

Coal keeps the lights
on



**ASSIGN
BUSTER**

He would go in at dark and leave in dark and often go without eating or taking a break because his job was so demanding. Even though mining was dangerous and vigorous work he loved his job. In 1966 his pay was \$3.25 an hour, for that day and time he was making good money. In 1980 when he had to quit due to health issues his top pay was \$26.00 an hour. It was hard, but I had a job to do. When he got his job finished he was ready to go home to his wife and family. Delbert said there was nothing better than the boss saying may boys lets shut her down, its time to go home. That was something they looked forward to after a long day's work. Upchurch 2 He knew when he was a little boy he was going to be a coal miner. His grandfather, father, and many close relatives and friends were all coal miners.

If you lived in Harlan, more than likely you were going to be working in the mines. The best thing he liked about his job was the challenge of hard work. He said he loved anything that came as a challenge to him, he loved it when he achieved exactly what he set out to do. Cones Jones said he misses working in the mines. If his health was better he would be right back. He also said that most of his family worked in the mines, but he would want any of his grandchildren going through what he did to provide for his family. He said it was a good job, but he could live without the aches and pain he feels every day. Although life in the mines was hard, it was even harder on his body. The twenty-two years he gave the mines gave him back one destroyed body. He ended up having black lung disease from inhaling all of the coal dust which eventually turned in to COPD. He also had to go through six back surgeries from all of the bendings over and crawling he had to do. He said if you work in the mines you will come out with an old tattered up and worn

down body. He would love to be living in Harlan, working dusk till dawn living the coal miners life. It was and will always be apart of who he is.

Two of his sons also worked in the mines alongside him. They didn't put nearly as many years as he did but put enough into both be disabled with back injuries. Jones said it was important to him that he see them get out of there before they got a lack of long and It takes over the rest of their lives. He said he would have loved it if his body would have let him work long enough to retire from the mines. That was one of thegoalshe had set for himself that he didn't get to accomplish. Jones said he is somewhat thankful he got out when he did, if not thestressof the job may have been too hard on