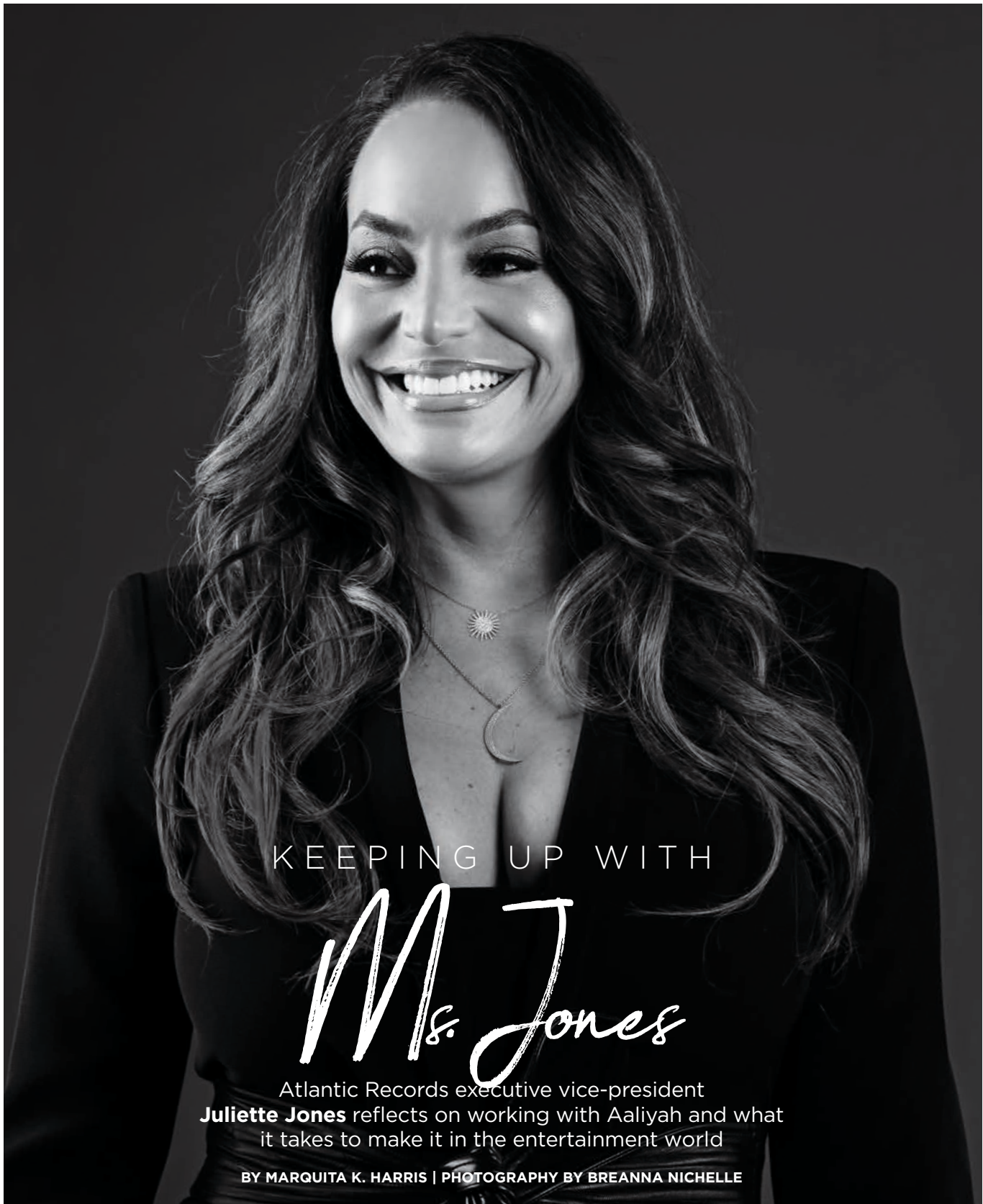


# POWER.



KEEPING UP WITH

*Ms. Jones*

Atlantic Records executive vice-president **Juliette Jones** reflects on working with Aaliyah and what it takes to make it in the entertainment world

BY MARQUITA K. HARRIS | PHOTOGRAPHY BY BREANNA NICHELLE

UNBOSSED



*One mistake people make is letting your job become your identity. It's just a job, and you're here to make money."*

**Clockwise from top left: Juliette Jones with Bruno Mars; Jones poses with Michaela Robinson, Dallas Martin and the late rapper Nipsey Hussle; Jones and R&B star Tank; Jones with singer Ginuwine and the late Aaliyah.**

The late R&B icon Aaliyah was only 15 years old when she was brought under the tutelage of Juliette Jones, a young professional at the now-defunct Jive Records. Like Aaliyah, Jones was the new kid on the block during the storied record company's heyday. Their shared sense of greenness led to an instant connection between the two.

"My first artist at my very first job as the [mid-Atlantic regional promotion director] was Aaliyah," Jones marvels. "She was shy. And she was a true artist who really respected artistry."

Just as Jones guided Aaliyah, during the span of her own career, Jones has been guided by such industry greats as radio legend Arlinda Garrett and Interscope heavyweight Larry Khan. Jones is as opinionated and fiery as she is graceful and reserved. She has the kind of armor that comes with a long run in a hard-nosed business. Today, she's the executive vice-president of urban promotion at Atlantic Records. She's worked with some of the biggest names in music, ensuring that hits from artists like the late Nipsey Hussle, Bruno Mars, Gucci Mane and Cardi B make

it to the airwaves. Here, Jones reflects on her enduring career.

**ESSENCE: As someone who makes so many top-level decisions, have you always been comfortable as a leader?**

**JULIETTE JONES:** No. I mean, I'm not always going to be comfortable with it now. Some days I definitely feel like I'm winging it. But I don't think I'm the only one who does that.

**ESSENCE: It's great that you can admit that, because who doesn't feel like they're winging it at times?**

**JONES:** It's important for us to know that almost everyone, at every level, suffers from impostor syndrome in the beginning. You've never done this job before. Even if you were great at the last one, this new thing is still like, *I was killing the last one—I could have stayed there forever. Am I about to expose myself?* That's pretty common.

**ESSENCE: What advice do you have for anyone who's been laid off or fired for the first time in their career?**

**JONES:** One huge mistake people make is letting your job become your identity.

It's just a job, and you're here to make money. Anything we perceive as rejection sucks in the moment. I would venture to say many of us have had a relationship that didn't work out, and in hindsight we don't think, *That's the one that got away.* We're usually like, *Whew, thank God that didn't work out.*

**ESSENCE: What are the main challenges of working in your industry?**

**JONES:** If you can't move at the speed of the music business, it's not for you. This business moves at a fast pace. I'm old enough to understand that you can be mad at life or you can get into the flow of it. It's up to you. If you want to be mad at it forever, you can be mad until we bury you and throw dirt on top of you. That doesn't sound like a good plan, though. It's better to get into the flow.

*This interview has been edited for clarity and space.*



**EXCLUSIVE** To learn more about Juliette Jones's career, check out the UnBossed podcast, hosted by ESSENCE Senior Editor Marquita K. Harris.