

From Service to the Saddle: Nick Jones' Journey of Strength, Storytelling, and Healing

At TEC, powerful stories unfold every day, but few capture the spirit of resilience and legacy quite like Nick Jones's.

A participant in the TEC WITH VETS program since early 2023, Nick is more than a veteran, he's a storyteller, a historian, and a living example of perseverance. A proud U.S. Navy veteran, Nick enlisted at just 17 years old in 1962 and served honorably until 1966. Like many who have served, his journey didn't end with his military career; it simply took on new meaning.

After undergoing a complete hip replacement, Nick set a goal that speaks volumes about his determination: he wanted to ride horses again.

"I came to TEC with one clear purpose to get back in the saddle," Nick shares. "What I found here was so much more than that."

Through the TEC WITH VETS program, Nick began rebuilding strength, confidence, and mobility. Today, at 81 years old, he proudly says his riding skills have "improved immensely," proving that healing has no age limit.



But Nick's story doesn't stop in the arena.

A lifelong creative, Nick is the founder of W.T.J. Films, where he has spent nearly four decades producing independent Western films that spotlight the untold stories of Black American men who helped shape the American West. His work is not only cinematic, but it's also a form of historical preservation. His film *Bass Reeves*, based on the first Black U.S. Deputy Marshal, has earned him recognition at the National Cowboy & Western Heritage Museum, where artifacts from the production are now part of permanent exhibits.

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He is also a published author and continues to create, with plans underway for his sixth independent film, *Conflict*, further uncovering overlooked figures in American history.

Beyond personal growth, Nick has become instrumental in advancing TEC's broader mission. He plays a key role in organizing efforts with Riders of Valor and helping shape the upcoming TEC WITH VETS Senior Veteran Celebration, an event dedicated to honoring those who have served while showcasing the healing impact of equine-assisted programs.



For Nick, TEC has been transformative in unexpected ways.

“It’s not just about riding,” he explains. “It’s about connection—learning to communicate, to trust, and to grow again. The TEC program is in a class by itself.”

When asked what he would say to fellow veterans considering the program, his message is simple but powerful:

“This is a place where you can rebuild physically and mentally. If you’re thinking about it, don’t wait. Just come.”

Nick Jones embodies the spirit of both cowboy and hero, resilient, driven, and grounded in purpose. His journey reminds us that healing is not just about recovery, it’s about rediscovery.

And sometimes, it starts with a horse.

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