

ALBERT JONES (1920–2013)

BY: [AMAR A. SHARMA](#) | SEPTEMBER 12, 2013 | 0

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Albert Jones, a legendary variable star observer, passed away this week, leaving behind a voluminous



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Albert Jones

The international astronomy community lost one of its greatest visual observers with the passing of 93. Jones was best known for his phenomenal skill as a variable star observer, having made numerous discoveries in the field. He is also remembered as a comet observer, and his discovery of a comet in 1946 which set a record for the greatest time span for comet discoveries by an individual.

Fellow New Zealand comet hunter Rodney Austin aptly dubbed Albert Jones a “Quiet Achiever” due to his reserved personality. Jones became a legend among variable star observers, and he achieved worldwide fame when he independently discovered the naked-eye supernova, SN1987A, in the Large Magellanic Cloud.

Albert Francis Arthur Lofley Jones was born in Christchurch, New Zealand, on August 9, 1920, witnessing a brilliant aurora in 1939. Jones’s observations of the aurora came to the attention of the Mount John Observatory, who later nominated Jones as a member of the New Zealand Astronomical Society (New Zealand).



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But it was another New Zealander, Frank Bateson, who introduced Jones to variable star observation. Jones was the sixth person to amass more than 100,000 visual estimates of variables, and he passed the 50 today.

Jones, however, wasn't interested in quantity but rather quality when it came to making magnitude estimates. Jones told after attending a meeting on the American Association of Variable Star Observers the banquet at St. Luc, Janet Mattei announced and presented awards, and then she said the over 500,000 observations. That set me wondering who had done so much until she announced it looked at ME – I was overwhelmed – I had no idea that I had made that many estimates!" Albert was there.

Jones's career spanned almost 70 years, ending only a year or two before his demise, an awards. Among the more notable are the Award of the Order of the British Empire by the Queen, the Comet Medal for his first comet discovery, the Edgar Wilson Award for his second comet discovery, and the Amateur Achievement Award of the ASP. The minor planet (3152) Jones was named in his honor.

For more about the life of Albert Jones, you can [read his conversation with Mike Simonsen](#) of Observers (AAVSO).

Amar Sharma is the most active comet amateur from India. He is conducting research on the upcoming work.