Stacy Jones
PhD Program – Chemistry

Stacy Jones, from Falcon, MS, is on the road towards his PhD in Chemistry here at JSU. His journey began in earnest the summer after 10th grade, when his High school Chemistry teacher encouraged him to “go out” and take a summer course at Tougaloo College, where “they had real lab equipment.” Jones was “hooked” after his first experiment in which the chemical reaction created a precipitant. Rogers said “It was the coolest thing I had ever seen!”

From Quitman High School, Jones’s journey took him to a BS at Ole Miss and on to a doctoral program in Chemistry at Texas A&M, where he was studying gold film monolayers, but he hit a roadblock: his mother had become quite ill. Rogers returned to Mississippi to raise his 15 year old twin brothers. He took a job teaching at the Northwest Mississippi Community College and eventually became the head of the Department of Math and Science.

A year or so ago, with his brothers grown and out on their own, it was time to get back on his road to that PhD. A professor friend from the University of Mississippi suggested he look into Jackson State University, where he knew they were doing research that would interest him. Jones applied to JSU hoping to work with Dr. Paresh Ray, whose work in the Center for Nanoscience and Nanotechnology focuses on developing a method to destroy cancer cells without harming healthy cells. There was not an immediate opening in Ray’s lab, but Jones enrolled and held out hope, and is now a member of that team. Stacy is investigating an iron storage protein, ferretin, and its utility in discriminating cancer cells from non-cancer cells.

Although it has been difficult adjusting to being a student again, Jones loves “doing” science, instead of just teaching it. He also likes the atmosphere at JSU and being among other graduate students. He finds that people are very nurturing here and “do everything they can to make you successful.” Rogers will complete his PhD in just one or two years and expects the next part of his journey to lead back into the workforce.