

The prosecutor

A group of boys walking along the riverbank behind Fontaine Ferry Park the morning of Aug. 5, 1965, were looking for dead fish but found instead the body of Kentucky's first black female lawyer.

Thirteen years later, the death of Alberta Jones is still a mystery.

Miss Jones was a force in the emergence of Louisville's black community in the 1960s. She was a civil-rights activist and a leader in voter registration drives.

A Louisville native, she was the first black woman to pass the Kentucky bar and the first woman to prosecute cases in the Jefferson County courts. Her cases were the divorces and sex offenses that passed through the old Domestic Relations Court.

On the night of her death, she called a beautician friend and told her she was worried about a controversy over a charge of dual standards for black and white beauticians. The friend told her to come over to her shop, even though it was 11 p.m.

Miss Jones and her friend went out to a riverfront restaurant, where they ate shrimp and lemonade in the parking lot. The friend recalled that a car of youths taunted them in the lot. A little later, Miss Jones said she felt a bit dizzy.

The two women returned to the shop, where the beautician styled Miss Jones' wig; the lawyer left about 1:30 a.m.

About 2 a.m. a couple who lived in the 2900 block of Magazine Street, in the vicinity of Miss Jones' residence, were awakened by a woman's screams. When they went outside, the screams had stopped, but they saw a man pick up something from the street, get into a car with three other men and drive away.

The day after the body was found, Miss Jones' car was found parked in the 3100 block of Del Park Terrace and her shoes were found on the Shawnee Park golf course.

In the rear section of the car were found large blood stains, bits of brick and a knife. Miss Jones' dentures were on the floor.

Three years later, her purse was found in a recess of a girder of the Sherman Minton Bridge, reinforcing the theory that her killers beat her, then dumped her off the bridge. The coroner's report indicated that she had lacerations and bruises around her head. However, the coroner said she died from drowning, not from the beating.

Rewards were posted, imminent arrests were promised from time to time, but the killers of Alberta Jones were never found.

Clipped By:



Brett Talley
Tue, Jul 13, 2021