

## Professor David Lloyd (Dai) Jones 1936-2024

Adapted from a citation read by *Dr T.G. Zengeni*, Dean of the Faculty of Science,  
University of Zimbabwe, on the Occasion of Professor David Lloyd Jones' elevation to  
Honorary Membership of the Geological Society of Zimbabwe

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Barbara and Dai Jones – *Jones' Facebook Page*

I feel extremely honoured to say a few words about a man whom the Geological Society of Zimbabwe has chosen to honour. Born on 18<sup>th</sup> June 1936, it would appear that Dai Jones' life encapsulated the model of a whole man:

- A teacher and mentor;
- A reputable scientist and researcher with a rare aptitude for team work and leadership;
- A gifted organiser;
- An avid sportsman;
- A humane individual with a passion to help the less privileged, and;
- An exemplary husband, father and grandfather.

Educated in England, he graduated with a BSc (Honours) London degree in Physics and was awarded a PhD degree in Solid State Physics, all at Exeter in the years 1958 and 1963 respectively.

After completing his studies, Dai joined the Department of Physics in the University College of Rhodesia & Nyasaland in September 1963. As a consequence of the prevailing circumstances he abandoned his original field of Solid State Physics and joined the Geophysics Research Group headed by Dr Ian Gough. The team was academically formidable, comprising Drs Mike McElhinney, Andrew Brock, Neil Opdyke, and later joined by Mike Walford and Jim Briden, among others. They set up a world renowned Palaeomagnetic Research Group, internationally recognised as a centre of excellence. This, in conjunction with the then newly established Department of Geology, constituted an Earth Sciences grouping next to none in Africa.

The work they did contributed immensely, in a pioneering fashion, to the ideas of continental drift that culminated in the theory of plate tectonics.

Due to the unfortunate Unilateral Declaration of Independence in 1965, the Palaeomagnetic Group dispersed and Dai Jones went to Edmonton, Canada, to regroup with Ian Gough in January 1967. After a year and a half, Dai returned to our University in July 1968 to continue

with the unfinished work and to build a new team. He became the team leader with such students as Phil McFadden and Martin Mushayandebvu, among others.

Dai's scholarly achievements saw him rise from Senior Lecturer to Reader and ultimately Professor of Physics in 1979. He was an excellent teacher and mentor. The speaker, Dr Zengeni, bears that testimony as he was his teacher and later colleague. Among Dai's early students were Professor Makhurane, Dr Mandishona and myself, in that year the only black students taking Physics.

Dai Jones' contributions to the Department of Physics, to the Faculty of Science and to the University of Zimbabwe are unparalleled. He was Head and Professor during the lean period of the Department in the late 70's and early 80's. He rebuilt the Department, virtually from scratch, to what it is now. Through his resolve and initiative, the Department of Physics prides itself for having maintained a steady flow of young academics. He was instrumental in establishing the Masters' Degree programme in Exploration Geophysics in the Department, after the recruitment of Alan Reid. He was Deputy Dean and Dean of the Faculty, a long-standing member of Council and its various committees, as well as being Chairman of the Research Board.

Dai Jones' scholarly work in the Earth Sciences is extensive. He had carried out wide ranging field work in the Arctic and in Labrador. He analysed rocks from Antarctica and carried out very successful studies on the hominid-bearing cave sediments of South Africa. His work in Palaeomagnetism was published in reputable international journals. I believe he and his colleagues were the first to date the Umkondo dolerites using palaeomagnetic techniques. In 1976 he, with others, was awarded the Jubilee Medal of the Geological Society of South Africa for what was judged to be the most outstanding paper published in the Society's journal in 1975. Apart from presenting papers at international conferences, he was invited to several as one of the keynote speakers, as well as receiving invites to universities in Europe, the United Kingdom, the United States, Canada and Australia to present research seminars and to participate in collaborative research.

His insatiable love for the Earth Sciences saw Dai in the company of geologists. Together with such eminent scientists as Jan Kramers and Jim Wilson, he contributed significantly to the international conferences on Dyke Swarms. I am told by some geologist friends that Dai should have been a geologist instead of a physicist. Probably the truth is that he was both.

Dai Jones participated actively in scientific organisations, having been a Committee Member of the Geological Society of Zimbabwe between 1984 and 1988 and again in 1992-93 when, among other things, he judged the Phaup Awards. He was a Member, Committee Member, Treasurer and Past President of the Zimbabwe Scientific Association. For his scholarly work, he became a Fellow of the Royal Astronomical Society.

A gifted organiser, Dai Jones took on tasks which many people of his standing would shy away from. His involvement with the local World University Service (WUS) Committee, with Priestly Knottenbelt and others, had a tremendous impact in boosting the number of young Zimbabweans who would not have otherwise been admitted to the University of Zimbabwe. As treasurer, he disbursed more scholarships to our students than any other organisation during that time. The sourcing of the funds by himself and the committee was no mean achievement.

All work and no play was not one of Dai's beliefs. He was a natural sportsman - a man who enjoyed keeping fit in the company of others. Even as a member of staff he played soccer with students for the University team. He loved his tennis. Not only did he play cricket, he also got heavily involved in the administration of that sport as Secretary to the Mashonaland Cricket Association.

On a personal note, Dai Jones was a man with an itch to provoke, being intolerant of unprofessional expediency. As a result of his straight talk, he occasionally brushed some of his victims up the wrong way as he would speak his mind when others thought otherwise.

Behind every successful individual, there is always a supporting partner and in his case this was Barbara. Incidentally, when Dai Jones first came to UNRN, he did so as a bachelor. Having met Barbara on the Island of Guernsey, she soon followed and they were married here in Zimbabwe. The couple were blessed with two children, Malcolm now in Australia and Claire in Virginia, USA. Barbara and her grandchildren remain in Canada.

After retiring from the University of Zimbabwe, Dai spent some years teaching Physics at St John's College in Harare where he continued to inspire young students and to umpire their cricket. Dai and Barbara spent his final years in Canada where he died in Ottawa, Ontario on 30<sup>th</sup> August 2024.



The late Professors Loveridge and Jones with Mrs Lake at St John's College.  
*St John's College Facebook Page*