

# Former farmer earns degree at 62

By DENYSE LANOUEPTE  
of The Free Press

When Maurice Jones left school to work on his father's farm nearly 50 years ago, he nev-

er expected he would one day graduate from university with an honors degree in history.

However, truth can be stranger than fiction. On Monday, Jones, who will be 63 next month,

received his certificate of honors standing in history from the University of Western Ontario.

And he will be back at Western in the fall, plugging away for his master's degree, also in history.

Although he is not sure what's in store for him after that, he intends to remain intellectually active.

"I'm not aiming for the prime ministership, but if it comes along I won't shirk from it," he said with tongue in cheek.

Jones, a widower, said he decided to go back to school after moving to London in 1969.

The only son of a farmer, he left school after Grade 9 in 1930 to help out at home. He remained a farmer until severe arthritis forced him to give up his farm at Minesing, near Barrie.

After spending a few months in the hospital because of his arthritis, he decided to move to London and live with his daughter, Eleanor Jones, of 540 Mornington Ave.

"I've always been very fond of reading," he said, explaining why he decided to go back to school.

At first he intended to take an evening course at Fanshawe College, but one of the professors there convinced him to register full-time.

"At first I was very reluctant and apprehensive because I knew nothing about the program and because I didn't know how the young students would react to me," he said.

The results were sufficiently encouraging for him to switch to a degree program at Western.

"I got four As and one B in first year," he said. "My grades have gone down a bit since then," he added with a grin.

They still remain respectable enough for graduate school, however.

"I like the reception I got at Western from both the teachers and the boys and girls in my classes. They made me feel part of it," he said.

Jones said it took him eight years to get enough credits for a pass degree and an honors certificate because he was attending part time. His weakest area was writing skills, he said, adding that his daughter, who works at the law library at Western, helped him.

I just went from grade to grade, course to course, and here I am."

Jones said his university education has given him self confidence and a broader realm of thought.

A firm believer in education, he said he does not recommend leaving school for the young people of today, not even for those interested in farming.

"If I were to start all over again in farming, I would take a course in agriculture," he said.

Jones has paid for most of his courses. However, for the past two years he has been eligible for free tuition because he is over 60:



One of Western's newest and oldest graduates, Maurice Jones, 62, holds his certificate aloft outside Alumni Hall Monday.

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