

Tony Jones - Biography

Tony Jones is a longtime community leader, philanthropist, and advocate for education, workforce development, and community engagement in Bloomington-Normal. A native of Richmond, Virginia, and graduate of Virginia Commonwealth University, Tony has dedicated more than three decades to initiatives that create opportunities, bring people together, and strengthen the community.

Tony is a **Co-Founder of Mentoring And Providing Scholarships (M.A.P.S.)**, established in 2002 to help high school students prepare for success beyond high school and provide scholarships to support their pursuit of higher education. His commitment to young people reflects his belief that mentoring, education, exposure, and opportunity can have an impact that extends well beyond an individual student.

Professionally, Tony retired from **State Farm Insurance after a 36-year career**, where he worked in information technology and systems development. Following retirement, he returned to the workforce to continue his commitment to community and workforce development. He has served in leadership roles with Heartland Community College's Workforce Equity Initiative and McLean County and currently works as a **Business Services Representative with Career Link**, partnering with employers and community organizations to support workforce development, employee training, and employment opportunities throughout Central Illinois.

Tony's community involvement spans decades. He has provided leadership to numerous organizations and initiatives, including the Bloomington Human Relations Commission, Cultural Festival, Inc., the annual Juneteenth Celebration, the Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Awards Luncheon, 100 Black Men of Central Illinois, the NAACP, and numerous civic and community organizations. For more than 20 years, he has also provided leadership for Bloomington-Normal's Cultural Fest, an annual celebration designed to bring people together through culture, entertainment, education, and community resources.

His service has been recognized through numerous honors, including being named **2023 Philanthropist of the Year by the Illinois Prairie Community Foundation**, the City of Bloomington's Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Community Award, the NAACP Roy Wilkins Jr. Community Leadership Award, and community service and leadership awards from several organizations throughout Central Illinois.

Tony is also a **Life Member of Kappa Alpha Psi Fraternity, Inc.** and has been active with the Bloomington-Normal Alumni Chapter for more than three decades.

"It is my privilege and pleasure to serve my community."