

# Family Matters

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Official Newsletter of the Gillyard-Johnson-Mahoney Family Reunions  
[www.gillyard-johnson-mahoney.com](http://www.gillyard-johnson-mahoney.com)

## Editor's Corner

### *A New Year and History*

A new year is a time for reflection, and a time for thanks. We are thankful for our past reunions and we look forward to our 5<sup>th</sup> reunion, **August 2-5, 2012, Honoring Our Past, Celebrating Our Future.**

For the Chinese, 2012 is the year of the Dragon, and it is thought that those born during the year of the dragon share certain characteristics: Innovative, enterprising, self-assured, brave, passionate; they usually make it to the top. They must be aware that too much enthusiasm can leave them tired and unfulfilled. They find pleasure in helping others, and you can always count on their help. That sounds a lot like the Gillyard, Johnson, Mahoney family.

Because of our commitment to "Pay it Forward" and helping others, we've

added A Day of Service to our 2012 family reunion schedule. On Thursday, August 2<sup>nd</sup>, family members have been asked to spend a minimum of 2 hours volunteering in their communities. Family members can also report on service projects they've participated in since our 2010 Call to Action. On page 4, read how Kadarius Thomas and his church group helped others during the holiday season.

February is Black History month and this year's theme is "Black Women in American Culture and History." We've included in this issue, a poem written by KaNesha Gillyard, one of our 2010 GJM scholarship recipients and a sophomore at the historical Spelman College (page 2). Our Family Spotlight features Mattie Mahoney McDowell (see below).

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## Upcoming Events

March 2012  
Reunion Fundraising Event

April 2012  
Reunion Fundraising Event

**August 2-5, 2012**  
the 5<sup>th</sup>  
**Gillyard-Johnson-Mahoney**  
Family Reunion

Check our website and your email frequently for all the latest information on the 2012 Family Reunion

## Family Spotlight



Mattie Mahoney McDowell

This edition of Family Matters shines the spotlight on **Mattie Mahoney McDowell**. Throughout life, Mattie has been a cautious, quiet, easy going person while giving thought to things that mattered. Mattie has focused on family, education and travel. She graduated from Southern

University, Baton Rouge in 1956, majoring in Home Economics. After graduation, she taught in the Bossier Parish Louisiana school district, met her military husband and began to travel with him wherever he was deployed. When her husband received orders to serve in Europe, Mattie was excited and at the same time experienced a sense of melancholy. She wanted to see more of the world, but did not want to leave her parents, **Howard and Sylvester Mahoney**, her siblings, **Lillie, William, Emanuel and Rosie**; and her friends.

Their overseas military deployments included Germany, where Mattie was able to keep busy making a new home, caring for a baby son, making friends and learning the country. She visited many of Germany's historical cities. It was then on to Asia and Okinawa, where Mattie taught General Science for a few months. She admits that after her experience with a golden Habus snake, it was difficult for her to settle down on the island. While living in that area of the world, a visit to Taiwan was a bright experience for her. There she had furniture custom made, which continues to grace her home today. (Continued on page 3)

## New Vines from Strong Roots

Written By: KaNesha Gillyard

New Vines from Strong Roots is the present theme,  
Without God: Mission Impossible is what it means.

As we go throughout our lives daily  
Let us say "I give praise to God who made me..."

We as a family were built to stand strong  
Throughout the good and bad times, short and long.

We assemble every two years; in order to remember  
The bond that connects us from January to December.

God, love, and unity are displayed on the family crest;  
Without those three roots, none of us would be blessed.

Love is shown through unity and unity through love;  
Though none of them would exist without the man above.

We live in a world surrounded by chaos, anger, and pain  
Now is the time to surrender to God, appreciate family,  
and stop placing the blame.

It's time we show love, kindness, joy, and peace,  
Let all the bitterness, anger, and strife of the past cease.

We as a family need to stay united  
Because without each other, we are left divided.

A house divided cannot stand;  
Because the foundation is weak and made of sand.

A house united can weather any storm  
Whether it be a hurricane, earthquake or destruction in any form.

God is the foundation and love is the source,  
Unity is the connector that keeps us on course.

New Vines from Strong Roots is the present theme,  
Without God: Mission Impossible is what it means.

Be an active advocate for your health care. Following are web sites related to Black Health that you may find helpful. Please remember to keep regularly scheduled appointments with your doctor or health care provider, and ask questions.

### 50 Million Pound Challenge

This web site is an initiative by Dr. Ian Smith, an African American doctor and author, and State Farm Insurance. The web site offers expert advice on health, and an online weight loss tracking tool.. [www.50millionpounds.com](http://www.50millionpounds.com)

### Black Women's Health

The contributors of this site are many, most of whom are doctors. It's filled with a lot of health related information,

such as nutrition and fitness, spiritual and mental health, and finances. <http://www.blackwomenshealth.com>

### Center for African American Health

The Center is dedicated to improving the health and wellbeing of the African American community. <http://www.caahealth.org>

### Afro Med

The doctor who runs this site feels that, due to the lack of medical information out there for Blacks, there needs to be a place to get some basic information and links to more specific. <http://www.afromed.com>

### African Americans and Alzheimer's Disease

As this site explains, African Americans

may be more susceptible to the grips of Alzheimer's disease. Check out this site to learn more. <http://www.alz.org>

### Black Coalition on AIDS

The mission of BCA is to stop the spread of HIV/AIDS and eliminate health disparities in the Black community. <http://www.bcoa.org>



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### Family Spotlight

(Continued from page 1)

Mattie says it was something that she loved about each stateside location as well. Colorado, California, Kansas, and Kentucky, as well as the highways and back roads of other states that they passed through, provided contrast in climate, terrain and manmade structures.

Mattie taught Home Economics for 2 years and first grade for 23 years. She developed beautiful and meaningful relationships with her home economic students. Though she taught them, she also learned from them. She says that the 6 year olds were adorable and she knew that she had them engrossed in solving the challenge at hand when they forgot where they were and called her "Mommie."

Mattie tells Family Matters that reliving some of these special moments of her earlier life has given her a feeling of awe and delight! She and her family reside in Millersville, MD.

Thanks Mattie for letting your light shine on us!

### We Connect

**Family History** Submitted by: Family History Team

Though our current website, [www.gillyard-johnson-mahoney.com](http://www.gillyard-johnson-mahoney.com) main focus is to keep family members updated on our family reunions, it also has information on our family history which has been researched and sourced.

The family history team spends hours researching, attending genealogical workshops and interviewing family and friends, and only publishes information which has been verified using three sources. Information is currently being catalogued and organized to donate to a local library in the northern Louisiana area to ensure that our history will be preserved for future generations.

To gain access to over 30 documents, including copies of census records, pictures, marriage and death records, military records, etc., visit our website and click on the Family History link. As you read the history, you can click on documents to view

and copy. Over 500 documents including business transactions dating back to the 1880s, school information dating back to 1916, voter registration cards, a school autograph book dating back to the 1940s, and newspaper articles will be on display, August 3<sup>rd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup>, at our family reunion. We will also have on display 4 published books with information on our family.

As we go about celebrating Black History this February, let us all remember that our family also has a history. It is one that we all can take a part in learning and sharing.

"Bringing the gifts that my ancestors gave, I am the dream and the hope of the slave. I rise. I rise. I rise." -Maya Angelou

We Connect!

*If you have stories to share regarding connecting with family, or family history and pictures, please email [qimfamilvreunion@gmail.com](mailto:qimfamilvreunion@gmail.com).*

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



Kadarius Thomas (standing fourth from right) participated in the Aksess Mission Project of the Elizabeth Baptist Church of Benton, LA. Thanks to Kadarius and the group's efforts, they were able to send 100 gift boxes to less fortunate children and families.

*A note from the GJM Family History Team: All volunteers and service project participants will be recognized at the 2012 Family Reunion*

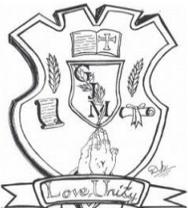
**A New Year and History**  
(Continued from page 1)

I was so amazed when I read the synopsis of Mattie's earlier life. Her life of family, education and travel is truly history. We salute KaNesha and Mattie. In We Connect, Family History, the Family Historical team shares information regarding the documents that they've made available on our web site, [www.gillyard-johnson-mahoney.com](http://www.gillyard-johnson-mahoney.com). As we approach this New Year and prepare to add to our history,

the 5<sup>th</sup> GJM Family Reunion; I am reminded that reunions are also a time when family unity can be completely expressed. Let us commit to that unity and make our 5<sup>th</sup> family reunion a GRAND SUCCESS!

Enjoy Your Blessings,

*Bettie*



**RECIPIENT NAME  
STREET ADDRESS  
ADDRESS 2  
CITY, ST ZIP CODE**