

# MUSEUM

THE ESTHER THOMAS ATKINSON  
OF HAMPDEN-SYDNEY COLLEGE

AUGUST 2012

## T. Catesby Jones 1899, lawyer and art collector

C. Wayne Tucker

When the Virginia Museum of Fine Arts (VMFA) re-opened in the spring of 2010 after a period during which it was closed for the construction of an addition, the principal exhibition on Tiffany glass was joined by a show of selected works collected by Hampden-Sydney College alumnus T. Catesby Jones, Class of 1899, "Matisse, Picasso, and Modern Art in Paris." In 1947 by bequest his collection of modern French paintings, sculpture, drawings, illustrated books, and other works on paper went to the University of Virginia and VMFA. The show appeared first at the University of Virginia, then at other sites in Virginia before coming to VMFA.

Thomas Catesby Jones was born on December 6, 1880, in Petersburg, the son of Walter Nelson and Ada Vaughan Jones. He was descended from Thomas Jones, who was born in London and in Virginia was a vestryman of Bruton Parish, a member of the House of Burgesses for the College of William and Mary (1720-22), and a member of the first Board of Aldermen of Williamsburg. Catesby Jones's other English ancestor, Mark Catesby, was a naturalist who immigrated to Virginia in 1712 and was the first to describe the common birds of the Colonies in a book. Original copies of the two volumes of that work were presented by T. Catesby Jones to the Williamsburg Restoration Committee. In 1929 Jones presented a marble tablet commemorating his ancestors to Old Bruton Parish Church.

After attending McCabe's University School in Petersburg, he enrolled at the age of fourteen in Hampden-Sydney College in 1895. Not an outstanding student, he nonetheless possessed innate intellectual gifts, which enabled him to master his subjects and receive his bachelor's degree in 1899. At the College, he was a member of Beta Theta Pi, served as president of the freshman class and vice president of the Athletic Association, and was on the staffs of both the yearbook and the magazine. As a member of the Union Literary Society, he won the Junior Debater's Medal in 1898.

He spent a year at Princeton University,

receiving a master's degree, before entering the University of Virginia School of Law, from which he received his law degree in 1903.

For nine years he practiced admiralty law in Norfolk before moving in 1912 to New York to join the firm of Harrington, Bigham & Englar. In the following year he was admitted to the New York Bar and became a partner in the firm, which was renamed Bigham, Englar & Jones with offices at 64 Wall St., and still later, Bigham, Englar, Jones & Houston, where he remained until his death. He had homes on the upper East Side and in Far Rockaway, Long Island.

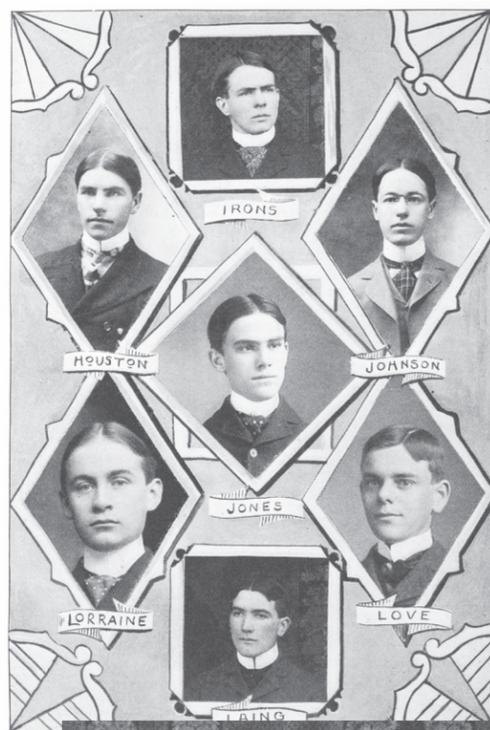
He appeared before the U.S. Supreme Court and was a member of the American Bar Association and the bars of many of the United States Circuit Courts of Appeal and District Courts. He served a term as chairman of the ABA's Committee on admiralty and maritime law, and represented the Maritime Law Association as a delegate to the 1927 Comité Maritime International in Amsterdam and the 1930 Antwerp Conference.

In 1944 he was appointed Prize Commissioner in the United States District Court for the Southern District of New York, which was given jurisdiction of the entire Atlantic Ocean and tributary waters, dealing, among other matters, with the question of the American seizure of the German liner *Europa* as a prize of war.

He served as a trustee of a number of institutions and societies, including Hampden-Sydney College and the Jamestown Society. At the time of his death he was a life trustee of VMFA.

His first wife was Olga Hasbrouck. They married on May 6, 1911, and had one son, Catesby ap Thomas Jones. Olga Jones died on February 6, 1913, and on September 2, 1916, Jones married Louisa Brook. They had two daughters, Mary Virginia Catesby and Frances Key.

Catesby Jones's interest in art probably began during a trip to Paris with his wife in 1924. While he could not afford the Impressionists, he became interested in works by unknown artists. During



LEFT TOP: Catesby Jones's senior picture (center), from the 1899 Kaleidoscope.

BELOW: Catesby Jones as a member of the Drama Club (he is third from left in the back row).



that first trip he bought eight paintings, and in subsequent trips with his wife he bought other works and continued collecting in New York, where among his dealers was Pierre Matisse, the son of Henri Matisse. He purchased works by artists who later became famous, including Matisse, Braque, Ernst, and Picasso, as well as others who are not as well known even today.

Jones is quoted in an article in the 1936 *Record*, "My hobby has been collecting modern paintings, those horrible things so frequently greeted with

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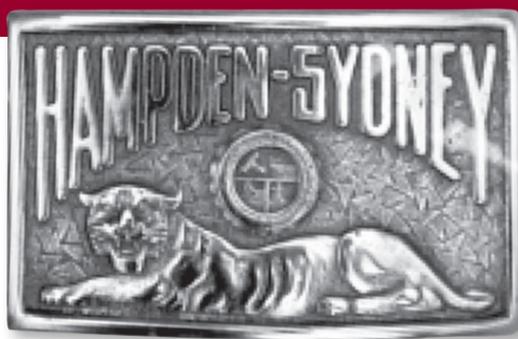
International lawyer and art collector . . . PAGE 1

#### Honor Roll of Donors, 2011-2012

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#### Belt buckles reproduced

Iconic memorabilia now available . . . PAGE 3



BELT BUCKLE PRESENTED BY JOSEPH T. TROTTER '35, ONE OF THREE REPRODUCED BY THE MUSEUM

#### Hampden-Sydney in stained glass

A church in New York displays our seal . . . PAGE 4

#### Coming Exhibits

From skulls and bones to Egyptian chairs, something for everyone to see. . . PAGE 4

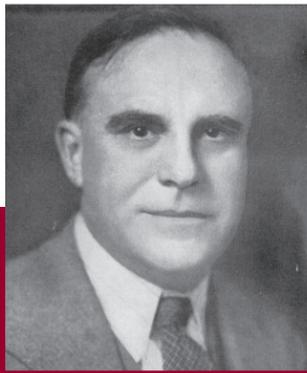
CATESBY JONES 1899, CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

derision. Some persons have intimated that this hobby indicates an idiosyncrasy so marked as to amount to disease.”

And in a volume compiled for the thirtieth anniversary of his law school class, he wrote, “I have resorted to pictures as an antidote to too deep reflection on the origin of law and have managed to get together some modern French pictures which most of you would consider rubbish.”

Jones was a supporter of the Museum of Modern Art and lent works from his collection for special exhibitions. He gave an historical collection of Chinese ceramics to Vassar College in memory of his first wife, who was an alumna of the Class of 1905.

Jones died on December 21, 1946, at his home in New York City. On his tombstone in Blandford Cemetery in Petersburg is a sculpture by Jacques Lipchitz, whom Jones had earlier commissioned to do a bronze portrait head. The sculpture was first entitled *Harp*, but because American customs rules of the time stated that all imported works of sculpture be named for something living, Jones and the customs agent called it *Harpy* for the bird-like creatures that befouled the food of Aeneas and his men in Vergil’s *Aeneid*, and finally *Harpist*. The artist, who supervised the installation, intended the work to be a “visual metamorphosis of a harp player and her instrument into bird form.” Also in the Jones square are buried Louisa, who died at eighty-four,



*Hampden-Sydney of today, I am sure, has fully lived up to its traditions. Even in these hours of perplexity, perils and horrors of war, the form of education which existed here in my day is of inestimable value. True, that type of education is not like a radio beam which will lead to a designated place. It was not intended to be. It was intended to build character and fit men for life.*

T. CATESBY JONES 1899.  
Commencement Address at  
Hampden-Sydney College, 1940

and Jones’s son Catesby, who died at fifty-five.

Matthew Affron, curator of modern art and academic curator of the University of Virginia Art Museum—and organizer of the Jones show—is quoted as saying that “Jones collected with an awareness of history, building a good foundation in the great masters of modern art . . . as well as lesser-known artists shown by the art galleries in Paris and New York at the time.”

According to Affron, Jones’s gift transformed both art institutions. “It brought a body of work from the first half of the twentieth century in France to Richmond and it became the backbone of our modern art collection here.”

Affron continued, “He saw art as a spiritual force. He believed that great art touches the soul.”

**Sources**

- Affron, Matthew, “Gift of Modern European Art Transforms U.Va. Art Museum Collections,” *The Cornerstone Society Report 2008-2010*, pp. 18-19.  
Brock, Robt. K., “Thomas Catesby Jones,” *The Record of the Hampden-Sydney Alumni Association*, 1936, pp. 4-5.  
Levit, Ginger, “UVMA showcases the collection of T. Jones,” *Antique Week* (41.2071, March 23, 2009), pp. 1, 3.  
Proctor, Roy, “U.Va. show focuses on French art,” *Richmond Times-Dispatch*, March 29, 2009, “T. Catesby Jones, Lawyer, 64, Dead,” *New York Times*, December 22, 1946, p. 41.

RIGHT: *Catesby Jones as the commencement speaker in 1940, from the Record.*



“The Harpist” by Jacques Lipschitz, placed on Catesby Jones’s gravestone at historic Blandford Church in Petersburg.  
PHOTO BY C. WAYNE TUCKER

## Student Museum Board Events

Alex Alexander  
Chairman, Student Museum Board

On Tuesday, March 27, the Atkinson Museum Student Museum Board held the first ever Hampden-Sydney Pub Quiz in the Tiger Inn. Fourteen students participated in the event to compete for three Tiger Inn gift certificates.

Students competed against one another over three rounds of questioning in which they were asked a series of questions pertaining to Hampden-Sydney history and culture. These questions ranged from fairly easy questions like “Beginning in 1899, classes were not scheduled at what hour of the day?” to harder ones like, “What type of club was Ye Anti-Calico Club?”

After surviving two qualifying rounds and a final of round-robin questioning, Nick Arakaky won the grand prize of 25 Tiger Dollars. The competition was tough, but everyone seemed to have a good time. And in the end everyone walked away with something—either a surplus of Tiger Dollars or a few facts about H-SC.

Continuing into the fall semester is an opportunity for several Hampden-Sydney students to participate in the hands-on conservation treatment of a large oil painting. The portrait depicts James McConnell, the first president of Radford College, now Radford University.

The project is carried out at the Atkinson Museum by Sharon Koehler, long time Objects Conservator and Associate Member of the American Institute for Conservation. The treatment involves the careful consolidation of lifting/flaking paint as well as a thorough cleaning of the painting’s overall surface.

Eight students assisted Conservator Koehler during the spring semester and a similar number is expected in the fall.

## Thank you to our donors in Fiscal Year 2011-2012



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Director-Curator,  
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*Mr. Joseph O. Humphreys '61*

# Vintage buckles reproduced

C. Wayne Tucker

The Atkinson Museum has spearheaded the effort to produce replicas of vintage Hampden-Sydney buckles in the Museum's collection. The replicas are now on sale at the Bookstore.

Museum Board Member **Conley Edwards '67** investigated several foundries and recommended Hanover Brass, which had presented a favorable estimate. The sale of the buckles will benefit the Museum and will also be used as an incentive for giving to the Museum.

The replicas are based on buckles from the 1920s and 1930s given to the Museum for its collection of College memorabilia. One buckle was donated by Dorothy W. Elliott and had belonged to Emmet R. Elliott '28. The silver buckle is inscribed H and S with a tiger head between the letters. After graduating from the College, Elliott received his M.A. from Duke University in 1929. In 1934 he joined the Hampden-Sydney faculty, teaching mathematics before taking a leave of absence to serve in the United States Navy. Elliott returned to Hampden-Sydney in 1948 as associate professor of mathematics and continued to teach until 1964.

Dr. Gilman Z. Simms '30 donated a silver buckle inscribed with HSC and a tiger head under the S. After studying at the medical school of the University of Louisville, Dr. Simms practiced dentistry in Charleston, West Virginia, for forty years. After his retirement, he moved with his wife Julia and son Walter to Hampden-Sydney, where he served for many years as a volunteer trainer to the athletic teams. He was named an honorary member of the Hampden-Sydney Athletic Hall of Fame in 1989. His son J. Scott Simms graduated from the College in the Class of 1961.

Another buckle, donated by Joseph T. Trotter '35, is silver with the inscription Hampden-Sydney across the top, the College seal in the middle, and a tiger below.

Following his graduation from the College, Trotter studied at the Harvard Graduate

School of Business Administration. After a career in business, in 1960 he was named director of alumni affairs at Hampden-Sydney, coordinating alumni work and engaging with parents, foundations, corporations, and friends of the College.



Two of the three belt buckles which have been precisely reproduced and are now available from the Hampden-Sydney College Bookstore. The top buckle was given by Dr. Gilman Simms '30; the lower one belonged to Emmett R. Elliott '28.

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## Personalized Bricks *A Lasting Tribute*

**REMEMBER!** You can purchase inscribed memorial bricks to be placed in the Museum's front walk. They are an ideal way to recognize graduates, loved ones, beloved teachers, or classmates—even (as one of our students did) to propose.

To request a brick order form, call the Museum at (434) 223-6134, or download one from [www.hsc.edu/Museum/Personalized-Brick.html](http://www.hsc.edu/Museum/Personalized-Brick.html)



## Supporting the Museum

The Museum's operating budget comes principally from gifts from its friends, augmented by income from its small endowment.

As a result, individual gifts of annual support are extremely important to the continued health and progress of the Museum, both as a guardian of Hampden-Sydney's heritage and as a memorial to Mrs. P. T. Atkinson, who founded it.

Gifts may be mailed in the enclosed envelope or submitted online at [www.hsc.edu/Making-A-Gift.html](http://www.hsc.edu/Making-A-Gift.html). You may specify that your gift be used by the Museum. All gifts to the College are tax-deductible.

*The MISSION of the Esther Thomas Atkinson Museum is to promote an awareness and understanding of the history of Hampden-Sydney College as it relates to its role in the history of Virginia and the United States, while serving to support and enhance the College's mission to form good men and good citizens in an atmosphere of sound learning.*

## The chapel of the reformed faith

Angie Way

Hampden-Sydney College has had an often-close tie to the Presbyterian Church. Even from the earliest days, the College was influenced by other Presbyterian institutions and Colleges like Princeton. In the mid-1900s one of these Churches recognized this association in a unique way.

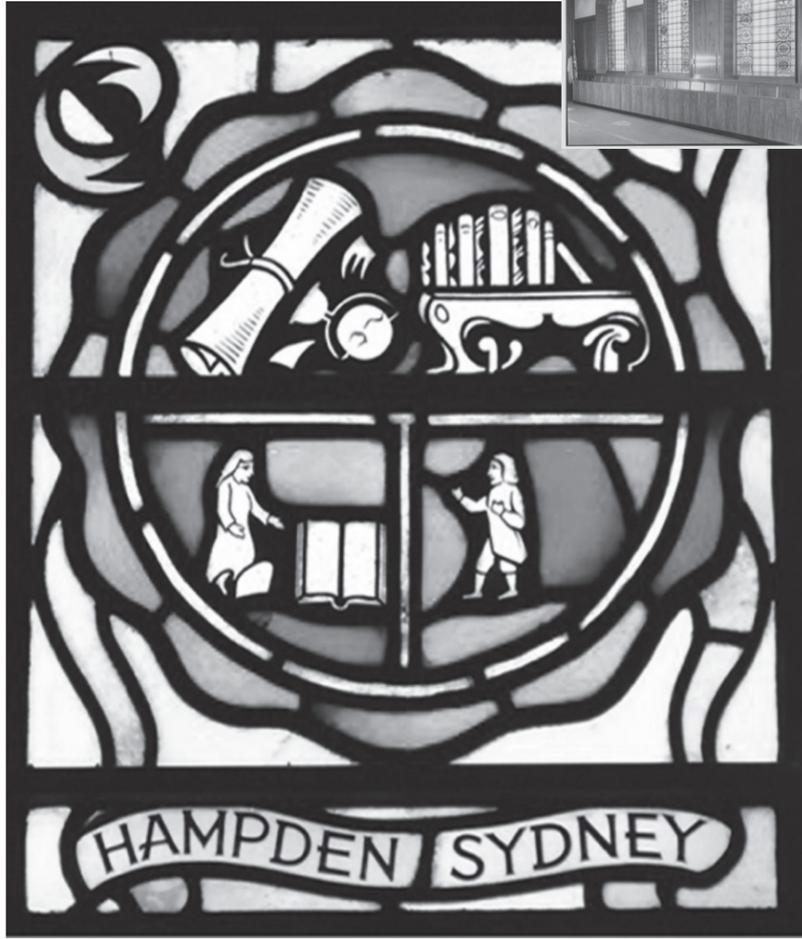
In the Brick Presbyterian Church in New York City is the Chapel of the Reformed Faith, dedicated in 1952. Its interior was designed by the firm of Adams and Woodbridge, inspired by the Wren Chapel at the College of William and Mary. Some of the features of the room include Italian mosaics decorating the floor, an organ at one end installed in 1996, and three stained glass windows.

Along the exterior wall in the Chapel are the three windows. One panel represents the hospitals in the United States founded under Presbyterian auspices; the second panel represents Presbyterian seminaries; and the third contains the seals of colleges and universities. The seal of Hampden-Sydney is one of those displayed.

The windows were executed by Reynolds, Francis, and Rohnstock of Boston. Joseph G. Reynolds founded Reynolds, Francis, and Rohnstock in 1923. The company designed windows in the spirit of Gothic Revival and created some of the finest pieces of that period.

Hampden-Sydney's part of the window is in the College and University panels. Our seal, in shades of maroon and blue, is fully depicted with painted details in the leaded glass. According to the *Record*, "Hampden-Sydney was one of seventeen colleges to be honored by inclusion in a stained glass memorial window in the Chapel of the Reformed Faith at Brick Presbyterian Church in New York City." President Edgar Gammon attended the unveiling ceremony on November 22, 1953, on behalf of Hampden-Sydney.

A very nice publication showing the windows and the architecture of the church is downloadable by going to [www.brickchurch.org](http://www.brickchurch.org) and selecting News and Downloads under the News and Resources tab. The .pdf is titled *Brick Church Architecture*.



The Hampden-Sydney seal at the Brick Church in New York City is set into a stained-glass window in the Chapel of the Reformed Faith (inset, right).

### HOW TO HELP THE MUSEUM

Financial donations to the Atkinson Museum are welcome and help fund our special projects and exhibits. These are planned to complement the course offerings of Hampden-Sydney College and serve our students.

To make a monetary donation, please mail your check to the Atkinson Museum, Box 745, Hampden-Sydney College, 23943. Please be sure to write Atkinson Museum in the memo line of your check.

For donations of items, we are looking for Hampden-Sydney personal items from former students, faculty, and staff that depict the close relationship and influence the school has had on the people associated with it. Whether the item is a letter to home from a 1920's student on College life or an early version of the Tiger Mascot costume, we appreciate the chance to share these special items with our students and alumni.

## ON EXHIBIT

### Art, skulls, bones, and Jefferson's Egyptomania

May 24-August 4, 2012

#### Central Virginia Arts Members' Show

Work by artists from the seven counties around Hampden-Sydney.

August 14-October 26, 2012

#### Diamonds, Gold, Skulls & Bones

#### Fraternity and Society Jewelry from the 1700s to Today.

The exhibit features originals along with greatly enlarged photographs of jewelry in the collection of the Museum, showing the artistry and mystery of fraternity jewelry. Included is a presentation of the steps required to make a piece of fraternity jewelry today, courtesy of The Fraternity of Phi Gamma Delta, Inc.

October 9, 2012, at 4:30 pm

#### Lecture: Jefferson and Egypt

Beth O'Leary

This lecture explores Jefferson's fascination with Egyptian history, art, and architecture as revealed in his writings, furnishings, and design for his own grave.

Co-sponsored by The Fine Arts Department of Hampden-Sydney College and Professor Mary Prevot. In the Atkinson Museum Back Gallery.

October 7 & November 4, 2012, and January 13, 2013, at 3 pm

#### Lectures by experts from the Virginia Museum of Fine Arts

Co-sponsored by Central Virginia Arts.

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