



Meet CCA Member:
James Jones

Title: Managing Director
Employer: EY
Location: Hoboken, NJ
Practice Area: International M&A

CCA CONFERENCE OF
CONSULTING ACTUARIES

“The More You Change the Less You Fear”

We often remember our first times experiencing things. Why? New experiences are **IMPACTFUL**, they alter us permanently and if we allow them to - they are what allow us to grow. No one understands this concept more than James Jones. You see, he is first in line to give things a whirl because he's discovered the secret behind it all. When you're willing to take on those challenges you always walk away better, stronger, wiser. While so many cringe at the mere thought of their career firsts, James revels in the recalling of his professional journey and many of the firsts he has shared with fellow members of the CCA.

Which is why it's no surprise that James is the ideal candidate to be this year's chairperson for the first-ever virtual CCA Annual Meeting. After all, this is a year characterized by new experiences and firsts for many. It's become "the new normal" to constantly hear about "the new normal." Still, James has learned all that chaos needs some sort of consistency within it. An eye in the storm. Even when being forced to try new things, not everything has to change. Professionally speaking, James knows he has a network of individuals - people that have over time become his true friends - that he can count on, no matter what.

To adapt is to survive. To learn how to enjoy it is to thrive. Remember that and then think of that glorious smile on James's face next time things are tough. You may very well crack a smile yourself.

So, please sit back, relax, and take a moment to get to know the CCA member, super volunteer (including being this year's Annual Meeting Chair), and just an all-around delightful person – James Jones!

Name: James Jones / **Location:** Hoboken, NJ / **Employer:** EY / **Title:** Managing Director / **Area of Practice:** International M&A

How did you get into the actuarial profession?

I learned about the profession in high school through participating in the Howard University Summer Actuarial Program. Being honest, I looked at it as an opportunity to travel to Washington, D.C. during the summer. When I arrived, I was amazed to hear from professional actuaries discussing what they do and being exposed to some of the fundamental mathematical concepts needed to understand how to do the work. It was challenging. It was exciting. I arrived back in Dallas in my senior year with the sole intention of finding out how to pursue this profession.

What is the strangest thing someone has told you they assumed about being an actuary or what it means to be an actuary?

Of course, I heard the jokes about actuaries being introverted accountants. However, the strangest assumption that I heard from someone was that actuaries were mortuaries for actors. (I had to smile before I explained that is not what an actuary is).

What is your favorite part about being a CCA member?

Access to education with intriguing topics delivered through their webinars and the Annual Meeting. Through each of these channels, I am able to see what insights are being discussed in the market and innovative ways to grow as a consultant. The CCA has also been a great networking organization within the actuarial community.

Is there something about you that people would be surprised by if they knew it? If so, what is it?

I am very much an "open book" ...but I am a self-taught gospel pianist and singer. I love to travel in my professional and personal life. As a child, my mother was concerned about me being "shy." 😊

Who was a professional mentor of yours and how did he or she impact your career?

I have had numerous actuaries (all of them members of the CCA) mentor me over the years and I am grateful for their advice and guidance. They have truly been instrumental in shaping me into the person I am today.

What is your greatest accomplishment to date – professional or otherwise?

Attaining my actuarial credentials, touching 6 of the 7 continents, and speaking numerous languages (although I may not speak them all well 😊). But most of all, I am proud of the opportunities that I have had to achieve these accomplishments and grateful for the journey.

Can you tell us about your favorite experience working with the CCA?

All of my experiences relate to my “firsts.” I remember the first meeting I attended (I was super excited to network and meet others in the profession). I remember my first time as a session coordinator (slightly nervous being on stage with the other experts in the field). My first time facilitating a learning session (truly enjoying the interaction with the audience). And now as the Annual Meeting Chair (building on our successful brand in these extraordinary times).

Where did you go to school and what did you study?

The University of Texas at Austin. I studied Mathematics with a concentration in Actuarial Science and Finance with a concentration in Risk Management.

How do you define success?

Learning along the way of your journey. We all have goals and it is great to attain them. However, pay attention to what you have learned en route to your goal. Most people will continue to set goal after goal to build a list of accomplishments. That is good, but for me, the life lessons along the way are important.

What advice do you have for future actuaries or actuaries just getting their careers started?

Words that my father would say often: “Always give the best that you have. If you get tired, sit down. Rest awhile. Get back up and fight some more. Never give up.” Other advice that has been given to me that I appreciate: It is a marathon, not a sprint. Enjoy the ride!

What do you see as the future of the profession?

I believe actuaries will continue to push the boundaries of our traditional roles and expand into innovative leadership roles that are strategic partners for businesses. I do not believe that there are any limitations to our profession. Leveraging our analytical skills and applying them to any type of business issue is our greatest strength.

How do you define yourself as a Consulting Actuary (i.e. what does it mean to be a consultant)?

A consultant is someone who has experience in an area, can share their expertise, and help others in solving problems. Our areas of specialty may differ. But our value is highlighted by being able to use our previous experiences, recognizing patterns in data, and solving challenging situations for others.

Do you have strong opinions about calculators?

No. I recently found my Texas Instruments BA II Plus and smiled as I returned it to storage with my Actuarial Mathematics textbook. I use Excel a lot and if I need a calculator, I will use the app on my phone.

What is the most important thing that you've learned in the last five years?

Things change. And that is ok.

If you weren't an actuary, what else might you like to do for work?

I think I would always do some type of consulting/facilitating. I like to help people solve problems and learn. (I guess it is in my genes—both of my parents were teachers).

What would be the title of your autobiography?

Unicorns Exist

What does being a member of the CCA mean to you?

The opportunity to network with and learn from some of the greatest consultants in the actuarial profession.

Thank you, James, for taking the time to share this with us and the actuarial community!

[Have a question for James? Send the CCA an email at conference@ccactuaries.org containing your contact information, and we'll get the message to him on your behalf.]