

# Family Matters

July 1, 2020 Official Newsletter of the Gillyard-Johnson-Mahoney Family and Family Reunions  
Volume 7, Issue 3



## Inside this Issue

Joy in These Times	1
Upcoming Events	1
Family Spotlight	1
What People are Saying	2
GJM Family History Voting Project	2
Healthy Living	3
A Message from Cassandra Mitchell-Griffin	4

## Joy in These Times

By: Bettie G. Griggs

Joy! It might seem strange that with all that is currently going on in our country, the coronavirus pandemic, murders of unarmed blacks by the police, racial injustice, demonstrations, an economic crisis, and on and on. There is also our family reunion. It was originally scheduled to start this month but has now been postponed until next year. Many of us are feeling overwhelmed, frustrated and even angry. So where is the joy?

This joy is not a giddy type of expression. As I think of joy and us as a family of believers, I am thinking of how we should respond to all that is happening around us.

After a recent and timely study of the book of James, I believe it is the joy that James speaks of. The joy that does not stop the pain from hurting and does not ignore the circumstances, but rest

in the power of the Almighty God. God keeps his promises and his promise is that we will persevere. No matter a pandemic, racial injustice, murders by police officers, demonstrations, and a reunion postponement, we will persevere. We must trust and obey Holy Spirit no matter our circumstances. Joy is possible for all of us.

In our Family Spotlight (see below), we see Gloria's joy on display as she shares briefly about her time in foster care.

I have retold many times the reason I never miss an opportunity to vote. There certainly is joy in that for me. The GJM Family History Team is continuing the Voting Project. Current interviews start on page 2. Three young people share their feelings about being able to vote for the first time. Yes, there is joy in voting. The team is continuing to conduct interviews and if

(continue on page 4)

## Family Spotlight



Gloria Guillard\*

Family Matters is shining the spotlight on Gloria Guillard. Gloria is the fifth of thirteen children born to our oldest living cousin, Josie Bell Gilliard. Her grandfather was the late Mack Gilliard. She was born in Shreveport, La. and now lives in Bossier City, La.

Gloria spent over 13 years of her life in foster care. She was placed in a home in Stonewall, La. with parents she describes as loving. Though she was not

physically with her mom, she maintained an emotional attachment with her. She harbors no ill thoughts regarding her removal from her mom's home or her time in foster care. Her mom currently resides in a local care facility and before the pandemic, Gloria visited her often. She misses those visits and is prayerful that they will resume soon.

Gloria graduated from Second Ward in Gloster, La. and went on to graduate with a degree in Recreation from Grambling State University in 1974.

Gloria is employed by the Bossier Parish School District.

She has one son, Zedrick Tinsley and four granddaughters, 15-year-old twins Sha'mya and Sha'nya Jackson, 10-year-old Zoi Tinsley and 8-year-old Zori Tinsley.

\* spelling of last name as recorded on her birth certificate

## Upcoming Events

Oct 1, 2020

Next Family Matters Newsletter

(submit any news or articles you have to share by Sept 1, 2020)

July 30-August 1, 2021  
The 9<sup>th</sup>

Gillyard Johnson Mahoney Family Reunion

Check our website, Facebook page and your email frequently for all the latest information on our family and the 2021 Family Reunion

April Family Newsletter

This was a great read. Thank you for keeping this going.

Takisha Flowers  
Inglewood, CA

Thank you!!!  
This is a fantastic newsletter!!! We are so blessed to be a part of it.

James and AnnMarie  
Georgia

May we share on our website?

Edith Wagner  
Reunions Magazine  
Milwaukee WI

Family Reunion Postponement

...Please note, that the committee has been following the news, and with careful consideration of family members health, safety, and well-being, we have decided to postpone our family reunion until July 30, 2021. However, we are still accepting registrations for those who would like to make payment(s) this year, so it is one less thing to do later...

2020 GJM Planning Visionary Team  
Cassandra Mitchell-Griffin  
Tammi Owens  
Frederick Gillyard  
Tameka Martin  
Alicia Shorter  
Inger Daniels  
Carla Bell-Marchman  
Takisha Flowers  
Gretchen Petterway  
Roderick Jackson



The GJM Family History Voting Project  
Interviews conducted by Glenda Gillyard

GJM Family History Team member, Glenda Gillyard conducted the following interview with 22-year-old Essence Gillyard and Denisha Hayden, and 18-year-old Darrell Sheppard regarding their voting experience.

**Family Matters:** How old were you when you registered to vote and how did it make you feel?

**Darrell:** I was 18 years old. I felt good that I could finally vote and join the other voters in my family.

**Denisha:** I was 18 years old and I felt proud to vote.

**Essence:** I registered to vote on my 18<sup>th</sup> birthday, February 2, 2016. I felt excited and liberated to know I would be able to make decisions that will direct the way our country operates.

**FM:** What was the first election in which you were able to vote? Do you want to share who you voted for at that time?

**Darrell:** I voted in the Presidential

Primary which took place on March 10, 2020. I voted for Bernie Sanders.

**Denisha:** I voted in the 2017 Presidential election and I voted for Hillary Clinton.

**Essence:** My first election was the Presidential election between Donald Trump and Hillary Clinton. Hillary Clinton was my choice.

**FM:** What issues are the most important to you and why?

**Darrell:** LGBT Rights, Criminal Justice. These are important to me because I feel everybody should be treated the same and not any different because of the color of their skin or their sexual orientation.

**Denisha:** The issue that is most important to me is Equality because blacks are not treated appropriately.

**Essence:** I have always been for equal rights for everyone. I am a

firm believer that nobody should be treated unfairly because of their race, sex, religion, or because they believe differently.



Darrell Sheppard



Denisha Hayden

(continue page 3)

Information in this column was summarized from the article, "Coronavirus in African Americans and Other People of Color" by Sherita Hill Golden, M.D., M.H.S and from hopkinsmedicine.org

It is a known fact that the Coronavirus Pandemic is having an impact all over the world. It is disturbing to know that in the United States, blacks are experiencing more serious illness and death due to COVID-19 than white people. The health experts say African Americans are at greater risk of death from the Coronavirus.

The most talked about risk factor, for blacks, are underlying health conditions associated with a poor outcome from COVID-19 including diabetes, heart disease, high blood pressure and lung disease.

In a study cited by the United States Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), about 90% of those hospitalized with severe COVID-19 had at least one of these underlying medical conditions.

Blacks have inconsistent access to health care. This is due to lack of insurance or underinsurance. Most blacks cannot afford doctor's visit, and the medications needed to manage underlying health conditions. This makes a COVID-19 black patient more at risk for severe, even deadly coronavirus infection. All blacks should be tested for COVID-19. Lack of testing could mean further spread and more patients not seeking medical help, until they become seriously ill.

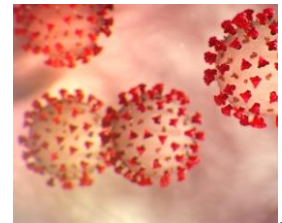
Dr. Sherita Hill Golden says that "this is something that should not happen.

Any person who believes that he or she has COVID-19 symptoms and has not been referred for testing should advocate and persist to have it done."

Since there is no anti-virus treatment or a vaccine for COVID-19, please, please follow the CDC guidelines for staying safe.

- Social Distancing
- Wash our Hands often
- Wear a Mask

It is a must. These are crucial public health interventions that will prevent the spread of COVID-19.



## GJM Family History Voting Project

(continued from page 2)

**FM:** Who had the most influence in your life to help shape your views?

**Darrell:** Members of my family.

**Denisha:** My Uncle Murrell has had the most influence in my life to help shape my views.

**Essence:** My mother and my high school teachers.

**FM:** If asked, what advice would you have for our leaders?

**Darrell:** Lead the country and the people whom you were elected to serve in the right direction and be fair to all groups.

**Denisha:** The advice that I would have for our leaders is to treat everyone the way you

would like to be treated.

**Essence:** I would say to our leaders, you have been chosen to serve all people. You must focus on making sure everyone is treated fairly to serve effectively.

**Family Matters:** Thank you for taking the time to be a part of our Voting Project for the Gillyard Johnson Mahoney Family History Team.

Some editing was done to clarify, but not to change answers.



Essence Gillyard (r) registering to vote at the Registrar of Voters Office, Desoto Parish, La.



**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 are on the Web!**  
gillyard-johnson-mahoney.com

Email Us:  
gjmfamilyreunion@gmail.com

...We praise God that even during this difficult time, we can still connect through other platforms such as Facebook, Instagram, Twitter, free conference calls (Zoom), emails, etc. Please share your photos and/or videos of what you're doing as a family. You can also share a

special "Word", scriptures, encouragement, or thoughts, through our group email or on our website - [www.gillyard-johnson-mahoney.com](http://www.gillyard-johnson-mahoney.com) by clicking on Guest Book.

Emailed to family April 3, 2020

**Joy in These Times**

(continued from page 1)

you would like to participate in the project, please contact the team at [gjmfamilyreunion@gmail.com](mailto:gjmfamilyreunion@gmail.com)

We are pleased that Reunions Magazine is sharing our newsletter on their website (see What People Are Saying). Our newsletter is reaching people.

The coronavirus does not seem to be going anywhere soon. Velma Dumas, our Healthy Living contributor shares

how it is specifically impacting blacks. (page 3).

As we persevere family, let us commit to having conversations with one another. Let us lead by example and count it all joy.

Enjoy Your Blessings!

*Bettie*

