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Cc: [Archive](#); [Shelly L Armstrong](#); [Raymond L Gant](#)
Subject: Ferris State University welcomes motivational speaker Jolanda Jones
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Dear Editors/News Directors:

Included below is a press release highlighting the appearance of upcoming speaker Jolanda Jones. Please call/e-mail with questions.

For Immediate Release
Nov. 2, 2005

Leah Nixon
Assistant Director of News Services
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Motivational speaker Jolanda Jones to appear on campus

BIG RAPIDS – Inspirational speaker, entrepreneur and lawyer Jolanda Jones will share her “Game Plan Secrets for Success” Nov. 8 from 11 a.m. to noon in Ferris State University’s Rankin Student Center Dome Room.

The 39-year-old Texan will share her insight and wisdom during a morning presentation, followed by a reception with selected students and guests. She is also scheduled to meet with the track team.

“Jones’ life exemplifies the life experiences (the hardships and obstacles) of many Ferris students,” said Raymond Gant, director of Minority Student Affairs and assistant to the president. Seen as a “beacon of light,” Gant believes that by bringing her to speak on campus, she will motivate other students to achieve and follow in her footsteps down the path to success.

Characterized by peers as a highly confident and hard working individual with strong organizational, leadership and interpersonal skills, Jones seeks to motivate others to realize their full potential by sharing her life experiences.

Born in Houston to a 19-year-old mother and a 20-year-old father, Jones did not have what most would consider a “normal” childhood. She experienced psychological and sexual abuse and even witnessed her father commit suicide, an event which she says profoundly impacted and shaped her life.

Raised by a single mother, she spent her childhood in a house with no running water and little essentials and grew up around friends who never considered college an option. She grew accustomed to seeing gun-shot victims, and her brother was murdered—shot five times—two weeks before she tried out for the 1996 U.S. Olympic Team. Faced with many obstacles, she learned the importance of self-reliance, confidence and independence.

“The labels associated with where I come from don’t have to lead to welfare, prison or worse,” said Jones. “You can learn positive things from adverse situations.”

Among her many accomplishments, she is the owner of both an inner-city law firm and a consulting firm, a successful civil criminal and family litigator, a leader recognized by Congress and the cities of Houston and Galveston, a member of the Verizon Academic All-America Hall of Fame, and a U.S. champion in Track and Field.

As part of the Life's Playbook for Success Speaker's Team, Jones travels the country addressing groups of secondary school students, educators and administrators about the importance of leadership and overcoming obstacles in order to succeed in life.

For more information on her appearance at Ferris, contact Gant at 591-2617.

Thank you for your time and consideration,

Jessica Short

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