



**The Center for Alternative Dispute Resolution's
2008 Annual Conference
June 19, 2008**

**James E. Jones Diversity Award Presentation to
Marcy May**

Thank you Marvin for those kind words. You are a kindred spirit to me.

It's truly an honor to be recognized with this James E. Jones Diversity Award today. I want to thank Marvin, Linda, Torin and all of the folks at the Center for Alternative Dispute Resolution here in Maryland. It's really great to receive this recognition.

I've had so many teachers in my life, Marvin among them, and I'd like to share a few of their lessons with you, for these people and the lessons I learned from them have shaped my life.

The other day I called Marvin so I could be properly prepared for this presentation. I asked him just what was this award about anyway? And, in typical Marvin style, he grumbled "well, if you had be listening at the conference last year..." You all know what I'm talking about... So I googled James E. Jones. Well, for those of you who don't know, he is literally the architect of affirmative action in employment; was the one who put forth numerical and time tables for meeting those goals, co-authored "Race in America" and is a prolific, brilliant man.

That said, I had to ask myself, "What's a white woman like me doing receiving an award like this?" And it has made me very reflective over the past few days, remembering all of the teachers who crossed – and continue to cross – my path, with words, actions, lessons about life, race, class, power, control – the things that continue to fascinate and baffle me every day.

There *is* no greater accolade than receiving an award for one's work with diversity. It let's me know that the focus of my work is meaningful and worthwhile. But more importantly, it let's me know that I'm aware of, and confronting, my white privilege. Growing up in white, middle class America in the 60's and 70's I lived the dream of "truth, justice and the American way."

So what were the lessons that led me on a different path?

The primary lesson was to live life with intent, or you'll miss it.

My mother raised me with intent. She taught me that every person, no matter who they are, has something positive to offer.

Theresa Funciello, who told me, upon my graduation from college, that I could “be an ‘expletive deleted’ and go play with my (white, middle class) friends up in Boston, or I could move to New York City and really change my life.” To all of those women on welfare in New York City who taught me first hand about race, class and poverty in America, I thank you for sharing your lives.

And I had to ask myself, how can I be 21 years old, a college graduate, and not have known about the “other America.” I was filled with anger and resolve.

When Raheim Townsend, who at 13 years of age told me “Marcy, no one wants to get hurt” it was in that moment I came to believe that alternative dispute resolution could really work.

And to Jacquie McDonald, the love of my life, who allowed me to see the world through her eyes – a dark skinned African American woman who grew up in the hell of child abuse, hunger, homelessness, domestic violence and horrors I never knew existed. She taught me so much, including what it means to live a multicultural life and how to create and maintain a truly multicultural organization.

Thank you for expanding my vision.

So this is why I bring young people everywhere I go – to expose them to the rich lessons that await them. And for the past 23 years I have run this organization called EARS. I have cultivated a remarkable group of people – many of whom are here today – to help me raise the next generation. I intend to expose them to the best and the brightest in our field, to those of you of color, and my white peers who share this vision of diversity, I bring them to you.

In closing, I’d like to encourage the adults in this room to consider mentoring a young person in a committed, serious way. Now I imagine many of you already mentor young people, because that’s who you are. Marvin Johnson, Homer La Rue, Lynne Hurdle-Price, Sharon Press, Janice Fleisch, Warren Price, Daniel Bowling, Edwin Figueroa and so many others have mentored many, many EARS youth, and are the reason these young people are here today. I thank you.

And thank you for this honor of being the recipient of the James E. Jones Diversity Award. I pledge to continue to “walk the talk” in my work and in my life.

Thank you.

Respectfully submitted

Marcy May

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