

JONES, JOSEPH (1877 - 1950), principal of the Memorial College, Brecon

Name: Joseph Jones
Date of birth: 1877
Date of death: 1950
Spouse: Gwenllian Jones (née de Lloyd)
Parent: Jane Jones
Parent: Reuben Jones
Gender: Male
Occupation: principal of the Memorial College, Brecon
Area of activity: Education; Religion
Author: David Joseph Davies

Born 7 August 1877 at Fronfelen, Rhydlewis, Cardiganshire, the son of Reuben and Jane Jones. The family moved in March 1882 to Cwmaman, Aberdare, and joined the Congregational church at Moriah Aman. His father lost his life in the colliery when he was 35 years old and, as a result, his mother ventured to manage a milk business and Joseph, the 12 year old son, was obliged, very reluctantly, to leave school for the coal mine. He began as a lamp-boy and subsequently worked as an engineer for a number of years. Soon it became evident that he had the makings of a scholar and preacher, and encouraged by the wholehearted support of the church at Moriah and its minister, the Rev. H. Aeron Davies, and the energetic, successful efforts of his mother in her milk business, Joseph Jones decided to leave the mine for the ministry. He began to preach and after a short period at the Higher Grade School, Aberdare and the Academy, under Dunmor Edwards, at Pontypridd, he entered the Memorial College, Brecon, in 1896.

Briefly, his college career was as follows: 1896-1901, University College, Cardiff; B.A., degree with Hons. in Greek; 1901-1904, Memorial College, Brecon; B.D., degree; the first Congregationalist to graduate B.D. (Wales); 1904-1907, Mansfield College, Oxford; an exhibition to Jesus College, First Class in the Hons. School of Theology and the Hall Houghton Junior Greek Prize open to all the colleges in the University. Before completing his course in Oxford, but already enjoying a reputation as a scholar, he was appointed in January 1907 to the New Testament Chair at the Memorial College, Brecon. He began duties in October 1907. At the close of his first year as professor, he was ordained to the ministry. In 1909, he married Miss Gwenllian de Lloyd, Aberystwyth. He was granted leave of absence by the college in 1911 to pursue special New Testament courses at Heidelberg. He spent his life in the service of the Memorial College; 1907-1943 as professor and, in 1943 on the retirement of [Principal Thomas Lewis](#), he was appointed principal. He died suddenly at his home in Brecon on 28 April 1950 and was buried in the Brecon Public Cemetery.

Joseph Jones was endowed with exceptional gifts and came to prominence as a preacher, educationist, church statesman and social leader. It is hardly possible to record all the offices and positions to which he was called. He was very prominent in the life of Breconshire as a member of the County Council 1913-1948; chairman of the County Council 1940-1942; Alderman 1948-1950; chairman of the Education Committee 1919-1950. He was a Justice of the Peace of the Borough of Brecon. He became particularly prominent in the sphere of education. He served on various committees such as the Burnham, Hadow and Spens, and represented Wales on the Norwood Committee. He was a member of the County Councils Association and a vice-president of the Federation of Education Committees. He figured prominently on the councils of the University of Wales, a member of the Court, Council and of the governing bodies of several of the colleges. He was Dean of Divinity 1931-1934. A Liberal in politics, he contested the Welsh University Parliamentary seat in 1924, and was defeated by eight votes. In recognition of his great service to Welsh education, the University conferred on him the honorary degree of LL.D., in 1949. In that same year, he was appointed the first chairman of the Welsh Joint Education Committee.

He was very loyal to his denomination and to nonconformity. He had the gifts of the true church statesman. He was President of the Union of Welsh Independents in 1946 and served as the chairman of its Council for years. In 1950, he was elected Moderator of the Free Church Federal Council of England and Wales. He was a popular preacher and his services were in great demand. He had the gift of easy, fluent speech and a remarkable memory. His great interest was preaching, and the work dearest to his heart was that of interpreting the New Testament to generation after generation of young preachers.

He published *Esboniad ar Efengyl Mathew* (2 vols.) 1913-1914; *Cymrodoriaeth Gristnogol*, 1946; *Personal Christian Responsibility*, 1950. He edited for some time the Welsh monthly *Cennad Hedd*; was joint editor of *Brecon and Radnor Congregationalism*, 1912; contributed for many years the 'Letter from Wales' in the *Christian World*. He wrote articles for *Geiriadur Beiblaidd*, and to numerous periodicals.

Author

Reverend David Joseph Davies, (1900 - 1976)

Sources

Tywysydd y Plant, 1936

The Congregational Year Book, 1951

Memorial College, *Memorial College, Reports*, 1896-1911; 1943; 1946; 1950

Y Tyst, May 1950

information from his widow and personal acquaintance

Further reading

NLW Archives: [University of Wales Election](#)

[Joseph Jones \(1877-1950\)](#), From Warfare to Welfare website, viewed 30 May 2019

Additional Links

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