



## Birch Jones Jr.

October 26, 1949 - March 9, 2021

Jones, Birch

Age 71 of Minneapolis, MN passed away unexpectedly on March 9, 2021. Preceded in death by his parents, and sister, Joyce Falkner. Survived by his wife Shirley Jones; three children, Jayatta Jones, Nika Jones (Silvana) & Faro Jones; his sisters Shirley Buchanan & Beverly Bradley; one grandchild, Sofia Jones; and a host of nieces, nephews, cousins and friends. Born in Chicago, IL, Birch moved to Minneapolis in the 1970s to pursue a career in education and worked for the Minneapolis Public Schools for 30 years. He rose through the ranks in MPS as an Assistant Principal, Principal and Area Superintendent; he retired as Chief of Staff. Birch was dedicated to his students and enjoyed spending time outdoors and with his family. In his spare time, he operated Jones & Jones, a family-owned cleaning business. Public visitation will be held at Estes Funeral Chapel on March 19, 2021 from 4pm - 7pm. Funeral services will take place on March 20, 2021 at 11am with visitation 1 hour prior. COVID restrictions on capacity. Services livestreamed at: [estesfuneralchapel.com](http://estesfuneralchapel.com). Interment following services at Lakewood Cemetery.

# Cemetery Details

## Lakewood Cemetery

3600 Hennepin Ave  
Minneapolis, MN 55408

# Previous Events

## Visitation

MAR 19. 4:00 PM - 7:00 PM (CT)

Estes Funeral Chapel  
2201 Plymouth Ave N  
Minneapolis, MN 55411  
(612) 521-6744  
<https://estesfuneralchapel.com>

# Tribute Wall

CH

“ I had the pleasure of working with Birch at Franklin. He was supportive of both staff and students. What I liked best about Birch's style was his encouraging of creative methods and ideas. Also, his sense of humor livened up some otherwise dull staff meetings! Thank you, Birch, for all the help and inspiration you brought to the Franklin Family.

*Christie Howieson*

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**Christine Howieson** - March 24, 2021 at 04:29 PM

TL

“ My deepest and most heart felt condolences to the Jones Family. My most fondest memories of Jr was when I was about 5 Me and my dad were visiting on a cross country trip for a family reunion. My father in a quest to visit all relatives in Chicago, left me in the care of his sister Joyce to babysit me .At about 8pm it was her intention to send this then rambunctious 5 year old to bed. I begged and pleaded to stay up to but she said no! As I began to accept my fate that my Big Cousin had imposed, Jr said don't send him to bed I'll watch him, We watched TV until I fell asleep. His kindness and love for his Family and others is one of the many qualities that will be missed. Rest up Big Cousin!! Till we meet again I Love you!! Sending prayers and love to the family Timmy

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**Timothy Leggs** - March 20, 2021 at 02:29 PM

LH

“ To my wonderful cousin, I will forever miss and love you. Thanks for being that big brother. I have many fond memories of our times together from when I was a kid. I am so grateful that I had a chance to sit and talk with you this past August. Give Miss Ovell, Lucious, and Charles, and all the others we have lost this past year a big hug from me. Wishing your wife, kids, and sisters comfort doing this difficult time. Love ya big Cuz.

Lilly

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Lilly P. Holt - March 20, 2021 at 11:30 AM



“ Blue Caribbean Bouquet was purchased for the family of Birch Jones Jr..



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March 19, 2021 at 07:55 PM

KK

“ Birch and Shirley have been my neighbors and fellow church members for more than twenty years. I first met Birch through my work with Minneapolis Public Schools while I was at The Minneapolis Foundation. We enjoyed our work together--I loved and deeply appreciated his passion and commitment to North Minneapolis. He believed deeply in the unlimited potential of young people. As a "younger" professional, Birch was always such an encouragement to me. He often called me by my whole name "well, hello Ms. Karen Kelley-Ariwoola" which always made me laugh. He always made me feel like I was doing something of value in the community.



Outside of work-related things, I often saw Birch and Shirley together--at church or in the neighborhood. If I saw him alone in the store or the coffee shop, I'd always say "where's Shirley?" He'd say she was off being a loving Grandma or doing something artistic. Shirley, I send you my love knowing how you will miss him!

Finally, I want to acknowledge Birch's kindness to my sons and to me in my role as a mom. He loved to lament how he had watched our sons grow up since we moved into our house on Upton a year before our oldest (now 25 yrs old.) was born. He saw them at church. He watched them run around the neighborhood, ride bikes up and down in front of his house, and tag along with me to MPS board meetings or other community events. He always stopped to greet them, ask about school and/or sports, and he'd get the biggest smile on his face when he heard about their latest milestone--academic or otherwise. He was in his own way part of our "village." As a mom of Black sons sometimes I'd tell him about my worries or various challenges and he'd always have an encouraging word--reminding me that they'd grow out of a certain stage and to focus on how they were going to grow into great men. And by the grace of God they have. I'm grateful for those conversations along the way.

I will always remember Birch for his kindness, his character, his

*commitment to our community, and his friendship. I'm grateful that our paths crossed in this life.*

*Sending love to you Shirley and your family. I will keep you in my prayers. Thank you for sharing Birch with us. He was a good man.*

*Love,*

*Karen Kelley-Ariwoola*

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**Karen E Kelley-Ariwoola** - March 19, 2021 at 05:41 PM

AG

“ *Mr. Jones was an amazing leader in the community and at the schools. When he was at North High School he was highly respected by students, staff and teachers. He will be greatly missed.*  
*Ms. AQ - Chanda Green*

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**AQ - Chanda Green** - March 19, 2021 at 11:08 AM

GK

“ *On behalf of the King-Mims-Kemp Family Reunion Group, we extend our sincere sympathy to the immediate family of our love one. I praise God for the opportunity of spending time with Birch during the 2019 Family Reunion.*

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**Gwendolyn King-Nichols** - March 18, 2021 at 11:43 PM

AP

“ So sorry for the loss of Birch! He was a good friend and was one of the hardest working person that I know. He was so kind and loved his family very much. He may be gone from this earth but still lives on inside of your hearts. May his wonderful memories help to bring some comfort at this sad time. May he Rest In Peace. He is greatly missed.

*M. Ann (Machen) Pritchard*

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**Ann Pritchard** - March 18, 2021 at 11:36 PM

RU

“ Rev. (Dr.) John and Rev. Felicia Udo-Okon purchased the Bountiful Rose Basket for the family of Birch Jones Jr..



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**Rev. (Dr.) John and Rev. Felicia Udo-Okon** - March 18, 2021 at 05:25 PM

JP

“ June Porter purchased the Simply Elegant Spathi phyllum for the family of Birch Jones Jr..



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**June Porter** - March 18, 2021 at 03:49 PM



“ *Full Of Love Bouquet was purchased for the family of Birch Jones Jr..*



March 17, 2021 at 07:58 PM



“ *Cousin Clint purchased the Peaceful White Lilies Basket for the family of Birch Jones Jr..*



**Cousin Clint** - March 17, 2021 at 07:53 PM



“ *Peaceful White Lilies Basket was purchased for the family of Birch Jones Jr..*



March 16, 2021 at 08:51 PM



“ *Peaceful White Lilies Basket was purchased for the family of Birch Jones Jr..*



March 16, 2021 at 02:26 PM

MD

“ Birch was principal at North High during much of my tenure there. He was a caring and supportive principal and such a kind man. Faro went on the school trip to France with me in '96 and I've always had fond memories of the Jones family. My deepest condolences to you all. Wishing you peace and comfort in your memories of Birch. --  
Melissa Davis, French Teacher (retired)

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**Melissa Davis** - March 13, 2021 at 03:19 PM

JM

“ Birch was a fantastic principal at Franklin. He saw me in the hall trying to coax a student into the classroom. He said something really funny which I can't remember but it put the student and me at ease. I never saw him flustered even though junior high students can exhibit emotionally outlandish behavior. He certainly had a productive, professional contribution to our community. Say "hi" to Shirley and Bonnie up there for us Birch. At our age we will be joining you one day. Please have a Franklin lounge so we can all be together.

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**Joyce McMains** - March 12, 2021 at 07:49 PM

HF

I echo what Joyce said. Birch hired me at Franklin in 1991 and I have been teaching middle school ever since. He was a stellar principal and human. He was one of those people who made you want to be better at your job. He was supportive of kids, staff, families and the community. The Franklin Family was special- one of a kind- and Birch Jones was integral in forming and heading up that family. What a reunion I can only imagine is happening write now! Bonnie, Shirley, Kay B, Pat Davis and so many others! I will always be grateful for your leadership, your example and your support!

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**Hayley Griffin Forrest** - March 12, 2021 at 10:04 PM

MB

*My views on Mr. Jones are quite different than the above. Anyone can contact me relating to my awful experiences with him.*

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**Mike Berglos** - May 25, 2021 at 12:49 PM