

## **Mariana Wilson Jones**

Mariana was born and raised in Coleman and graduated from Coleman High School in 1953. She started dance lessons at age three, and dancing soon became a life-long passion. While at CHS, she coordinated and danced in school plays and productions and was also the drum major of the Bluecat marching band. Mariana is also recognized for being one of the first to dress up as a “Bluecat” mascot for school spirit events.

After graduating from Texas Tech University, where she was named “Woman of the Year” her senior year, Mariana studied dance in New York City. She taught school in Phoenix, Arizona and in Frankfurt, Germany. Mariana then earned a Master’s in Education from the University of Texas in Austin.

Following her graduation from UT, Mariana spent the next several years experiencing the world with her family while residing in Florida, France and Germany. When Mariana returned to Coleman in 1969, she invested her time working on civic improvements for the City of Coleman. She started the Coleman Summer Recreation Program in the early 1970’s and worked diligently with the City to secure funding for the construction of a new City Pool and tennis courts which are still in use today. The largest component of the Summer Recreation Program was swimming lessons, which initially took place at the Old City Pool. Hundreds of Coleman County children learned to swim through this program. In addition, Mariana helped coordinate a life-saving course for more experienced swimmers, who would then go on to teach in the summer recreation program. The swimming program grew to the point that it had over 400 participants annually.

In addition to all of her volunteer work for the City of Coleman, Mariana also taught dance lessons to a generation of Coleman children. Her dance school’s annual recitals were a highly anticipated annual event and were attended by hundreds of Coleman residents every year.

In 1971, Mariana was awarded a Certificate of Achievement by the Texas Recreation and Parks Society for her work on the Summer Recreation Program. The award was presented to five Texas residents who “contributed to the fulfillment and enrichment of the Park and Recreation concept” in the State of Texas.

Mariana was active in St. Mark’s Episcopal Church, and was the spur for creating the Tri-Church living nativity scene, which was displayed each Christmas on Commercial Avenue in front of the First Christian Church.

In addition to all of her other activities, Mariana also served as a director of the Coleman Chamber of Commerce, a coordinator for the “Miss Coleman County” Beauty Pageant, and a director of the Coleman Community Center. In 1977, Mariana was named “Outstanding Citizen” in Coleman for her various contributions to the people and city of Coleman

She taught English at Coleman High School from 1980 until 1984. At this time, Mariana continued her passion for dancing and teaching by founding the Coleman High School drill team. The CHS drill team soon began competing state-wide and received numerous honors. She worked passionately and tirelessly on the various routines and programs performed by the team, and the drill team provided an opportunity for many high school girls to contribute to the spirit of the school

Mariana later taught drama and English in Austin public and private schools until her retirement in 2004. Mariana loved teaching both at Coleman High School and in Austin, and she impacted hundreds of students over the course of her long career in teaching.

Accepting Ms. Jones’ 2022 Hall of Honor award on her behalf is her son, Wilson Jones.

