

# Family Matters

July/August 2011  
Volume 4, Issue 2

Official Newsletter of the Gillyard-Johnson-Mahoney Family Reunions  
www.gillyard-johnson-mahoney.com



## Editor's Corner

*It's a Celebration!*

We are counting down to a GREAT Celebration;

It's the 5<sup>th</sup> Gillyard-Johnson-Mahoney Family Reunion.

Our 5<sup>th</sup> reunion deserves something special.

And what can be more special than seeing all of you again?

How about bringing someone with you, who has never attended a GJM family reunion? Now that would be really SPECIAL.

It's a milestone. It's an important point in the progress of our family reunions.

It's a CELEBRATION family!

Come and share your memories, your good times, and your laughter.

What else is special about our 5<sup>th</sup> reunion?

We've added a day to our celebration of family. That's right. It's a 4-day CELEBRATION. On Thursday, August 2, 2012, we "Pay It Forward" by volunteering in our communities, in the memory of our ancestors.

The day of service answers our 2010, Call to Action. It is a small price for us to pay for being the beneficiaries of the labor and generosity of those who walked before us.

Where does all the CELEBRATION take place?

Based on your votes, we are going back where it all started, Mansfield and Shreveport, Louisiana.

What will we do?

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## Family Spotlight



Lula Mae Dixon

This edition of Family Matters shines the spotlight on Lula Mae Gilyard Dixon.

Lula Mae is the fifth child who was born to the union of Mack and Lula Gilyard. In addition to being known for her

beautiful hats, class and sophistication, she is easily thought to be the family's matriarch, the eminent senior or states (person) who advises other family members.

Lula Mae has spent most of her life in the ministry of helps. She is a lifelong member of the Sunshine Baptist Church, in Mansfield, La. She realized at an early age that the ministry of the church did not rest on status but on helps ministry and service. She has served the New Sunshine Baptist Church in several capacities including serving many years as Church Secretary.

She has been a long time member of the Grand Courts Heroines of

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## Upcoming Events

2012  
Gillyard-Johnson-Mahoney  
Family Reunion

August 2-5, 2012

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

## Remembrance

Submitted By: Historical Team



(L to R, Glenda Terrell, Gloria Gillyard, Melvin Gillyard, Bettie Griggs, Sampson Gillyard, Velma Dumas, Bradley Gillyard, Essence Gillyard)



Red Lick Presbyterian Church



Family Historian

On Memorial Day, May 30, 2011, Family Historian Bettie Gillyard Griggs led a team of eight, for a day of remembrance. The day's activities included a historical tour of local churches, and the cleanup of several gravesites at the New Friendship Baptist Church and Good Hope Presbyterian Church cemeteries. Documenting birth and death information from headstones and the churches' cornerstones was also a goal for the day's activities. All our locations were in Desoto Parish, Louisiana.

The team's first stop was the Red Lick Presbyterian Church. The team could not locate a cornerstone on the structure, though the historian has received information that Charlie Gillyard was a founding member.

The team then traveled to the New Friendship Baptist Church Cemetery and found that it is remarkably well maintained (the Church had held a Cemetery Clean Up Day on May 28<sup>th</sup>).

Sampson Gillyard led the clean up efforts for our team at the cemetery.

What surprised us most of all however, were the number of

gravesites that we were not able to locate and the large number of sites with temporary markers that are now unreadable. The historical team has a large number of death certificates indicating that love ones are interred at this cemetery.

Our next stop was the New Friendship Baptist Church where we documented family information from the church's cornerstone. William Guion is listed on the cornerstone as part of the 1913 building committee.

Our last tour stop was the Good Hope Presbyterian Church and cemetery. After walking the cemetery for over an hour, again we were unable to locate gravesites even though death certificates indicate that love ones are interred there also.

With quiet emotions displayed on the faces of team members, we ended the day of memories and shared time together.

The historical team will now do research to determine if plot maps are available for the cemeteries, and check with family members to verify if permanent markers were ever in place at gravesites.

*Headstones and their inscriptions are historical sources that can be used to study the past. Those who come after us can learn much about us from where we are interred and the inscriptions on headstones.*

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### In Memoriam

Corine Guion  
B: August 11, 1924  
D: June 23, 2011

Idell Hall  
B: February 26, 1939  
D: March 20, 2011

Johnnie Mae Davis  
B: January 31, 1948  
D: January 12, 2011

For this issue, I've decided to focus on our female family members and how we can be well. Being well can help you thrive throughout life— as a woman, friend, sister, employee, wife, mother and community member- so you can be there for the people and things that you cherish the most. To Be Well, we must make the effort to Be. We must take steps to improve our overall physical, emotional and social well-being.

**BE FIT & HEALTHY** - Eating healthy foods and being active helps you keep a healthy weight and get the nutrients that you need, so you look and feel your best. Be active for at least 30 minutes a day, get enough sleep, 7-9 hours each night, to look and feel your best.

**BE CONNECTED** - Being engaged with your family, friends and community is good for your health. Consider joining

a health related walk-a-thon and a health related walk-a-thon and attending community health fairs.

**BE INSPIRED** - Balancing the demands on both your mind and your body is important for your physical and spiritual well-being. Think about your goals for the future - dream big! Dance or sing to your favorite playlist, Meditate or pray.

**BE INFORMED** - Being informed about health issues and the factors that affect your health gives you power-the power to create healthy changes for yourself, for your family and for your community.

**WHAT YOU CAN DO** - Take steps to Be Fit and Healthy every day. Be Connected to your family, friends, and community. And Be Inspired—make time for yourself—to relax and do what you love.

To help prevent illness or prevent it from getting worse, visit your medical provider at least once a year for health screenings and to treat medical conditions. Also learn about medications, sexually transmitted diseases, and vaccines that can affect your health. Learn how to manage your stress and ask for help when you need it. Advocate for healthy changes in your community—such as afterschool programs, safe spaces for physical activity and access to healthy foods. Make the government work for you--become an informed citizen and learn how to do your part to influence lawmakers and help them pass laws that help you, your family and community achieve good health.

Article summarized from [www.bewellwomen.org](http://www.bewellwomen.org)

## Family Spotlight

(Continued from page 1)

Jericho, Prince Hall Affiliated, Louisiana Jurisdiction. On Sunday, October 3, 2010, Lula was honored as she retired from District Deputy Grand Matron, Grand Court Heroines of Jericho, Region 4, Districts 9,10,15,16, Prince Hall Affiliation, Louisiana Jurisdiction. At a grand ceremony held at the Union Masonic Hall located at 5632 Hearne Avenue in Shreveport, LA., Lula Mae's Life's Reflections were expressed in the areas of **Faith** by Gloria Jackson; **Family** by Ethel Davis and **Friend** by Mary Gilliam. During the ceremony, she received many accolades including a Proclamation from Mayor Cedric B. Glover of Shreveport, La.

Someone once said that we should "Never fear shadows...that always mean there is a light shining somewhere." Lula Mae is our light. And now Lula Mae, we shine the spotlight on you.

## We Connect

Submitted By: Bettie Gillyard Griggs

Imagine growing up as child always hearing the name of a brother, but never meeting or seeing him. That was me, for more than 56 years of my life. I could remember my dad talking about his son, Elijah, and that he lived in Shreveport, La. I never asked, so I never knew much more.

When I decided to search for my brother, I started with the telephone directory, his first name and his mother's last name which I had been given. I also tried Elijah Gillyard. I had no luck. By chance one evening while talking with one of my sisters, I was given another last name to try. I then went to the computer and the website, whitepages.com. I typed in Elijah Griffin, and there it was; a telephone number, and an address. The next day I called, explained who I was, and our relationship as brother and sister

was firmly planted. Elijah referred me to his Uncle Walter, who shared with me memories of our dad. During my telephone visits with Elijah, I learned that he had met one of our brothers and a sister. I wanted him to get to know all of us, so I encouraged him to participate in our 2010 family reunion. He seemed so excited. It confirmed what I've always known; most of us long to know who we are, and to be connected to family. I was so happy that he attended the reunion, but I am even more pleased that I now know my brother, Elijah.

Elijah and I continue to visit often by telephone. We Connect.

*Read the story of second cousins meeting for the first time in our next newsletter.*

Family Historian  
bettiegillyard@aol.com

**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

**It's a Celebration  
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**Thursday, August 2, 2012** - GJM Day of Service. You select where you will volunteer.

**Friday, August 3, 2012** - Registration, Meet and Greet, Light Buffet Dinner, Opening Ceremony.

**Saturday, August 4, 2012** - Morning Activities: Games and other fun activities, Light Lunch Snack. Evening

**On Track**

Submitted by: Ostell Griggs

I have a real passion for the sport, Track and Field. A couple of years ago, much to my surprise, I learned that Shalonda Solomon, a track sprinter who I had followed since her teens, was a relative of the Gillyard family. She is the great granddaughter of Johnny B Sanders and great great granddaughter of Elizabeth Gillyard Thomas. On June 26, 2011, Shalonda Solomon ran a 22:15 to win

Activities: Banquet Program and Buffet Dinner.

**Sunday, August 5, 2012** - Worship Service.

What will it cost?

Letters with the cost, locations and other details will be mailed and posted on the website, on August 2, 2011. Be sure to look for your letter in the mail.

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the women's 200 meter dash at the U.S. Outdoor Track and Field Championships in Eugene, Oregon.



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