

Family Matters

Apr 1, 2020 Official Newsletter of the Gillyard-Johnson-Mahoney Family and Family Reunions
Volume 7, Issue 2



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Certainty vs Uncertainty Reunion vs No Reunion By: Bettie G. Griggs

Just as I had put this edition of Family Matters to bed, I got an email that alluded to the possibility that the 2020 GJM Family Reunion may be postponed. I had written this beautiful column on Live, Laugh, Love that no longer seemed appropriate for this edition. Of course I knew the reason for the possible postponement. It had to be the COVID-19 pandemic. This pandemic has caused so many changes and disruptions to so many lives. It currently has me under a **California Shelter in Place** order. That order has given me more time to think of family, but most importantly, it has given me the opportunity to draw closer to the Lord and to be His light in the darkness.

Our reunions offer us an opportunity to come together in fellowship every two years. We spend a weekend getting to

know one another more deeply, learning more about our shared history, and prayerfully sharing what it is that we can do to help one another. Isn't that the essence of true fellowship?

I am sure that the reunion planning committee has found themselves balancing the decision concerning today's unforeseen uncertainties while also remaining committed to planning a GJM Family Reunion, either this year, next year, or at some other time in the future.

Many of us are now under orders to stay indoors. What can we do during this period of uncertainty? As we draw closer to God, why not also try incorporating small amounts of moderate-to-vigorous physical activity into our schedules. It just might boost your mood and prove to be a great form of joy. Read our Healthy Living column on page 3.

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Family Spotlight



James and Ann Marie Davis

Family Matters is shining the spotlight on James Roy Davis. James Roy Davis, the youngest child of the late Mr. and Mrs. Johnny and Leola Gilyard Davis, was born in Shreveport, Louisiana on March 13, 1954

James is married to Ann Marie Velasquez from Trinidad. Together they have 7 children; Jason, Joshua, Melanie (Wagner), Tijaani, Monica, Nuwna

(Michael), and Nuwrina. They have 6 grandchildren, Omar, Jason Jr., Gabrielle, Adrian, Margaret and Elleanna.

James and Ann Marie are founders of the Cisse Niass Project, which is a 501-(3)(c) corporation that operates a clinic and a food pantry in Senegal, Africa and offers tutoring here in the United States.

James and Ann Marie's focus is on prayer, family and education. They begin their day with prayer and end it with prayer.

James will be starting his Masters Degree in Christian Counseling this year, and Ann Marie is working on her Doctorate in Curriculum and Instructions.

Their hobbies are exercising and gardening. They are both avid shooters and spend time at the gun range.

James says, "We love each other, we love our children, we love our family, and we love life."

Upcoming Events

July 1, 2020
Next Family Matters
Newsletter

July 30-August 2, 2020
The 9th
Gillyard Johnson Mahoney
Family Reunion

Check our website and your
email frequently for all the
latest information on the
2020 Family Reunion

Family Health Fairs

Hello,
 ...I had an opportunity to present a webinar about why African American family reunions are an important cultural space for addressing health. I just wanted to make your family aware that I featured your family's website as an example during my presentation, specifically the family health fair led by Dr. Gretchen Petterway....I have found that people often underestimate or don't understand the importance of family reunions in the African American culture. African American family reunions are *more* than a picnic. As you know, they are also a place for learning and sharing. I commend your awesome work! And please know that your family

reunion model is one that many can draw from for inspiration.

Sula Hood, PhD
 Assistant Professor
 of Public Health
 Indiana University,
 Indianapolis, IN

turns your way, my child, "your faith has made you whole."

Mr. Willie L. Wilson Jr.
 Rex, GA

Family Spotlight

Thank you so much family. Much love and blessings.

Tracey Brooks
 Bossier City, LA



God Cares in the Time of Dementia

Joyce, Jesus would say to you as He

The GJM Family History Voting Project



Ethel Davis

One of our GJM Family History team members, Ethel Davis participated in our Voting Project. We are pleased to share her answers to the following questions.

FM: Do you remember when you were not able to vote? If so, can you describe how that made you feel?

Ethel: I can recall how demeaning and unfair it was when I read and heard about the struggles when blacks could not vote. Personally I did not witness it. Every time I read or heard of those

days it gave me a new desire to do all I could to take advantage of every opportunity to strive to be the very best I could be in every area of my life. Philippians 4:13 was and is still my motivational and encouraging verse.

FM: Do you remember when you were first able to register to vote and what year it was? If so, how old were you and who or what did you vote for?

Ethel: Yes, I do remember how proud I felt leading up to my decision to register and after I registered. I was about 20 years old when I registered to vote. I was in college and I felt bad to have waited a year before going to vote/register. I can't recall who I voted for the first time I voted.

FM: Do you have a copy of the first voter registration card you received? If so, can you provide us a copy of it?

Ethel: No,
 I don't have a copy of my first voter registration card.

FM: Can you provide us with a copy of your current voter registration card.

Ethel: Yes. I can give you a copy of my voter registration card.*

FM: Did you vote for President Barack Obama in 2008 or in 2012? If so, please describe how that made you feel to be able to vote for and see a black man hold the office of President of the United States of America

Ethel: Yes, I voted both times for President Obama. Words could not describe how I felt. But I can say it made me thank God for the hope it gave to our young people that they can even become President of the United States of America. His election as President was as an answer to years of prayer and sacrificing. To God Be the Glory!

(continue on page 3)



ACTIVE & HEALTHY | APRIL 2020

April is National Minority Health Month, and for the second time, **Active & Healthy** has been chosen as the theme. The theme provides the Health and Human Services Office of Minority Health (OMH) and minority health advocates around the nation the opportunity to advance health outcomes by highlighting the benefits of incorporating small amounts of moderate-to-vigorous physical activity into our schedules.

I want our family to take to heart these benefits. That is why we have included exercise and

physical activity into our family reunion's health fairs. We have incorporated Michelle Obama's 'Let's Move' and brought in local exercise trainers to demonstrate proper exercise techniques.

Simple changes to our daily routine can transform our lives and reduce the risk of chronic diseases and other conditions that often are more common or severe among Blacks and other ethnic minority groups.

Physical activity can make daily life better. Get more active and start feeling better right away.

- Boost your mood
- Sharpen your focus
- Reduce your stress
- Improve your sleep

Over time, physical activity can help you live a longer, healthier

life:

- lower your risk of diseases like type 2 diabetes and some cancers
- Control your blood pressure
- Stay at a healthy weight

So family let's all take the first step. Get a little more active each day, and stay active and healthy.



Article summarized from hhs.gov website

GJM Family History Voting Project (continued from page 2)

FM: What advice would you give young people about voting?

Ethel: Voting is a must if you care about what is going on around you, weather it is good or bad. Many of our people gave their blood, sweat and tears for their right to vote. Voting gives everyone an opportunity to make and enforce issues going on around us everyday. The only way your voice can be heard is by voting. It also lets the person holding the voted in position know that if they don't live up to promises they can be voted out. In addition to the above statements, voting gives you a sense of pride that your one vote does count. It also gives us freedom.

FM: How do you feel about our current president, Donald Trump?

Ethel: No comment !!!

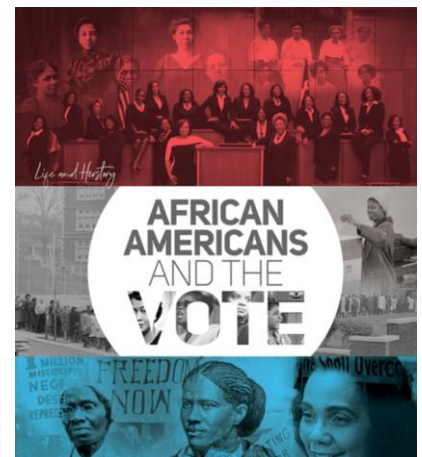
FM: Do you have anything else to add regarding voting?

Ethel: Please, please, if you have not registered to vote, please do!!! If you are a registered voter and don't vote, please exercise your freedom by voting Now. God Bless!!

FM: Thank you Ethel for participating in our Voting Project.

*Ethel provided a copy for our historical archives

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Association for the Study of African American Life and History
2020 Poster

Family Historian
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Family Reunions
Mission:

To focus on the things that shape us rather than the circumstances that divide us; to strengthen and preserve family as God orders our steps. We value God's Plan, Family, Tradition, and Service.

We're on the Web!
gillyard-johnson-mahoney.com

Email Us:
gjmfamilyreunion@gmail.com

You are Cordially Invited to The 9th GJM Family Reunion Family Time... Live, Laugh, Love July 30-August 2, 2020

details at www.gillyard-johnson-mahoney.com

**POSSIBLY
POSTPONED**

Certainty vs Uncertainty Reunion vs No Reunion

(continued from page 1)

Family Spotlight continues to be my favorite Family Matters column. For this edition, we shine the light on James Davis (see page 1).

Be sure to check out pages 2 and 3 as the Family History team shares another interview from their Voting Project. If you would like to participate in the project, please contact the team at gjmfamilyreunion@gmail.com

I enjoy reading the comments that are received regarding our newsletter, our

website, and our family reunions. Take a look at what people are saying on page 2.

At this writing I do not know what decision will be made regarding our 2020 Family Reunion. I am however certain of this, Family Reunion, or no Family Reunion, I'm **feeding my faith and starving my fears**. Sending all of you comforting hugs.

Enjoy Your Blessings!

Bettie

