

Pastor at center of aborted Quran burn gets a new car

by [Eunice Lee](#)

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SOUTH BRUNSWICK, N.J. (RNS) Florida Pastor Terry Jones held the keys to his black 2011 Hyundai Accent for only a few minutes on Friday (Oct. 22) before handing them to a battered women's advocacy group.

Jones gave the car, which car dealer Brad Benson had decorated with two patriotic peace symbols, to the Jersey City-based Women Rising.

The pastor received the car after Benson's Hyundai dealership aired a radio advertisement poking fun at the pastor, promising to give him a new auto to use for a year if Jones promised not to burn a Quran.

"It's a brand-new car, which means that they'll be getting use of it for many, many years," Jones said after the exchange.

Benson, a former New York Giants offensive lineman, aired a brazen ad crowning Jones winner of the "International Idiot's Award."

"We've been called a lot of names. A few more names won't hurt us," Jones said. "We're trying to use it for some good."

The pastor of Dove World Outreach Center in Gainesville sparked an international uproar when he threatened to burn a Quran on Sept. 11,

protesting the building of an Islamic cultural center near Ground Zero.

"We never had any intention of taking the car," said the pastor, who told reporters he had received more than 100 death threats over the last few months.

About a dozen police officers secured the area around the dealership before Jones arrived with his 29-year-old son, Luke.

The car was originally supposed to be donated to WAFA House, which supports battered Muslim women, according to Benson.

However, the groups involved decided at the last minute to switch to Women Rising because WAFA House is not a residential program, Benson said.

Paul Johnson, chief financial officer of Women Rising, accepted the keys from Jones and said the car will be used to transport women during family visitations. The pastor said yesterday that he has no future plans to waver from his promise.

"We've given our word that we will not burn the Quran," Jones said.

Benson said his dealership received a call from Jones' congregation a few weeks after the ad aired. He then asked listeners whether he should make good on the spoof offer.

"I made a public offer on the radio and they felt I had a responsibility to give this man a car," Benson said.

He and Jones shook hands and spoke cordially. Benson, who said he was contacted by FBI officials regarding the giveaway, assured the pastor yesterday that he'd taken extra security measures. "This lot's been swept," Benson said.