



For Immediate Release

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ALBERTA JONES HONORED AS LOUISVILLE’S NEXT HOMETOWN HERO

LOUISVILLE, Ky. (October 9, 2017) – Alberta Jones, a pioneering attorney and civil rights leader, is the latest Louisville “Hometown Hero” to be honored with a giant banner, which was unveiled today at the River City Bank Building, located at 500 South 6th Street.

Jones was the first African-American female to pass the Kentucky Bar Exam and was the first female of any race to serve as a prosecutor in the state of Kentucky. She was Muhammad Ali’s first attorney and negotiated his first boxing contract – an unprecedented achievement for a female attorney of any race at the time.

“We are so proud to honor this remarkable Louisvillian, who deserves to be remembered for being a legal trailblazer and courageous civil rights leader,” said Mike Sheehy, spokesman for the Greater Louisville Pride Foundation (GLPF), the nonprofit organization that sponsors the Hometown Hero program.

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“We are fortunate today to live in a city that is recognized for its compassion, dedicated to providing opportunity for all of our citizens, and we must remember how we got here,” said Mayor Greg Fischer. “We stand on the shoulders of courageous and accomplished civil rights activists like Alberta Jones as we work together, as she did, to ensure that every citizen has the opportunity to reach their full human potential.”

River City Bank president David Hobbs said he was honored to have Jones’ banner installed on his building. “Our bank is locally owned, and we pride ourselves on our hometown roots and our history of service to the African-American community,” Hobbs said. “We couldn’t be happier to support this well-deserved honor for Alberta.”

In addition to being a legal trailblazer, Jones was a staunch civil rights activist, participating in the 1963 March on Washington and marches in Louisville, and even rented voting machines so she could hold classes to teach African Americans how to vote for the candidate of their choice.

She established the Independent Voters Association and was an active member of the Louisville Urban League and the NAACP. She single-handedly integrated Louisville’s City Hall by forcing the city to hire African-American employees.

A graduate of Louisville Central High School, Jones attended the Louisville Municipal College for Negroes. When the college was merged with the University of Louisville during desegregation, Jones continued her education there and graduated third in her class. She was accepted into U of L’s Law School, but transferred after her first year to Howard University School of Law, where she graduated fourth in her class. Her picture hangs in the Brandeis School of Law at U of L and the Jefferson County Attorney’s Office. A pre-law scholarship in her name is given annually at Bellarmine University.

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Jones was brutally murdered in August 1965, and the case remains unsolved. Bellarmine Associate Professor Lee Remington is writing a book on her life, which will be published in 2019. According to Remington, “Alberta Jones was the most important female legal figure – of any race – in the entire history of the state of Kentucky. She deserves recognition for her tremendous accomplishments, and justice for her horrible murder. She spent her entire life fighting on behalf of others, and it’s time that people finally started fighting for her.”

Started in 2001, GLPF’s purpose is to build pride within the local community and enhance Louisville’s image. “One of the most unifying aspects in the life and health of a community is the pride that it feels for its people and for their accomplishments,” its website says.

In the 16-year history of the Hometown Hero program, GLPF has hung 29 very visible banners throughout the city in recognition of some of Louisville’s most distinguished citizens.

Other Louisville Hometown Heroes include:

- Muhammad Ali (Installed April 2002) – LG&E Building at Second Street & River Road, facing the Ohio River
- Pee Wee Reese (Installed February 2003) – Fetzer Building at 209 East Main Street, headed west from Slugger Field toward the H&B Factory and Museum
- Mary T. Meagher (Installed June 2003) – Norton Suburban Hospital Building in St. Matthews, viewable from I-64 East (since removed)
- Ed Hamilton (Installed September 2003) – Glassworks Building at Ninth & Market Streets, facing Ninth Street
- Bob Edwards (Installed January 2004) – 624 Baxter Avenue, seen headed north
- Pat Day (Installed April 2004) – Second & Broadway viewable from I-65 North/South
- Colonel Harlan Sanders (Installed April 2004) – BP Apartment Building at Third and Guthrie
- Judge Louis Brandeis (Installed May 2004) – Chase Bank Building, best seen headed east on Liberty Street between Fifth and Fourth
- Kentucky’s Derby (Installed May 2005) – US Bank Building 5th and Market
- Diane Sawyer (Installed September 2005) – Starks Building on Muhammad Ali between Third and Fourth Streets, viewable from I-65 North/South
- Bud Hillerich (Installed July 2006) – Heyburn Building at Fourth & Broadway
- Darrell Griffith (Installed September 2006) – Watterson City Building, along I-264 East at Newburg Road
- Paul Hornung (Installed October 2006) – Watterson City Building, along I-264 West at Newburg Road

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- Tori Murden (Installed May 2007) – Kentucky Exposition Center, facing I-65 South just passed the Crittenden Drive exit
- Patrick Henry Hughes (Installed February 2008) – OK Storage Building, East Broadway at Barrett
- Kleinert & Kutz (Installed May 2009) – Jewish Hospital Heart and Lung Building
- Phil Simms (Installed August 2009) – Southern High School east wall at Preston Highway
- Wendy Whelan (Installed March 2010) – J Graham Brown School corner of 1st and Ali
- George Garvin Brown (Installed September 2011) – 122 West Main Street
- Denny Crum (Installed February 2012) – Marriott Courtyard across from KFC YUM! Center
- Victor Mature (Installed April 2013) – Derby Dental Building on Shelby Street
- Rudell Stich (Installed May 2013) - 5th Street just north of Ali
- Tom Bulleit (Installed April 2014) - 3rd and Main Street
- Will Wolford (Installed May 2014) - Market at 3rd Street
- Bobby Nichols (Installed August 2014) - Watterson City Building
- Jennifer Lawrence (Installed September 2015) – Kentucky Center for the Performing Arts
- Sue Grafton (Installed April 2016) – Springhill Suites by Marriott – 132 E. Jefferson Street
- Lisa Harrison (Installed October 2016) – Southern High School
- Milton Metz (Installed April 2017) – Architecture Building, 425 W. Market Street

For more information about the Greater Louisville Pride Foundation and the Hometown Heroes, go to: www.louheroes.org.

The Louisville Downtown Partnership is the dynamic organization that drives economic growth in Downtown for the benefit of the entire region, as well as oversees multiple on-street enhancements that help establish Downtown Louisville’s distinctive character and widespread appeal. LDP believes the economic engine of any great city starts with a strong Downtown. For more information visit: www.louisvilledowntown.org or call (502)584-6000.