



# CAPITOL CITY SPEAKERS BUREAU

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## Cullen Jones

*Travels from:* North Carolina

*Fee Range:* \$7,501 - \$10,000

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Cullen Jones burst onto the swimming scene at the 2005 World University. He easily won the Gold Medal in the 50 freestyle and became the first African-American Male to win a Gold Medal at the World University Games. Cullen continues to dominate the 50 meter sprint event and has also become a threat in the 100 meter freestyle.

At the 2006 Pan Pacific Games, Cullen became the first African American to break a world record in swimming in an Olympic contested event as a part of the USA's 4 X 100 Freestyle Relay Team. He also won the 50 meter freestyle swimming the fastest time in the world for 2006. Cullen was a 4 time ACC Champion and 2006 NCAA Champion from North Carolina State University.

Cullen proved that he is one of the swiftest swimmers on the planet in 2008 when he became the second African-American in history to win an Olympic Gold medal in swimming. An ambassador for African-American swimmers, Jones wanted to shatter stereotypes one lap at a time, eager to spread his message that, "black kids can swim too."

Jones accomplished that by helping the 4X100 freestyle relay team win the Gold medal in a comeback for the ages. In a race soaked with drama and subplots, the Americans shattered the world record they had set just hours earlier in the prelims, blistering through the water in 3 minutes, 8.24 seconds.

In his spare time, he gives back to the community through motivational speaking, youth clinics and even private lessons. Working with USA Swimming Foundation's Make a Splash Program, Cullen is dedicated to helping minorities learn how to swim. In 2008, he established the Cullen Jones Diversity Tour out of a need for the larger swim community to have a vehicle to support a diverse population of young kids. Cullen yearns to inspire people: "I can only hope that by winning an Olympic gold medal and launching my Tour, we can make parents in many different communities aware of the risks of drowning while showing that being water safe and enjoying the health benefits of swimming can last a lifetime."

According to studies, more than half of African-American children can't swim, and nine African-American children drown every day. After her son nearly drowned at a water park when he was five years old, Cullen's mother wanted him to learn how to swim. After just a few lessons, he fell in love with the water. As he grew older and became a more accomplished swimmer, he began to understand the danger of minority swimmers' lack of swimming skills. Using his celebrity status, Cullen's dream is to make the water safer for all children and prevent the type of drowning accident that nearly took his own life. Cullen hopes that his 2008 Olympic gold medal will give him the platform to truly make a difference.