

MELVIN JONES



Founder & Secretary-General of Lions International

Melvin Jones was born at Fort Thomas, Arizona, on January 13, 1879. His father was Captain Calvin Jones of the U.S. Army, commanding a troop of scouts under General Nelson Miles. His mother was Lydia M. Gibler.

Fort Thomas was an outpost on the Gila River, a short forty miles from the Apache stronghold. Only three years before Melvin's birth, a band of Sioux Indians had surrounded and massacred General Custer's band of scouts in Montana; now, in Arizona, the Apaches were making their last stand against the white man's encroachment. Melvin's father was in the thick of the fighting until 1886, when Melvin was seven, and when Geronimo was captured and banished to Oklahoma. Melvin's boyhood memories were a mélange of horses and blue-clad troopers, bugles and war cries, wagon trains, gaunt settlers and dust. He was boyishly happy when his father was transferred to a new

post in Montana, and his mother cried tears of happiness when she heard the news.

Melvin attended public schools at Quincy, Illinois and St. Louis, Missouri. Later he took a course at Union Business College and studied some law at Chaddock College in Quincy. In his twenties he joined the Johnson & Higgins Insurance Agency in Chicago. By 1913 he was sole owner of the Melvin Jones Insurance Agency. Earlier, in 1909 he married Rose Amanda Freeman, a great woman golfer, who, in 1925, won the National Women's Open Golf title at Pinehurst, N.C.

At the age of 33 he was invited to a luncheon to meet some of the members of the Business Circle of Chicago who held their weekly luncheons in the old Boston Oyster House. This group was like many business men's groups over the U.S. whose purpose was business pure and simple---they patronized each other. Jones was invited to join this group of leaders in the fields of trade and commerce. In 1915, Jones was elected secretary. Working in this capacity he began to get the vague feeling that something was wrong with the picture. He felt that these 200 successful influential business men of Chicago could have a great group influence for good in the community.

In 1916 Melvin began writing letters to other clubs expressing his ideas. **On June 7, 1917, 20 delegates representing 27 clubs met in Chicago's Hotel LaSalle. The Associations of Lions Clubs was formed and the organizations, under the leadership of Melvin Jones, was perfected at the first convention held in Dallas, Texas, October 8, 9, 10, 1917, and at the second held in St. Louis in August of 1918, when they boasted 48 clubs.** Jones was secretary-treasurer. By 1950 the membership had grown to 400,000 and Jones received the

title of Secretary-General of Lions International for Life. In 1953 he helped dedicate the general office building of Lions International located on Michigan Avenue.

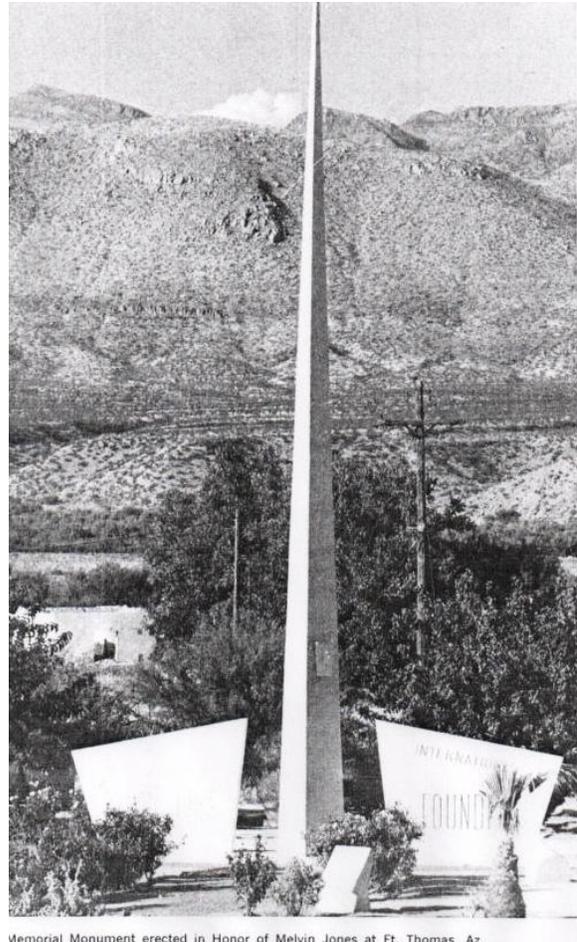
Jones received many international honors, and in April of 1945 represented Lions International as a consultant at the historic organization of the United Nations.

Rose Amanda, his wife, died in 1954. Then on June 21, 1956, he married his charming and cultured neighbor, Lillian M. Radigan.

Melvin Jones lifetime perfect attendance record was broken when he passed away at his home in Flossmoor, Illinois on June 1, 1961 at the age of 82. He had seen his Business circle grow into the World's largest serve club organization. Wrote Finis E. Davis, past president of Lions International, "Once in every generation or era a man appears and in his fleeting hour upon the stage leaves an indelible imprint upon the lives of his fellow men and upon generations yet to come. Such a man was Melvin Jones."

Attached is a photo of the Memorial Monument erected in Fort Thomas, Arizona, honoring Melvin Jones, the Founder of Lions Club International

Written by Glen Burgess; submitted by Bill Lewis



Memorial Monument erected in Honor of Melvin Jones at Ft. Thomas, Az.