

COMPASS

ODU

GRAD ENDOWS SCHOLARSHIP FOR NEEDY STUDENTS

By Lia Russell
The Virginian-Pilot

Toykea Jones has humble roots.

The 29-year-old Johnson & Johnson manufacturing supervisor said her family had no money growing up in Norfolk's public housing.



Toykea Jones attended Old Dominion University with academic scholarships that paid her tuition.

in Norfolk's public housing.

But Jones had something more important — definitive goals and a supportive family. She also had benefactors who helped pay for her college tuition through academic scholarships.

Now, Jones is the person extending a helping hand through a scholarship program designed to help students like her achieve the success she has had.

"I always knew I was going to go to college," said Jones, who oversees the production of a Johnson & Johnson skin care line. "My parents always said, 'We want you to do more than we've done.'"

As Jones prepared to graduate from Booker T. Washington High School in spring 1999, college acceptance letters arrived, including from University of Virginia and Virginia Tech.

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OCEAN VIEW FISHING PIER

Patrons are hooked on this bay of li

By Bruce Ebert
Correspondent

MORE THAN 200 suntanned rod-and-reelers, some bare-chested, were casting their bait off the Ocean View Fishing Pier on a recent hot, breezy afternoon. The aromas of sunscreen, cigarette smoke and squished fish innards mingled in the air.

It was a boisterous crowd, from elementary school students on summer break to long-timers old enough to recall details of storms that have shaped and reshaped the beach.

For as long as most can remember, there has been a pier jutting out into the Chesapeake Bay from this exact location. Ocean View Fishing Pier, owned by Ronnie Boone Jr., was built after the rubble from Harrison's Pier was cleared, after Hurricane Isabel in 2003.

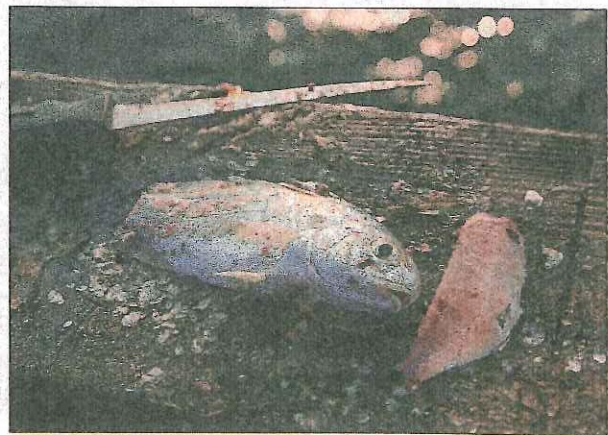
The pier is 1,690 feet long. It has what Boone called "that fisherman feel" with rough-hewn, 16-foot wooden planks. Boone said he made his pier with concrete underpinnings that make it better able to withstand a furious storm. It has quickly become a Norfolk institution.

Though many fishermen are from Hampton Roads, others such as Peanut Brown, a dreadlocked weekender from Roanoke here with his father-in-law and cousin, come great distances, lured by the prospect of catching fish from Chesapeake Bay.

Boone said he has no idea how many people fish off his pier over the course of



PRESTON GANNAWAY PHOTOS | THE VIR



Above David pulls in a fish Ocean View Pier. Rascoe started fishing his wife. "I th was a golfer time, but I en he said.

Left A small filleted for be pier.

a year. "In the good weather, we do great; in the bad weather, we do not," he said. "In the middle of the night, in the summer, when you think everyone is asleep, this is like Times Square or Las Vegas. It's crazy."

Amid the loud talk, ship repairman James Chase spoke to a roundhead.

"I got you," he said, looking the 12-inch fish squarely in the eye. "You ain't going anywhere. I said I got

you. The next destination for you is the frying pan."

The gray-stubbled grandfather crouched down and explained softly to his granddaughter, who came up to his waist, "There are certain fish we eat and some that we don't. Croaker, spot, roundhead, we eat."

At the end of the pier, Kathy Lanberson metic-

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going?

Where? 400 V View Ave.

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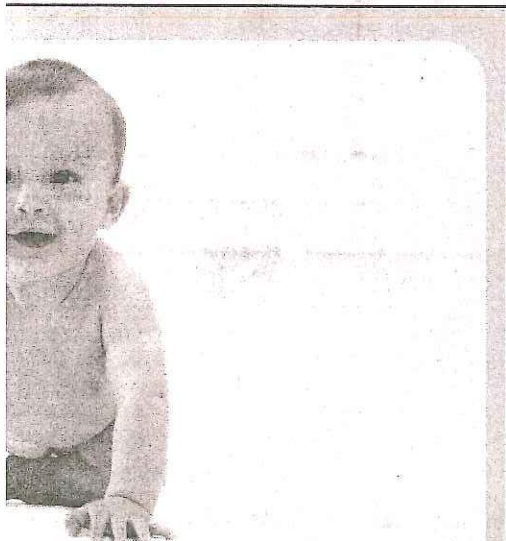
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"But I didn't want to leave home," Jones said.

So she accepted academic scholarships to Old Dominion University that paid her tuition. "I lived on campus, so I had my independence, but I was still near my mom and brother," Jones said.

Her undergraduate and graduate studies at ODU set her up for success, she said. "When I first went to college, I wanted to be a doctor, but when I started taking those chemistry and biology courses, I realized being a doctor was not for me," Jones said.

She completed a bachelor's in chemistry then pursued a master's degree in environmental engineering. "I'm glad I did, too, because I was able to get right into Johnson & Johnson with that degree," she said. "I had eight job offers when I completed my graduate studies."

Jones said ODU prepared her for the challenges of employment, providing practical knowledge, leadership and problem solving skills.

She also never forgot that someone's generosity helped her go to college. "I had a lot of grants and scholarships and someone had to fund them," Jones said.

Now, she wants to give back. "I called ODU and told

them I wanted to donate - to start a scholarship," Jones said. "I want to help someone that is in the same situation as I was."

Jones, who lives in Los Angeles, has endowed a \$25,000 scholarship at her alma mater.

The criteria: college sophomore standing, a minimum 3.0 grade point average, a civil engineering major, must be a graduate of a Hampton Roads high school and have financial need.

Johnson & Johnson is contributing \$2 for every \$1 Jones donates toward the scholarship. More than 150 ODU scholarships are funded by alumni, said Alonzo Brandon, vice president for University Advancement.

"What makes Toykea unique is that she is among the youngest to do so," he said. "For someone her age to be so forward thinking is commendable, especially coming from her meager beginnings."

Although Jones is excited about funding the scholarship, she admitted the effort is mildly straining her finances.

"I'm sacrificing my shopping habits, specifically handbags and shoes," she said, laughing. "I'm now living on a budget for sure."

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PIER

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ulously unhooked three small squirming fish and tossed them back one by one. She said the crowd is friendly.

"We're a family that sees each other in fishing season," she explained.

Experienced fishermen offer advice to novices, and if two anglers cross lines, the offender quickly apologizes and the other fisherman accepts the apology.

In September 2003, just before Isabel destroyed its predecessor, Harrison's Pier, Lanberson and her two sons spent 19 days in a row at Ocean View, stopping only to go back to their house, off Tidewater Drive, to shower. They ate, slept and fished on the pier, she said, and it was one glorious time. "What else is there to do?," she asked. "There is great camaraderie out here. It's peaceful and fun. And it beats sitting home, watching TV."

Up and down the pier recently, conversations were struck.

"Some of the people here are doing this for more than just a good time," Chase observed. "They're here because of the economy."

One fisherman told another, "Flippin' houses, taking out loans that you can't pay back ... We got to start living more modestly."

In another huddle, the topic was the Gulf oil spill, and in yet another an explanation of how climate change may affect coastlines.

Talking on cell phones seems rare. Debbie Springs, resplendent in straw hat with wide brim, doesn't see the point. "You can't call the fish!" she said. "You might as well leave it at home. You come here to relax."

She cast a perfect arc into the water. "If you stay long enough, you may see me catch a whopper!" she said.

Had she ever caught a whopper?

"I'm still looking."

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