

*Downtown School students ask bobsledder Randy Jones,  
'Have you ever gotten really scared and thrown up over the side?' His  
reply: yes and no – and yes, he did meet Harding and Kerrigan*

# Olympic Experience

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JOURNAL PHOTOS BY STEPHEN MATTESON JR.

**Randy Jones of the 1994 U.S. Olympic bobsled team visits The Downtown School.**



Randy Jones took his skin-tight uniform, helmet and spiked shoes to The Downtown School yesterday to talk about being an Olympic athlete and the importance of setting goals.

Jones, who was born in Winston-Salem, was a member of the U.S. bobsled team in this year's Winter Olympics in Lillehammer, Norway.

Lillehammer was "very, very, very, very, very cold," he told the students, and the snow reached up to his knees.

Jones, a track star when he was at Glenn High School, explained his job as brakeman this way: "Start the sled real fast," then jump in and keep your head down, counting the curves so you know when to stop the sled.

"It's like you're sitting on the floor with no carpet, and you get tossed around a little bit," he said.

Stopping involves pulling the

handles on brakes that grip the ice — "kind of like how the Flintstones stop their car," he said.

The children were most impressed when Jones told them he had met Nancy Kerrigan and Tonya Harding.

One of the big questions he was asked was: "Have you ever gotten really scared and thrown up over the side?"

Yes, he said, he has been scared riding the bobsled, which can reach speeds of 80 mph. But no, he's never thrown up over the side.

**ALPHONSE ODOM**, a second-grader, was impressed with Jones. "I think it was neat — how he showed the helmet and how tight the uniform was." But Alphonse was a little disappointed that Jones didn't bring his bobsled with him to school.

That would have been impractical, since the sleds can weigh anywhere from 400 to 1,000 pounds.

Jones, 24, went from Glenn to Duke University, where he played running back in football

and ran track.

When he graduated from Duke in 1992 with a degree in mechanical engineering, he seemed headed for a job as an automobile-company executive. But a bobsled driver named Scott Pladell noticed Jones' sprinting times in a track magazine and asked him if he wanted to learn how to push a bobsled. Jones went to a camp in Lake Placid, N.Y., where he caught the eye of Brian Shimer, another bobsled driver. Jones ended up joining Shimer's four-man team.

Jones' team placed 13th in the two-man bobsled competition in Lillehammer. His four-man team was disqualified because the blades of their sled, which are warmed for competition, exceeded the allowable temperature.

But Jones is looking forward to a new goal — to compete as a member of the U.S. Olympic track or cycling team at the 1996

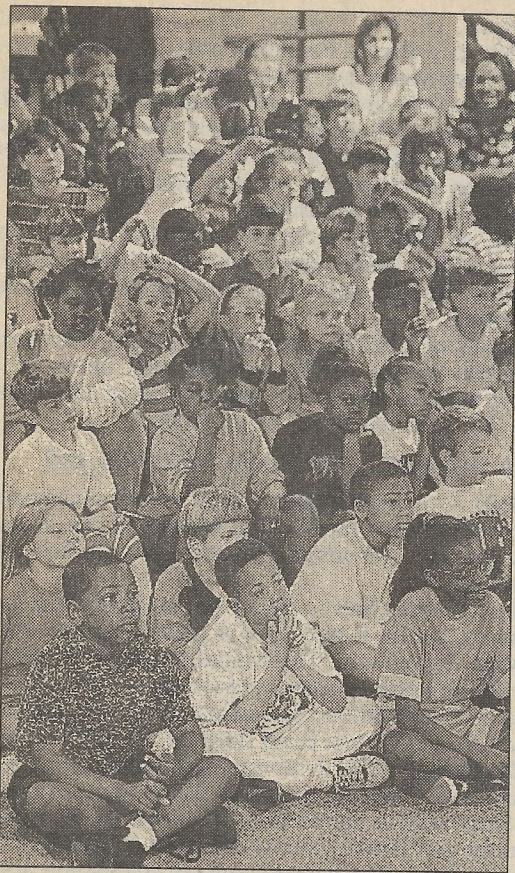
# OLYMPIAN

Continued From Page 13

Games in Atlanta. And he wants to push a bobsled in Nagano, Japan, in the 1998 Winter Games.

If Jones makes the team for the Summer Games in 1996, he will join a select group. Only eight people from the United States have competed in both Winter and Summer Olympics, according to the U.S. Olympic Committee.

Jones' father, John Jones, is proud of his son. The senior Jones was at The Downtown School yesterday, videotaping the visit. He said he hopes his son can serve as a role model to encourage other young people to set goals and strive for them.



Downtown School students listen to Randy Jones tell them that in Lillehammer, Norway, it was "very, very, very, very, very cold."