



NEWSLETTER

Fourth Edition—Family News

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May—June 2016

“40th Anniversary” Parker/Eley Family Reunion

The planning of this year’s Parker/Eley Family Reunion celebration began as last year’s 2015 reunion hosted by Clyde and Elesia Everette and committee members would come to a close. Standing in front of the “Big House” along Mapleton Road, Thelma “Tina” Lewis-Neal, the youngest daughter of the late Eula Eley-Lewis, who was one of Theoria Eley’s older sisters. It was there on that final day that Tina would make plans to take on the challenge for the New Jersey/New York family.

As we now mourn the passing of the late Theoria Patrice Eley, whose life and service was one of dedication and sacrifice. A legacy of love imbeds itself into our hearts to remember all those whose lives served for the preservation of family.

This year brings with it that spirit of togetherness to come from both near and far in celebration of decades of tradition. In this, marks 40 years from the official start of the Parker/Eley Family Reunion dating back to 1976. The photo below shows a commemorative t-shirt worn in 1992 at its 16th anniversary beginning in Murfreesboro, NC.

Although such gatherings goes back far beyond in Murfreesboro, this year proudly announces a “40th Anniversary” celebration. Within weeks away, the year has come full circle among a host of local family members in New Jersey and New York having worked diligently to set accommodations for all who shall attend.

Remembering Theoria P. Eley as a mother, aunt, cousin, and daughter of the late Robert and Georgia Eley.

*February 23, 1926
–May 12, 2016*



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This Year's Family Reunion Committee's MVP

Getting started in the preparation for this year's 2016 Parker/Eley Family Reunion in New Jersey did not take long to put together a committee who would become dedicated in hosting what looks forward to becoming a commemorative family event.

As all would arrive safely back into New Jersey from Murfreesboro, North Carolina still invigorated from the July 4, 2015 weekend. It was within weeks that a venue had been carefully selected by our very own, Myesha Lewis-Caraballo. Myesha in her diligent search convened us all to meet at a location of which her diligent search had brought us to in Iselin, N.J.

We were all pleased of her findings in bringing us together, unanimously. As we now have focused our attention to accommodate this year's Parker/Eley Family Reunion. In sharing a little about Myesha, she is a granddaughter of the late Eula Eley-Lewis. Her mother Thelma "Tina" Lewis-Neal made plans to take on the challenge while still in North Carolina at last year's Parker/Eley Family Reunion, but Myesha exceeded all expectations.

Myesha's has a career background in law-enforcement while working as a police officer in New Jersey's largest and one of its busiest cities, she earned Police Officer of the Month. An Honor Award for Outstanding Police Work presented to her by Newark Lodge No. 12 on September 9, 2009. It was a part of her keen intuitiveness now serving as a Sherriff Officer for the Middlesex County Sherriff Department. This rapid find may have contributed towards discovering the Renaissance Hotel in Iselin, NJ located in Middlesex County.

Her appreciation for family began at a young age in Newark, N.J. She would regularly attend with her mother, family gatherings at her aunt Louvenia and uncle Bob's home for Thanksgiving Day dinners and other celebratory events. She remembers spending Summer vacations in Murfreesboro, N.C. at the "Big House" with her late great aunt, Theoria Eley when she was younger. She also admits always having a curiosity about the family connection. She often thought, as she have shared, *"I know you are my cousin, but I would love to know how?"*

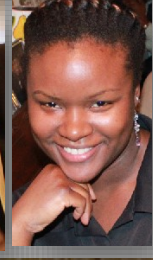
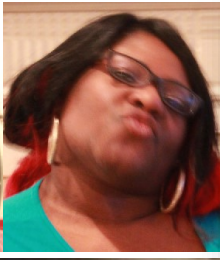
This is what has prompted Myesha to make the many discoveries and sharing them about family to this day. Myesha has been on a quest to know the Eley/Parker family history, et al. It has become one of her hobbies, as she proudly admits. She started building a private family tree on ancestry.com. To date, she has 1,144 people on her tree, 348 photos and plenty supporting documents from census reports etc. which is continuously growing. Myesha has three children of her own, Michael, Amaya, and Anel (AJ) Caraballo. *We Salute You!!!*

(Myesha seated first during her Ceremony)

(Myesha shown standing Center)

Her Honor Award Mom and Daughter







The Great Migration

Not long after the turn of the 20th century from 1915 near 1970 would begin a unique period in African American history known as the “Great Migration.” Expanding the African American population, this period as Professor James Edward Gatling writes;

“Simultaneously, The Great Migration was taking place and many Negroes (African Americans) abandoned their working properties and farming and relocated to the cities of the North. Unfortunately, the low-wage employment that they found in the urban centers forced them to reside in cramped, low rent dwellings and low quality of life. Many of these centers evolved into our present-day ghettos.” p. 77 America: Birth to Greatness and the Black Man’s Contribution

Families which got its start in the rural south would now become larger spreading its wings outward towards the cities of the north. All in search of economic opportunities. Such resulted in moving into cities like Newport News and Norfolk, Virginia, Baltimore, Maryland, Washington, D.C. Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, Newark, New Jersey, New York City and others which became a periodic trend along the east coast and beyond.

This led to the ultimate expansion of many African American families as we have today within our own Eley and Parker families, et al. Today as we prepare to gather for a long history which stems well over a century back to Murfreesboro, North Carolina recognizes an part of our history within the 40th Anniversary of the Parker/ Eley Family Reunion.

Needless to say, those who helped paved the way towards such rich history and tradition has left a legacy. Enriching future generations to come aboard and make a connection from the heritage of this “Great Migration.”



Knowledge is Empowering

For the African American youth of today it should become empowering to know of the gifts which were bestowed. Gifts that are priceless in learning the survival methods which became necessary within our history. As so much which will never be known, so much has been told of the many stories of survival which has brought us into today. As we are aware, the making of history never cease and in many cases stands to repeat itself.



Professor James Edward Gatling

Featured in the third edition of the Family Newsletter, he gained during his lifetime much to his credit. He was the youngest of six siblings.

Born in Baltimore, Md to the late Neomia Eley-Gatling, who was an older sister to Theoria Eley. James grew up with a thirst for knowledge.

Having graduated several different colleges and universities, he also became a book author. As an historian, he wrote on Black History and its relevance and contribution in American History. He left a legacy through his research to be valued.





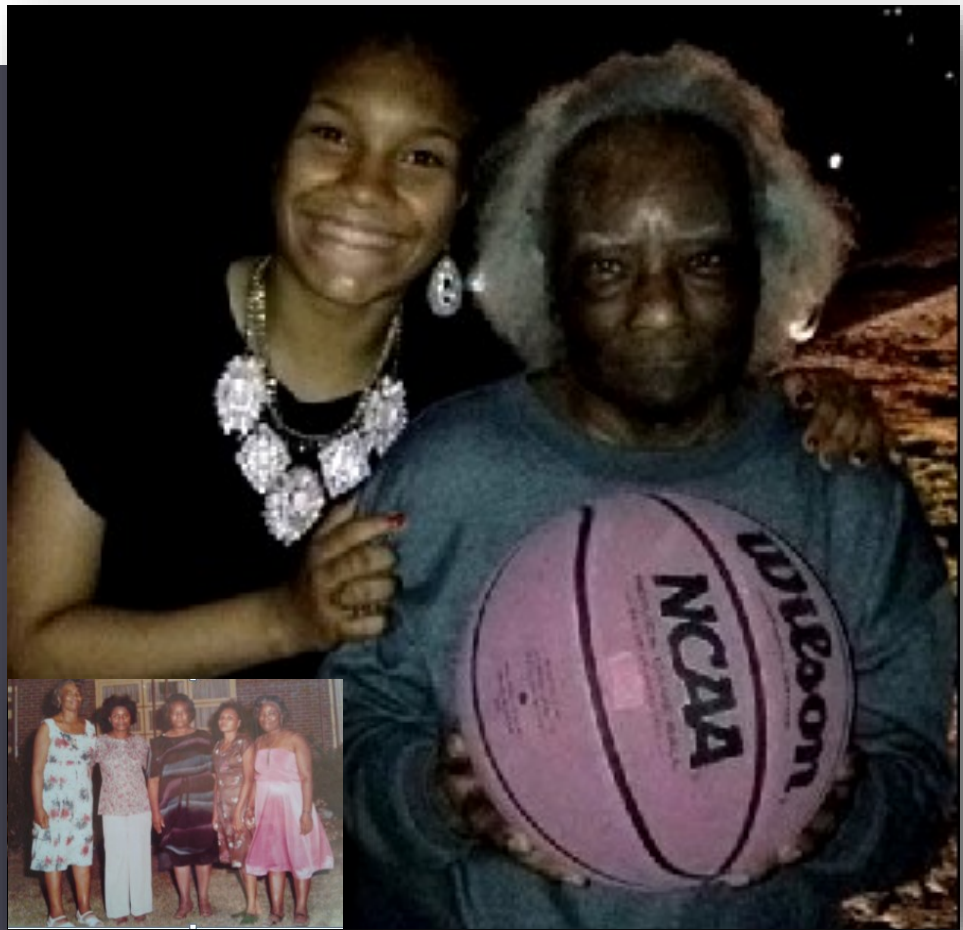
Elaine Goodwyn-Jones

Elaine was a pure sweetheart. Born in Newark, NJ to the late Robert and Louvenia Goodwyn on July 13, 1951.

She would marry Arnold Jones on Dec. 12, 1970 to become a wife and mother of one daughter and two sons.

She transitioned this life on March 20, 2015 while at home. Elaine worked over 25 years assisting children with special needs.

Below: A photo of the late Louvenia and Robert (Bob) Goodwyn Sr.



Inset; Theoria (far right) with Family. Above: Myesha's daughter Amaya who loves the game of basketball and Aunt Theoria in 2015

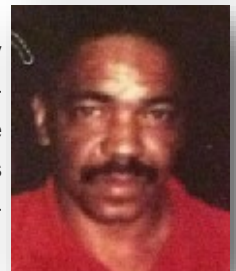
A Special Tribute

This year's "40th Anniversary" Parker/Eley Family Reunion was to pay a special tribute to the late **Theoria P. Eley** in life, as it now will be in her passing. Theoria was the youngest sister to the late Eula, Ella, Louvenia, Dorothy, and Neomia, with brothers William, Alvin, Robert, Vernon, and Amos Eley and son, Robin Parker all having preceded her.

Born on February 23, 1926 to the late Robert and Georgia Eley, she was raised in Murfreesboro, NC to the late Lonnie and Shirley Parker. Theoria departed this life quietly at home on May 12, 2016. She is cherished by her fond memories.

"**Goody**" as he became most known, was born Robert Goodwyn Jr. to the late Robert and Louvenia (Eley) Goodwyn. He departed this life on April 18, 2016. His life journey began on April 28, 1947 in Newark, NJ.

Goody was the oldest of three siblings and he was recently preceded in death by his sister, Elaine. In 1966 he was inducted into the U.S. Army to survive the Vietnam War. He was an attendee of the "1976" Parker/Eley Family Reunion as he personally shared this experience in a discussion in October of 2015 at a male family luncheon in New Jersey.



Family Reunion Accommodations for 2016 “40th Anniversary”

Final preparations for this year's Family Reunion are still underway. With only weeks away of preparations to go in honor of 40 and more years of celebrations. This year's final preparations welcomes all into the state of New Jersey as a family reunion precedent. We are also looking forward to everyone's participation in honor of this rich-tradition.



The welcoming accommodations includes an affordable rate of \$99.00 per night for all double and triple bed occupancies in a very luxuriant Renaissance Hotel located on US Hwy 1 in Iselin, NJ. The facility has a free shuttle bus to all local attractions. It is also within walking distance of local shopping plazas, the Woodbridge Shopping Mall and a premier Menlo Park

Mall within five to ten miles of the hotel. Numerous restaurants for fine dining or otherwise within the area. We are all anticipating a weekend to be long remembered; starting Friday, July 1, 2016—Sunday, July 3, 2016. The photos shown are but a few of the plush amenities of the Renaissance Hotel.



Travel Information

The Renaissance Hotel is centrally located in New Jersey near the New Jersey Turnpike exit 11, on US Hwy 1 southbound and within twenty miles of Newark International Airport. (EWR).

Public Transportation from the airport includes the New Jersey Transit train stopping in nearby Edison, NJ with commuter pick up from the hotel shuttle bus or car rental from EWR with a direct route to the hotel via US Hwy 1 & 9 south .