

Roscoe Simmons, a nephew of Booker T. Washington, into Baltimore City to politic among the black populous in opposition to Tydings' re-election.

To counter the efforts of Colonel Simmons, FDB needed a well respected political operative and an effective orator able to communicate with the African-American crowds in support of Senator Tydings. Mr. Leo was such a person. Wardell Stansbury personally saw many occasions on which a limousine pulled up to Jones' home at 551 Girard Street to escort Mr. Leo away. Libby Stewart confirmed the chauffeured rides. She also recalled her grandfather traveled to meetings in Baltimore with his close friend Willard Allen, the Grand Master of Prince Hall Grand Lodge of Maryland. Despite Brown and Jones' efforts in 1950, Butler defeated Tydings in a close race.

Regardless of the failed effort in 1950, John Leo Jones' work with Donaldson Brown likely sealed his reputation as the "Unofficial Black Mayor of Havre de Grace". A widespread belief among observers is that Brown, even after November 1950,

continued financing a campaign on Millard Tydings' behalf but kept his efforts hidden in order not to stir the ire of fellow industrialists supporting Republican candidates. After Roscoe Simmons died in 1951, "Mr. Leo" and Grand Master Allen maintained their labors in Baltimore City for Brown in anticipation of a subsequent Tydings race in 1952 and 1956. Tydings indeed received the Democratic nomination in 1956 but withdrew due to ill health.

Part 4 concludes the series of pamphlets on John Leo Jones. The next pamphlet will be a commentary on Frank Donaldson Brown, Sr.



John Leo Jones w/ wife Samantha on their 50th Wedding Anniversary (1963)

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John Leo Jones

(1893 – 1973)

Part 4

Pamphlet 0011

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Bringing Communities Together Through Sharing History



Pamphlet 0010 established the existence of a relationship between the Leo Jones and Donaldson Brown families. This edition will show how two very different events helped develop a closer affiliation between the two men. The first event was a tragic auto accident that nearly killed Brown's youngest son. The second event was the 1950 elections that pitted incumbent U.S. Senator Millard Tydings (D) of Havre de Grace against his Republican challenger, John Marshall Butler.

Until 1947, any connection between political activist Leo Jones and wealthy Cecil Countian industrialist F. Donaldson Brown (FDB) was low key, and most likely orchestrated by FDB's chauffeur, Charlie Burkett. It is even possible that until that year Jones and Brown never actually met face to face. In 1946, FDB retired from General Motors and was working out of his home office at the *Ark*. Because he was spending more time with his family close to home, Charlie Burkett's duties likely increased as well.

Tragically during the 4th of July weekend of that year, Keene Brown, the 20-year old son of FDB suffered

serious injuries in an automobile accident. The Princeton University sophomore scholar athlete endured a series of crushing blows to his head and chest, and lay in a coma for over two months. While young Brown remained at Harford Memorial Hospital in Havre de Grace, his family held vigil across the street at the Colonial Hotel. During this period it is very likely that John Leo Jones, the Colonial's head waiter, afforded the family all the comfort the hotel had to offer in the way of physical and emotional support. It seems just as likely that Jones arranged for Charlie Burkett's room and board. Because this was the era of Jim Crow and the Colonial Hotel refused to accommodate black patrons, "Mr. Leo" most likely made arrangements for Mr. Burkett to stay in one of the back rooms. Keene Brown's release from the hospital came only after a six month stay. He returned to the *Ark* in Port Deposit, but never completely recovered, and required full time medical attention for the rest of his life.

During the half year stay at the Colonial the anguished Brown family,

no doubt, received visitors from numerous prominent families offering their reassurances. There were times that John Leo Jones saw and probably interacted on the side with some of these guests. There were also many opportunities for Jones to meet personally with the Brown family and their staff. Judging from the relationship that ultimately developed, it appears certain that Leo Jones' close contact with the influential Brown family helped his political stature within the African-American Community.

With regard to Maryland's 1950 senatorial election, Donaldson Brown and John Leo Jones, despite being Republicans (it being typical at the time for African Americans to support the party of Abraham Lincoln), both favored the local incumbent, Democrat Millard Tydings. For industrialist FDB, it was a must to have a powerful friend like Tydings a member of the Senate Armed Services Committee, serving in Congress. But the Republican Party, heavily influenced at the time by right-wing McCarthyism, sought to oust Tydings, the Havre de Grace native. As a result, for six weeks prior to the election, the Republican National Committee sent Colonel