

MEET AUTHOR SHARON JONES - SCAIFE



Sharon Jones-Scaife is a native of Marvell, Arkansas. Born to the late Mr. & Mrs. E.J. & Beatrice Jones, she is the fourth child of fifteen. Sharon graduated from Marvell High School in 1985. She later attended the University of Arkansas at Little Rock where she received her Bachelor of Arts Degree in Graphic Design and minored in Illustration. Upon graduation from the University of Arkansas at Little Rock, she moved to Dallas and began working as a graphic artist for Jones Custom Products, Inc. There she created and designed specialty food labels for clients like Decker Foods, J.C. Potter Sausage, Oak Farms Dairy, etc.

Sharon was married to the late Albert Scaife and they have 2 loving sons (Cedric, 34 and Christopher, 21) and 3 grandchildren

(Rihanna, 12 and Deshawn 9). Mrs. Jones-Scaife is a member of Mt. Hebron Missionary Baptist Church. She is a member of The Dallas Black Chamber of Commerce and American Business Women Association (ABWA).

During Sharon's stay at Jones Custom Products, she began free-lancing offering her graphic design services to individuals and friends within the community to build her company and client list. In 1994, Sharon decided to form her own company called "SJS Graphic Arts". After a year of free-lancing part-time and gaining over 10 years of graphic design and printing experience, Sharon left Jones Custom Products to pursue her company full-time. To date, some of her clients include NTTA, The Dallas Black Chamber of Commerce, Commissioner John Wiley Price, St. Luke "Community" United Methodist Church, Joy Promotions, Inc., North Dallas Gazette, The Black Economic Times, MailWell Label, All Temps 1 Personnel Service, Inc., Blue Ivey Schools, Garland NAACP, Galaxy Ranch Schools, Mt. Hebron Missionary Baptist Church and many other local businesses to name a few.

Mrs. Jones Scaife founded Teens Reaching Teens, Inc. a 501 (c) 3 non-profit organization in the Dallas Fort Worth area. *Teen Graffiti*, a project of Teens Reaching Teens, Incorporated; mission is to be the voice of all youth by providing quality, community-based programs, and services that motivate and empower youth to strengthen and enhance their social development, educational, leadership, and business skills.

In October 1999, aware of the growing number of teens seeking answers to life's circumstances and situations from places not in their; nor society's best interest. Mrs. Jones-Scaife's goal became to create a forum where inspiring and positive information and advice are shared. A forum that would give our young people recognition and encouragement to continue to do positive things in our community and make a difference in the lives of others. Therefore she founded Teens Reaching Teens, Inc. a 501 (c) 3 non-profit organization, and later in February 2000, as a project of Teens Reaching Teens, Inc. she started a monthly magazine known as *Teen Graffiti*. This magazine is designed with teens in mind, to share the positive creativity and energy of our young people and to serve as an avenue of communication. The imaginary walls once responsible for preventing the sharing of information will be the same walls she will use to scatter their achievements, concerns, and opinions throughout the Metroplex and the world. Sharon will accomplish this without defacing property, but by capturing the artful effectiveness of graffiti on the pages of her magazine.

Within the pages of *Teen Graffiti*, Sharon features scholar students and athletes, teen entrepreneurs and volunteers, unsung heroes, and other teens that are making a contribution to society. Also, she features the creativity of our youth by including original essays, poems, and artwork that allow teens, our future leaders of tomorrow, to Speak Out, Speak Up, and Become a Voice!

Sharon's mission for *Teen Graffiti* is to provide an avenue for teens to voice their opinions and concerns on issues they are faced with today and to highlight their positive achievements and accomplishments. The most effective way of doing this is by eliminating the imaginary walls once responsible for preventing the sharing of this information. Her vision is to become the premier teen magazine that voices the opinions, concerns, and ideas of teens while providing nuggets of information that will help build the solid foundation they will depend on for years to come.

In August 2004, Teens Reaching Teens and *Teen Graffiti* magazine hosted its first back-to-school conference entitled, "Keepin' It Real: Youth Empowerment Summit" at Lakewest YMCA. The purpose of this FREE one-day youth conference was to provide our teens with "real life" solutions to problems they face and in the process help build their self-confidence as they prepare to return to school. During the day, each student participated in a series of workshops on topics such as Sexually Transmitted Diseases (STDs)/AIDS, cheese, school security, college financial aid, relationships, getting fit, and many other great topics. Our first year we served over 150 students from throughout the DFW Metroplex. Since its inception, we have grown tremendously from serving over 150 students to over 500 each year since.

During our second year (August 2005) of hosting *Teen Graffiti*'s "Keepin' It Real", we wanted to do more. Therefore, we introduced our Backpacking for Education program where we would provide low-income students with the necessary school supplies to start their school year off right. This program has been a big success as well, since its inception, we have provided over 20,000 low-income students with backpacks filled with school supplies.

Sharon Jones-Scaife is also the author/illustrator of *I Miss You Papa*, *Mrs. Hughes is Missing*, *It's Bedtime Lil' Marco*, *Lil' Marco Plays Hide*, and *Seek, Maddie on a Mission* and *Becoming*, a collection of original poems and illustrations. She is also the illustrator of the soon to be released book, *A Champion's Heart*, written by former NFL player, Brian Mitchell.

A resident of Sachse, Texas, Sharon Jones-Scaife spends her time supporting her son in basketball, creating adventures with her grandchildren, running, cycling, playing softball, writing, and of course, reading.

PWH: What inspired you to start writing?

SS: First, I'm the 4th of fifteen children, so I experienced plenty of fun and exciting things on a daily basis while I was growing up. I think this helped fuel my very over-active imagination. And lastly, I was inspired more recently by the passing of my husband of 25 years. Now I've found an outlet that I get to put to good use!

PWH: What advice would you give a new writer, someone just starting out?

SS: If you can't find writing that represents you, take it as your chance to fill in the gap. You have a right to be in the world fully and you have a right to see representations of yourself wherever you go. If you don't, write your way out.

PWH: How do you come up with the titles to your books?

SS: Most times, I use these steps to find my titles. I get clarity on my book goals; Brainstorm several potential titles; I make sure this title is not already popular. Then I pick my favorites and test them within other author groups. I imagine people saying the title and which they prefer.

PWH: When did you first consider yourself a writer?

SS: I considered myself a writer from the time I made my decision to write. I considered myself an author when I got my first manuscript finished and published.

PWH: Describe your writing space.

SS: My ideal writing space is my bedroom, at my computer desk with a little R&B playing in the background. I do not mind anyone being around, but I do want it QUIET - free from talking.

PWH: What is the most difficult part about writing for you?

SS: Writing is hard, plain, and simple. There are days when it comes easy when every word you type is gold and every page is poetry. Getting started, putting my ideas on paper. The middle, starting out with the steam and then hitting the dreaded writer's block. The end, you've finally pushed through the middle and hit your stride. It's been built up so much in your head, it can get tricky trying to create the perfect ending.

PWH: On a typical day, how much time do you spend writing?

SS: On a typical day, I spend a minimum of an hour writing; however, depending on the day and how I'm feeling, it could go longer.

PWH: Writing can be an emotionally draining and stressful pursuit. Any tips for aspiring writers?

SS: Have fun! Write the things you really want to write, in the way you want to write to them. Re-write; re-write; re-write and listen to your publishing editor. Remember that though you can learn techniques all writers operate differently. Learn your craft by practicing and practicing and allow your work to be constructively criticized. Read a lot and enjoy the process.

PWH: How do you deal with the emotional impact of a book (on yourself) as you are writing the story?

SS: Meditation and lots of prayer!

More information is available on her website at www.coffeecreekmediagroup.com.

