

Jack Jones

How good of a Top Gas racer was Jack Jones? So good that he is the only drag racer to have a significant statue made of his likeness. In 1969, Jones posed for photographs at Pomona Raceway that were used to design the current NHRA national-event winner's trophy. "Believe it or not, (NHRA founder) Wally Parks called me at my job and asked if I'd do him a favor, pose for pictures that would be used as models for the trophy," Jack said. Information from Dragster (June 30, 1995).

One would be hard pressed to find a better model driver in the Top Gas category than Jones. In the four years that he raced on the NHRA national event tour (1967-1970), Jones won the 1968 and 1970 U. S. Nationals crowns and the 1969 World Finals.

Mr. Jones was born in Kansas City, Missouri, but his family migrated to Dayton shortly thereafter. In 1956 at age 15, he made his first pass down a dragstrip in Dayton behind the wheel of a friend's '56 Chevy convertible. He didn't win, but he learned much from that experience. Jack graduated from Northridge in 1958 and moved to San Diego for a job in the aerospace industry.

In 1964 Jones met a local Modified eliminator racer, and he helped Jack build a dragster that he would drive. The Lincoln & Jones Junior Fuel dragster of 1965 was very successful. During that spring and summer, Jones won the eliminator 18 times at Liens Dragstrip. In 1967 he hooked up with Bill Schultz, one of today's better mechanics, and their partnership lasted until mid-1969. During that time Jones earned the first of his two U. S. Nationals titles. In 1969 he won the World Finals in Dallas. In 1970 he again won the U. S. Nationals title. His last race was the 1971 NHRA Winternationals.

In 1976, he opened his own recreational vehicle business in San Diego and is enjoying his racing retirement. "My career ended on kind of an ironic note," Jones said. "I made the Car Craft All-star Team as a Top Gas driver for the first time in 1971. The award was presented about six months after I had quit. Not a lot of guys can say that they won Indy twice, 4 Hot Rod champion-ships (2 in Junior Fuel and 2 in Tope Gas), and a world championship in just four years of serious racing. Top Gas was a tough, competitive class in the late 1960's, and to win over guys like that was a real accomplishment."