

Always Moving Forward

A memoir of friends, family and building Humana

by David A. Jones with Bob Hill



Non-Fiction - Autobiography

550 Pages

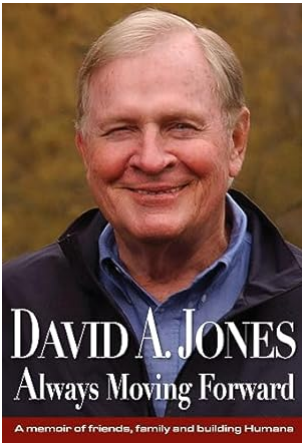
Reviewed on 08/22/2024

Book Review

Reviewed by Jamie Michele for Readers' Favorite

In his memoir, *Always Moving Forward*, David A. Jones recalls growing up in 1930s-40s Louisville, where he excelled in academics and athletics despite the financial insecurity his family was up against. As a Navy ROTC scholar at the University of Louisville, he met Betty, his future wife, and later co-founded Humana with Wendell Cherry. Beginning with a nursing home, they expanded into hospital management, rebranding as Extendicare in 1966 and going public in 1968. Jones, influenced by Peter Drucker, guided Humana's growth and international expansion. He played a significant role in local arts, healthcare innovations, and education reform, including contributing to the Kentucky Education Reform Act. Despite a financial setback from the Belknap Hardware acquisition, he supported civic projects, such as affordable housing and the Parklands of Floyds Fork. Post-retirement, Jones continued civic engagement, notably with the Parklands project, funded partly by a \$38 million federal grant.

If *Always Moving Forward* by David A. Jones isn't one of the ultimate boot-strap memoirs circulating today, then I don't know what is. I wasn't familiar with Jones before picking the book up, but on a flick-through, it seemed like a safe bet. There is an inspirational element to the arc but it truly does read as a traditional autobiography, even going back to times before his birth and his family pushing through the Great Depression. Jones is at his best in conveying his life story when it is within the orbit of what an everyday reader who does not know him, or know of him, recognizes or can relate to. The standout here is the 9/11 attacks at the World Trade Center when Jones was doing a media rollout. Dinner on the 10th was at Windows to the World. Breakfast on the 11th was skipped, and that's why he's here to share his story. The writing is mostly conversational in style and there are moments where I laughed, like when Jones says, "...we could not pass up a chance to grow the company through a traditional business formula: Use other people's money." Overall, this is a well-written and insightful look into the story of a man who has accomplished so much in a single lifetime, and I have no doubt his legacy will resonate for generations to come.



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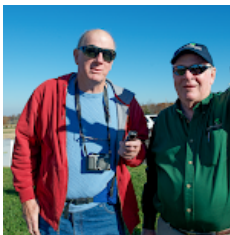


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Author Biography



David A. Jones was co-founder, CEO, and chairman of the board of Humana until his retirement in 2005.

Bob Hill, a Louisville writer, helped him with this book. Hill has won many awards for his writing, including the Ernie Pyle Legacy Award, which recognizes the ability to connect with people and tell their stories. He has also written for the Louisville Times and Courier Journal and authored several books.

An inspiring autobiography of the man who co-founded Humana, gave away most of his billion-dollar fortune, and managed to get home for dinner almost every night

Always Moving Forward is Jones' account of how a poor kid from Louisville, Kentucky was able to succeed on that scale. With humor, he talks about his optimism, his love of books, his "competitive mindset and willingness to throw a solid punch when necessary" - and of having one very important quality at the start: "the confidence of total ignorance."

Along the way, Jones championed for-profit health care, played a role in such cutting-edge medical advances as the artificial heart, rose to a Presidential challenge to help newly independent Romania rebuild its antiquated health care system, and lived through the 9/11 attack on the World Trade Center. After Jones retired, he and one of his sons also built one of the largest metropolitan parks completed in this century.

But in the end, Jones tells us it was all about family, friends, and the people he met along the way. This is their story, as well as his.