



Larry Jones

Born: September 2, 1956 in Hopkinsville, Ky.

Resident: Henderson, Ky.

Family: Cindy (wife), Amanda and Wendy (daughters), Michael and Wesley (sons).

Larry Jones' record at Keeneland:

Total Wins: 22

Stakes Wins: (1)

- Won Prioress Breeders' Cup Stakes (G1) with Wildcat Bettie B last year.
- Won the \$1 million Delaware Handicap (G2) in 2005 with Island Sand.
- Won first Grade 1 race with Island Sand in the 2004 Acorn.
- Won first Keeneland stakes when Josh's Madelyn won 2004 Lexus Raven Run Stakes (G2).

For Kentuckian (James) Larry Jones, the richest victory of his training career came in the 2005 Delaware Handicap when Island Sand took home the \$600,000 winner's share of the \$1-million guaranteed purse. In winning by three and three-quarter lengths, she became a millionaire herself.

"It was just wonderful," Jones said afterward. "When we came by the finish line the first time, we were still about eight-wide and I was really wondering how we were going to save any ground. But Jerry (Bailey) got her inside about three-wide. How he saved as much ground as he did, I will never know. That made the difference."

Jones had won his first Grade 1 race in 2004 with Island Sand in the Acorn. Not long after that, he nearly lost her after routine surgery for an entrapped epiglottis. He estimated it was a "one in a million shot" that she'd be as good at 4 as she had been at 3.

Island Sand's breeder, Dick Maynard, brought owner Jim Osborne and Jones together. Maynard and Osborne are friends in Arkansas, and Maynard had suggested that Osborne consider letting Jones be his trainer. Maynard bought Island Sand privately and called Jones.

"He told me he had purchased a filly and was sending her to me," Jones told *The Blood-Horse*, "but her current trainer (Tony Dutrow) said if he left her in New York she would win the Busanda." Jones advised Maynard to leave her in New York. After she won the Busanda, her first stakes victory, she was vanned to Oaklawn Park.

In her initial start for Jones, she ran second in the Fantasy Stakes (G2) and then second to Ashado in the Kentucky Oaks (G1).

"I'm on top of the world," Jones said, "although I could be just a little more on top! Really, the Kentucky Oaks is the second greatest race in the world ... of course, the Kentucky Derby is the greatest. I knew Ashado was going to be the horse to beat here. Going in, I knew if we could beat Ashado, we could win. Her next start? Don't know. She's headed for Ellis Park tonight. We'll celebrate on the way home, maybe stop at McDonald's."

In her next start she won the Acorn.

A tornado that caused nine barns at Ellis Park to collapse in November 2005 forced him to leave his training base early for

Oaklawn's 2006 meet. He said then that it was up in the air whether his operation would be based at Ellis again.

Though Island Sand was retired and bred to A.P. Indy last year, Jones had 40 horses with him at Oaklawn to keep him busy. Afterward, he headed to Keeneland and then on to Delaware Park for the first time.

"We were very fortunate to get our hands on her," he said of Island Sand. "She was very special. I know she needs to do her new job now."

Jones gallops many of his own horses, an average of nine or 10 each day, he said. His wife, Cindy, who is his assistant, formerly galloped for him.

"Our horses are getting better," he observed last February. "We don't have many claiming horses now. We've been able to upgrade. We won't be going back to Prairie Meadows with a string this year. We're kind of outgrowing it."

Other stakes victories in 2005 were the Goldfinch with Swede, the John Wayne with Wild Wild West and the Bob Bryant with Sunriseontheoasis, all at Prairie Meadows. His stable won 62 races last year and earned \$2,235,341, both personal bests.

His first Keeneland stakes winner was Josh's Madelyn, who won the 2004 Raven Run. After stumbling at the start, she rallied eight wide for the victory. She had previously won the Panther Stakes at Prairie Meadows.

For the year, Jones won 35 races and his horses earned \$1,167,990.

Jones has been successful selecting modest-priced horses at Keeneland sales. Josh's Madelyn, who was purchased for \$10,000, and earned more than \$400,000. Another was 2003 Fantasy Stakes winner Ruby's Reception, a \$12,000 purchase who earned more than \$365,000. Yet another was multiple stakes winner Don't Countess Out, a \$16,000 acquisition who went on to earn \$378,951.

"Hopefully, it all wasn't due to luck," he told Robert Yates of the *Arkansas Democrat Gazette* of his selections. "We'd like to think it wasn't. Our percentage of doing it is pretty good."

Jones, who carries a stethoscope around with him at the sales, has been asked what he's listening for numerous times. "I put it

up there and see if that horse says 'buy me.' If it says 'buy me, buy me,' I say, 'all right.'

"I don't think there's any question I have a better chance of winning the Kentucky Oaks than the Kentucky Derby," he said. "When we're sent to the sales, that's not what I've been sent to try and find, a Derby horse."

That could change with the undefeated Hard Spun, who won the 2007 Lecomte Stakes (G3) at Fair Grounds in mid-January.

Before he turned to training, Jones was a commercial farmer in Hopkinsville who grew corn, tobacco and soybeans and raised cattle and hogs. "It was just something I always wanted to do," he explained. "I was farming at the time and farming was not going well in the '70s, so I sold out and started doing this. I grew up showing horses so it was a natural move over."

He first dabbled in the Thoroughbred industry in 1980 as the owner of a \$2,500 claimer named Ala Turf, who was a winner. "I had a perfect record as an owner," he said. Two years later, he took out a trainer's license and saddled his first winner at Ellis Park in 1982. "I thought things weren't getting trained right, so I might as well do it myself. I found out training horses was a whole lot more fun than farming."

His first stakes victory came on Aug. 16, 1986, at Ellis Park when Capt. Bold won the Honorable Order of Ky. Colonel Stakes. Since then, he has developed such other stakes winners as Greatcaesar'sghost, D. C. Tenacious, Poverty Slew, Endless Parade, Strodes Commander and Elusive Sara.

"We have some pretty nice 3-year-old fillies this year," he said in early 2006. One of them, Wildcat Bettie B, won the Dixie Belle Stakes at Oaklawn in January, her first of four stakes wins during the year. "We're pretty excited about what we have coming. We have made a great deal of progress."

As it turned out, Jones had good reason to be excited. His stable won 62 races in 2006 and earned a new career-best \$2,823,294. Wildcat Bettie B, whose Prioress win gave Jones his second Grade 1 victory, also won two other graded races. He won a total of 14 stakes that also included Hello Liberty's win in the Nassau County Breeders' Cup (G2) at Belmont.

Hard Spun and Wildcat Bettie B were among the 40 horses he had at Oaklawn in January. He also had 12 horses at a nearby training center.

Jones, who always wears a cowboy hat, describes it as "my signature. My father and grandfather farmed and ranched. I loved doing anything that involved horses. I could round up cattle; one or a group. The hat became part of the job. I got into matching horses at an early age, then progressed to racing. I had no idea racing would take me this far. I'm grateful."

Through Jan. 9, 2007, he had 469 victories, earnings of \$10,708,173 and 21 stakes winners, according to Equineline.com