Remembers

A Shining Star of Excellence

The Honorable Stephanie Tubbs Jones

September 10, 1949 – August 20, 2008
Congresswoman Stephanie Tubbs Jones served on the Board of Directors for the Congressional Black Caucus Foundation. At the time of her death, she was chair of the Nominations Committee. Rep. Tubbs Jones also served as honorary chair of the Mervyn L. Jones Golf and Tennis Classic.

The Classic was named in honor of her late husband, Mervyn L. Jones, Sr. Rep. Tubbs Jones worked tirelessly to ensure that the Classic was a success, not just because it was named in honor of her husband, but because she cared so passionately about young people. The Classic is the primary fundraiser for the CBC Spouses Scholarship Programs.

This booklet includes excerpts from tributes submitted by her colleagues and photographs that depict remembrances of her. Rep. Tubbs Jones left a lasting impression on us and a model for living. We will take the life’s lessons we learned from her to make our lives and our living worthwhile and meaningful. We will forever miss her smile, her hugs, her enthusiasm and her wise counsel.

Elsie L. Scott, Ph.D.
President and Chief Executive Officer
Congressional Black Caucus Foundation
We celebrate the lives of Mervyn L. Jones, Sr. and Rep. Stephanie Tubbs Jones. The son of the late Jake and Ruby Jones, Mervyn was born July 7, 1950, in Cleveland, Ohio. A native of Cleveland, Congresswoman Tubbs Jones was born to the late Andrew and Mary Tubbs on September 10, 1949. Rep. Tubbs Jones joined Mervyn L. Jones, Sr. in holy matrimony November 1976, and they gave birth to one son, Mervyn L. Jones, II.

Both advocates for social justice, family unity and education, Mervyn L. and Stephanie Tubbs Jones touched the lives of many as devout public servants determined to make a difference in their community. Mervyn owned a truck company, and also held a very active position in his church, Bethany Baptist Church. Mervyn attended and graduated from Shaker Heights Public Schools. Rep. Tubbs Jones devoted a great deal of her time working in the community and with her “STJ Daughters” group. She earned a bachelor’s degree in social work, a Juris Doctor and four honorary doctorate degrees. In 1982, Rep. Tubbs Jones was elected to the Cleveland Municipal Court. She made a number of historic achievements throughout her distinguished career, including becoming the first African-American woman to serve as prosecutor in Cuyahoga County. She was also the first African-American woman to sit on the Common Pleas Court of the State of Ohio. Rep. Tubbs Jones made history again when she became the first African-American woman to represent Ohio in the United States Congress and on the House Ways and Means Committee. In 2007, she became Chairwoman of the House Committee on Standards of Official Conduct.

Mervyn L. Jones, Sr. passed away October 2, 2003, and Rep. Stephanie Tubbs Jones passed away on August 20, 2008. She and Mervyn left behind their son, Mervyn L. Jones, Jr., whom they loved dearly, and who will now represent their legacy.
A Shining Star of Excellence

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Stephanie Tubbs Jones was more than just a colleague to me; she was like a beloved family member who offered unconditional love and support. She treated me as a son, and I embraced her as a mother.

Stephanie Tubbs Jones didn’t just like people; she loved people. She didn’t shake constituents’ hands; she warmly hugged them. She didn’t just enter a room, sitting silently as an observing onlooker; she was the life of the party, with a lightning bright smile and an infectious laugh.

I have shed many tears remembering a woman who lived an extraordinary life, and accomplished much in the short time she was with us. ...We have lost a champion for the underserved and a heroine to so many.

Representative Kendrick B. Meek (FL-17)
Chairman, Congressional Black Caucus Foundation
Congresswoman Tubbs Jones and I came to Congress about the same time and we worked closely together for a decade. Whether it was standing up for Ohio voters and fighting for election reform or fighting to end the unjust war and occupation in Iraq, she always stood on the right side of justice. Indeed, we have lost a great warrior for peace and justice today.

She was much more than a colleague, though, she was my sister in arms, my confidant, and my friend. There is a tremendous hole in the Congress today, in the Congressional Black Caucus and in my heart.

Representative Barbara Lee (CA-09)
Chairwoman, Congressional Black Caucus
Congresswoman Tubbs Jones changed the way little girls dream because of the many firsts she reached in her life. She made all women stand a bit taller with her appointment to the Ways and Means Committee. But perhaps what we'll remember most was her ability to connect with people from every walk of life.

Ohio has lost maverick leadership, and this nation has lost a committed, poised, and passionate change agent.

Simone-Marie L. Meeks
Chairwoman, Congressional Black Caucus Spouses
Rep. Stephanie Tubbs Jones was an extraordinary American and an outstanding public servant. It wasn’t enough for her just to break barriers in her own life. She was also determined to bring opportunity to all those who had been overlooked and left behind – and in Stephanie, they had a fearless friend and unyielding advocate.

U.S. President Barack H. Obama
Former U.S. Senator (IL)
Congresswoman Stephanie Tubbs Jones was a tremendously vibrant presence in the halls of Congress. She believed in all the best things about our nation, and was a tireless force for justice, equality, and opportunity. As a leader in election reform, she fought on behalf of voting rights to ensure that every American voter can vote. She loved her hometown of Cleveland, and she believed that serving her constituents was the best job in the world.

Stephanie Tubbs Jones was always full of enthusiasm for the work of the Congress and for life in general.

Speaker Nancy Pelosi (CA-08)

U.S. House of Representatives
Stephanie Tubbs Jones distinguished herself as a judge, a prosecutor, and one of Cleveland’s African-American leaders. For nearly 10 years, I’ve been proud to serve beside her in the House of Representatives. She was a respected Member of Congress who represented her constituents with passion and dedication.

**Majority Leader Steny Hoyer (MD-05)**

*U.S. House of Representatives*

Congresswoman Stephanie Tubbs Jones devoted herself to public service and took on the responsibility of making Cleveland, Ohio a better place to live for her family and her constituents. Stephanie loved her city, and she loved representing Cleveland in the House of Representatives. I was proud to call her a fellow Buckeye as well as a House colleague.

**Minority Leader John Boehner (OH-08)**

*U.S. House of Representatives*
There is a great gap where she stood on behalf of affordable health care, women’s issues, access to quality education and fairness in voting.

Whether you were a presidential candidate, a colleague debating on the floor or a friend passing time, you wanted her on your team for her quick legal mind, tenacious debating skills, her infectious humor and that thousand-watt smile.

Majority Whip James E. Clyburn (SC-06)  
_U.S. House of Representatives_
A SHINING STAR OF EXCELLENCE

For Stephanie, no problem was too large, nor was any problem too small. In Washington, she fought for those affected by the recent foreclosure crisis, which devastated entire communities in her district, and back home in Ohio she stopped in the grocery store to talk to constituents one-by-one. Stephanie served her district on every level and on every issue with a sense of pride and moral fortitude all of us in Congress would be fortunate to possess.

Representative Sanford L. Bishop (GA-02)

I will always remember her extraordinary enthusiasm, will power, drive, intelligence and energy. She was an outstanding and extremely compelling speaker, both on the House floor, in committee, and in events and rallies. And as the first African-American woman elected to the United States House of Representatives from Ohio, I am certain that she will serve as an inspiration for other women to follow in her footsteps.

Representative Corrine Brown (FL-03)
When Stephanie Tubbs Jones walked into the room – at the Capitol, in her district in Cleveland, or even at my home in Avon, Ohio – she lit up the room. Most of us in politics wish our personality was as large as Stephanie’s. The public knew Stephanie’s accomplishments in her public life: her work as Chair of the Ethics Committee; her fight for jobs in Ohio; her outspokenness for justice on the House Ways and Means Committee. Her wide circle of friends – and Connie and I were so proud to be within her embrace – knew her warmth and kindness, her unselfishness and strength and her loyalty and love. We all considered ourselves so lucky to call her friend and colleague.

Senator Sherrod Brown (OH)
She always provided a strong and powerful voice that demanded that Congress remember to never leave anyone behind. She was a champion for economic justice, and we are all blessed to have known this great woman.

Representative G.K. Butterfield (NC-01)
She was an intelligent, energetic leader who was down to earth, but she was always willing to use her skill and her know how as a former prosecutor and judge to help not only the people of her district, but also the people of the entire country.

Delegate Donna M. Christensen (VI)
Rep. Tubbs Jones will always have a special place in my heart. As a member-elect, Stephanie reached out to me and served as a mentor, guiding me through my first 19 months as a member of the House.

Representative Yvette D. Clarke (NY-11)
She will be remembered as a great legislator and a true fighter for the interests of her constituents. The people of Cleveland have lost a champion, and I have lost a dear friend.

**Representative Wm. Lacy Clay (MO-01)**

Stephanie Tubbs Jones was exuberant. She lived her life. She lived it out to the fullest. And I can say that if you understand that life is not a time to just waste and then look at the time of Stephanie Tubbs Jones, you know she understood that. And I would say that death is not a cul-de-sac for some. It's not an end. Death is a beginning. And for Stephanie Tubbs Jones, it was a comma for a new beginning. She lived her life and she lived it with zest and zeal.

**Representative Emanuel Cleaver, II (MO-05)**
Congresswoman Tubbs Jones was one of the most esteemed leaders of this country and was a lifelong friend to me and all who came to know her. Personally, I found Congresswoman Tubbs Jones to have a great spirit and a love for all life that extended to all people. She was a great humanitarian and someone who consistently advocated for the needs of others. She lived life to the fullest and had many friends in Congress, and elsewhere, around the world.

Representative John Conyers, Jr. (MI-14)
Stephanie Tubbs Jones was a woman who fought until the very end to uplift and protect the men and women in Ohio’s 11th District. Her death is a loss not only to her constituents and her colleagues in the U.S Congress, but to the entire nation.

The dedication shown by Ms. Tubbs Jones toward her job and her constituents was an example for all members of Congress, and I was honored to work with this great woman.

Representative Elijah E. Cummings (MD-07)
She befriended people from all walks of life. It didn't matter if they were Democrats or Republicans, or if they had been prosecuted. As a matter of fact, when I think of her, I often think of the poet Homer, who talked about the kind of house that he wanted to live in, and I think Rep. Tubbs Jones was an embodiment of that kind of house. And when he said, “Let me live in my house by the side of the road, where the race of men go by. Men who are good, men who are bad, wise, foolish. But then, so am I. So why would I sit in the scorners' seat or hurl the cynic's ban? But let me live in my house by the side of the road and be a friend to man.”

Representative Danny K. Davis (IL-07)

The United States has lost a true leader, visionary and trailblazer. In the House of Representatives and in the State of Ohio she championed the rights of African Americans, women and workers. I will always admire her for having the courage to stand up for her convictions and to work hard to better the lives of the people in her district and across the country.

Representative Donna F. Edwards (MD-04)
Stephanie Tubbs Jones was not only my colleague but she was my friend. An advocate for her constituents she was resolute in her representation of their interest. Sought out for her keen intellect, Stephanie was respected and admired by her colleagues. It didn’t matter if you were a close friend or a complete stranger, her infectious smile radiated warmth and complete acceptance.

Representative Chaka Fattah (PA-02)

I could speak of her outstanding professional feats during her tenure as a Member of Congress, Cuyahoga County Prosecutor and Judge in two separate Cleveland courts, but no single achievement was greater than her consistency of character. Stephanie was full of light and love. No outside force or condition could alter her fundamental goodness.

When describing her tasks in Congress she would always say, “I’m going to do the people’s work.” We, the people, are grateful for her commitment, and will always miss her dearly. Her unyielding faith in humanity will live on in her son and in all of us who were graced with her wisdom, love, and passion.

Representative Marcia L. Fudge (OH-11)
Representative Tubbs Jones has served our country and the state of Ohio with great compassion, purpose, and dignity. She has championed voting rights, economic development, access to health care, and quality education for our youth and has fought to make the American dream a reality. The principles of equal rights and equal opportunity for all Americans have always been deeply ingrained in her work.

Representative Michael M. Honda (CA-15)
Congresswoman Stephanie Tubbs Jones made history by becoming the first African-American woman to be elected from her state of Ohio, and she represented her constituents well, becoming a leader on women’s health, predatory lending and voting rights. Throughout her five terms in the House, Congresswoman Tubbs Jones demonstrated a serious commitment to the issues and a wonderful sense of humor.

Representative Eddie Bernice Johnson (TX-30)
In the halls of Congress she was revered by her colleagues as a fair, yet firm Chair of the Standard of Official Conduct Committee. Throughout Ohio communities, she was celebrated for her tireless advocacy and intervention. Within the Congressional Black Caucus family, she will be forever cherished and gravely missed. Members of the Congressional Black Caucus will proudly continue to uphold the legacy of our leader, Congresswoman Stephanie Tubbs Jones and earnestly pay tribute to her life and service through all our endeavors.

Representative Carolyn C. Kilpatrick (MI-13)
Everyone thinks all we do in Washington is fight and that no one gets along, but Stephanie was a dear friend for more than 20 years, dating back to our days as county prosecutors. I will never forget asking her to be my date at the annual meeting of Ohio Republican Prosecuting Attorneys down in Columbus; she was a spit-fire and just lit up the room. Mingling with strangers and foes was as natural as breathing to her. She was always the most popular and gregarious person in any room and just a loving and exuberant spirit.

Representative Steven C. LaTourette (OH-14)

Congresswoman Stephanie Tubbs Jones belonged to a much larger family than her own. She had a significant impact not only on the people in her congressional district but also on the citizens of the United States and the rest of the world. She had a love for life and she was a quintessential public servant.

In John, Chapter 14, Jesus promises that there will be a place for us in his eternal home, and that He will come again to escort us to our new “mansion.” I am certain that she has found her place in Heaven already and is rejoicing in seeing those who passed before her.

Representative Sheila Jackson Lee (TX-18)
As a fellow member of the Ways and Means Committee, she was very concerned about using the tax code to help lift the burdens of the least among us. I always enjoyed it when she made a statement or questioned a witness. She was a brilliant judge and prosecutor, and that helped make her a gifted member of Congress.

Representative John Lewis (GA-05)
Congresswoman Stephanie Tubbs Jones was not only a respected Member of the House of Representatives, but a true champion for the people of Ohio. Her legal mind was second to none and above all else, she always stood up for those who could not speak for themselves.

**Representative Gwen Moore (WI-04)**

Stephanie’s death leaves a hole in my heart and a vacuum in the Congress. Her fearless self-confidence was mediated by generosity that knew no bounds. That self-confidence and Stephanie’s unflagging collegiality, character, judgment and her nimble mind led House Speaker Nancy Pelosi to appoint her to the most difficult post in the Congress – chair of the committee that judges her colleagues, the Ethics Committee. The people of Ohio and the United States have lost an unmatchable public servant, who managed to blend compassion with resolve in the public interest.

**Delegate Eleanor Holmes Norton (DC)**
Stephanie Tubbs Jones was a wonderful friend and colleague whose memory lives on in our hearts and whose legacy will continue in our history books. Stephanie was one of a kind – talented, hardworking, compassionate and accomplished, but also vibrant, funny and fun-loving. She was a pioneer who forged ahead not just for herself, but because she knew that she was opening doors for others who would benefit from her groundbreaking steps.

**Representative Donald M. Payne (NJ-10)**
I knew her as an excellent co-worker, a dedicated Congresswoman, but most of all as a passionate colleague who never lost her optimism in the promise of America or its people. It was an honor to have served in Congress with this trailblazer. The first African-American woman Representative of Ohio, she was well respected on both sides of the political aisle. She was an invaluable member of the Ways and Means Committee, a hard-nosed legislator and activist who fought hard to secure economic and educational opportunities for all Americans, regardless of race, creed or gender. She leaves us an inspirational legacy, a memorable record of public service and a charge to keep fighting for what is right and just.

Representative Charles B. Rangel (NY-15)
When I think of the Honorable Stephanie Tubbs Jones, I am in awe of the strength and notable fearlessness that she radiated throughout her lifetime. As another strong woman, Eleanor Roosevelt, once said, “You gain strength, courage, and confidence by every experience in which you really stop to look fear in the face. You must do the thing which you think you cannot do.” Stephanie lived her life similarly. We will always love and miss Stephanie, but because she lived her life as she did, she will forever remain in our hearts and in our minds, as we are reminded that we would all do well to be a bit more like her—to be strong, to be passionate, to be just, but, most importantly, to be as fearless as we can possibly be.

Representative Tim Ryan (OH–17)
She was a leader in Congress and the nation and she will be deeply missed. She was a genuine, historic figure as the first African-American woman elected to Congress from the state of Ohio. We are so fortunate God sent Stephanie Tubbs Jones to the United States House of Representatives.

Representative David Scott (GA-13)

She served with compassion… and was both a committed public servant and sincere champion for the causes that affected her constituency. Her zeal for life, her heartfelt commitment to the 11th Congressional District of Ohio, and her undeniable fortitude and strength of character will always be remembered.

She was a voice for the voiceless, a friend to the friendless, and an advocate for change, healthcare, housing, voter rights, and education.

Representative Edolphus Towns (NY-10)
When I swore her in at the beginning of her Congressional career, it was really one of the proudest moments of my life....It just made me proud to know that she was embarking upon a career where she was going to be a real standout in the Congress and I was not disappointed. In the short period of 10 years, she had become one of the bright stars in the Congress.

Former Representative Louis Stokes (OH-11)
As a member of the Congressional Black Caucus, I was overjoyed to be a part of history at the beginning of the 110th Congress with Stephanie. We became two of the five CBC members who would chair full committees in the House of Representatives.

We need more legacies like Stephanie’s—the kind of legacy that lives on. Her legacy demands that we do what Gandhi once said—to “be the change you want to see in the world.” So, let’s continue to trailblaze; take the road less traveled, so that someone else can walk down that road. Then our living will not be in vain.

Representative Bennie G. Thompson (MS-02)
A formidable legal mind, a skilled politician, a compelling speaker, and a respected colleague, Representative Tubbs Jones contributed much in her relatively short time in Congress and she will be deeply missed. As such, she lived the Congressional Black Caucus’ mission in developing and fostering blooming talent and leadership within the African-American community, empowering them with a wealth of knowledge and insight so that they may one day be in a position to serve and help others.

Representative Maxine Waters (CA-35)
Stephanie was a fighter with tremendous presence. She stood up for the tens of thousands who could not stand up for themselves and fought for justice, equality, and opportunity for every American. In her home state of Ohio and in her beloved city of Cleveland, she led the fight for election reform to ensure that every American’s vote is valued and counted.

I admired Stephanie’s enthusiasm for public service, her integrity, warmth, and intellect. Her presence will be sorely missed and her shoes hard to fill.

Representative Diane E. Watson (CA-33)
Both Mervyn and Stephanie were valued friends and a part of our close knit family. We miss their joy and spirit every day.

Representative Melvin L. Watt (NC-12)
Her jovial spirit, bright smile and warm presence delighted all of those who were lucky enough to have crossed her path. As a spirited politician, she very quickly commanded a national presence, and I certainly took notice. She provided many thought-provoking, informative and, at times, humorous sound bites to our network during the 10 years she served in Congress. Congresswoman Tubbs Jones was a great friend to the BET Networks family and a wonderful person to support.

BET Networks is proud to support the Congressional Black Caucus Foundation in continuing the work of both Congresswoman Stephanie Tubbs Jones and her husband Mervyn Jones, Sr. by providing scholarships to the future leaders of our community.

Debra L. Lee
Chairman & Chief Executive Officer, BET Networks
We are proud to recognize the outstanding achievements of the Honorable Stephanie Tubbs Jones and Mervyn L. Jones, Sr.

We salute the Congressional Black Caucus Foundation for their ongoing efforts to provide education and opportunities to the next generation of leaders.