down, and take me to Dr. Jones where she would give me that shot. "That's that lady with them needles."

How ironic, I was in the area driving by the office and Dr. Jones and those encounters came to my mind, Dr. Edith Irby Jones. Now 3 weeks later to hear on the news of Dr. Jones late that evening. My mother lives with me, so I jumped up yelling Mother, Mother look at this on the news. She and I were very saddened of such a great loss. My mother immediately called out the children names in the name of Jesus and spoke of the fond memories of Dr. Jones and children.

"That Lady with them Needles", I thank God for his guidance in blessing Dr. Jones to be one of his great physicians here on earth and to be a great wonderful servant to us, our families, and others throughout this land and nation. I plead the blood of Jesus over you and loved ones will be lifted up and given strength, love, mercy, and fond memories of the greatness the Lord has blessed us with. That lady with them needles, that gave me shots. This is our prayer for your family Ms. Doris Gipson and Harris County Deputy Gipson, her son.

We love you and may God bless you all.

M. G. - July 24, 2019 at 07:30 PM

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“ A great Doctor of all times!  
Gone but never to be forgotten, RIH



**Katie K** - July 20, 2019 at 06:08 PM

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“ RIH Dr Edith Irby Jones

**Vonda Breaux** - July 21, 2019 at 08:35 PM

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“ My heartfelt prayers and condolences go out to Keith, Kimberly and all who loved this Great Queen...her true love and amazing legacy will live on. I know she is smiling and taking her well earned rest in THE Arms of our SAVIOR.



**Demetria Routte** - July 20, 2019 at 05:42 PM

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“ Loretta Ghriri lit a candle in memory of Dr. Edith Irby Jones



**Loretta Ghriri** - July 20, 2019 at 08:36 AM

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“ Dr.Jones was my Mother's physician Maggie Lyons and I was going through a transition and I called Dr.jones screaming and crying and she came right away and calmed me down. In addition, she allowed me to do my internship in her facility and I felt connected with her in a special way because of her I was allowed to worked for Methodist hospital system in the Medical Center. Myra, Gary and Keith words can not Express how much your Mother meant to me but I am sending up prayers and condolences for you and your family. Loretta Ghriri

**Loretta Ghriri** - July 20, 2019 at 08:24 AM



“ RIP soror Dr.Jones, you took care my health for many years and you always made sure your patients were taken cared of even it was 9or 10pm!  
With love and compassion I extend my condolences to Sorors, Cynthia and daughter. God bless, soror Joan Batie

**Joan Batie** - July 20, 2019 at 03:29 PM



“ Condolences to Dr. Edith Irby Jones family, friends and colleagues. She was a pioneer, intellectual, community activist, kind, considerate, loving and funny! Everyone loved her, she will be remembered fondly.



**Liz Brown** - July 19, 2019 at 11:59 PM



“ Demitrice Venters lit a candle in memory of Dr. Edith Irby Jones



**Demitrice Venters** - July 19, 2019 at 10:54 PM



“ My condolences to Dr. Edith Irby Jones's family. She was my doctor for many years since college. I have always admired and was inspired by Dr. Jones. She had excellent work ethics and manners. I would always remember how kind she treated her patients and people. She will always be remembered.

**Demitrice Venters** - July 19, 2019 at 10:50 PM

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“ Renee Johnson-Hedgepeth (NC) lit a candle in memory of Dr. Edith Irby Jones



**Renee Johnson-Hedgepeth (NC)** - July 19, 2019 at 07:15 PM

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“ Thank you for sharing your life with so many! Although we didn't get a chance to meet personally, I will treasure your memory and your kindness to a brand new Delta in the summer of 2017! Take your rest sweet Soror amongst the ancestors and our beloved Founders.

**Renee Johnson-Hedgepeth (NC)** - July 19, 2019 at 07:13 PM

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“ Dr Edith I Jones was an extraordinary individual; she was gifted in mind and spirit and never hesitated to give of herself to anyone and everyone. I was blessed to know her as a friend and a fellow provider. She taught me a great deal and gave me strength, not only in the medical arena, but in the entire span of life. Because of her, I believe in angels, because she was one. She will be missed because she was so very special in the lives of so many. May God continue to bless her as she moves along on her splendid journey, back home.

Love and blessings to a great physician/soldier/friend

Dr. Robert E. Galloway

**Robert Galloway** - July 19, 2019 at 03:41 PM

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“ Dr. Jones was not my doctor but my cousins doctor. I was always mesmerized by her office off of Calumet. The window alone was different and stood out. To Kim and the Jones family I offer my sincerest condolences and prayers.

**T. Nichelle Shorten-Calhoun** - July 19, 2019 at 03:34 PM

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“ The Kelly family. Our condolences to the the family. Dr. Edith was our family doctor for forty years. RIH my second MOMMY!!!

**Michael Kelly** - July 19, 2019 at 05:30 AM

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“ Dr Jones was my family doctor first my girls then me my mother and Aunt Carrie We were with her until she retired with her in Eta Phi Beta Foy Friends of Youth Love and prayers to the family My friend God let us know her Myrtle Ross and Family



**Myrtle J. Ross** - July 18, 2019 at 07:48 PM

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“ Debra Barnes lit a candle in memory of Dr. Edith Irby Jones



**Debra Barnes** - July 18, 2019 at 03:28 PM

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“ Claudean Mathis lit a candle in memory of Dr. Edith Irby Jones



**Claudean Mathis** - July 18, 2019 at 02:44 PM



“ Dr. Jones was one of the most professional, caring, compassionate doctor that I had the privilege of working with for 28 years at St. Joseph Hospital. She always had encouraging and uplifting words for me with her beautiful smile. She will be dearly missed. My condolences and prayers to her family and friends. May she Rest In Peace for a job well done.

**Claudean** - July 18, 2019 at 02:53 PM



“ So blessed to have met my Soror Dr Edith at Knoxville College as a freshmen and performed in the Knoxville College choir the "GIFT OF SONG"  
Your long blessed life speaks volumes RIP

**Soror Jean Perpall Anderson** - July 18, 2019 at 04:30 PM



“ So blessed to have had Soror Jones in our Chapter - HMAC, she was definitely a pioneer of knowledge and wisdom. May her spirit live each day in all of us. RIP Soror your job is done!

**Soror ReShane Dawn-Fowler** - July 18, 2019 at 05:42 PM



“ What a beautiful lady she was. It makes me burst with pride that we are both members of the human race. Prayers are with you all and with Dr. Jones

**William Moore** - July 24, 2019 at 08:16 PM

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“ Maxine Goodwin Kinney lit a candle in memory of Dr. Edith Irby Jones



**Maxine Goodwin Kinney** - July 18, 2019 at 12:46 PM

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“ CONDOLENCES AND PRAYERS TO THE JONES FAMILY AND FRIENDS.

**Glenda smithcole** - July 17, 2019 at 02:12 PM