

'When The Soul Speaks'

Family story teaches value of pride, dignity

By Eugene Scott

I come from a long line of preachers, all the way back to my third great grandfather. My great grandfather started Redland Church of Christ, our hometown church of sixty years. He was my grandmother's dad on my mom's side of the family. So all the stories I've ever heard were about Dr. Joe Clark, Eugene Latten, my great grandfather.

My grandmother told me many stories about him, but the most affecting one is "The March on Washington" story.

My grandmother tells me of a happy and glorious morning. She felt that every day you awake is a blessed day. Grandmother remembered being awakened by her father's deep and resonant voice. She was a mother of two at this time; she had moved back home to North Carolina from New York without her husband, in order to take care of her mother.

They lived in Advance, N.C., a small town just outside of Winston Salem. They had planned to meet the march as it came through the Piedmont area of the state.

Doc Latten had been ill the past couple of days, and he was worried about his wife, who was too sick to join them. Someone in the family was going to take care of her and my mother and aunt for a few days.

Grandmother would never say much about the journey there, but would move on to the rest of the story.

She would say that when they reached Washington Doc Latten had become very ill and he needed rest, but he was determined to hear Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. speak, and he would not stay in bed at the hotel.

As they stood in the hot sun, grandma could see her father growing weaker as sweat poured

from his face. As Dr. King said, "We will reach that mountain top one day," Doc. Latten fell to his knees.

Grandma cried out for help, and told her brother to get a doctor. Grandpa Latten grabbed her and said, "No, baby, it's my time to go."

He added, "I am a Christian man and this earth was only my stepping ground. I'm going to my real home now. Take good care of your mother, for I believe she is not ready to join me yet.

"My work on this earth is done, but there will be another who will fill my shoes. I'll let you choose him and tell him about me, and through him my works will continue."

My great grandfather died as Dr. King was saying "free at last, free at last, Thank God almighty...free at last!"

As they took my grandfather away in the ambulance, my grandmother wiped the tears from her eyes. She knew her father was happy now, and he had left a job for her to do.

Although I have three uncles and two older brothers, my grandmother chose me to be the one to follow in my grandfather's footsteps.

This family story has had a great influence on my life and influenced me in many ways. It has taught me self-pride, given me dignity, and made me a stronger person. In order to achieve you must first believe, and through this you can accomplish anything you set your mind to. I learned that you must also make sacrifices sometimes, even though in the end things may not always turn out the way you wanted or expected them to.

And finally, the story has taught me to value my family and my history, and given me a foundation to build my life upon.

FICTION

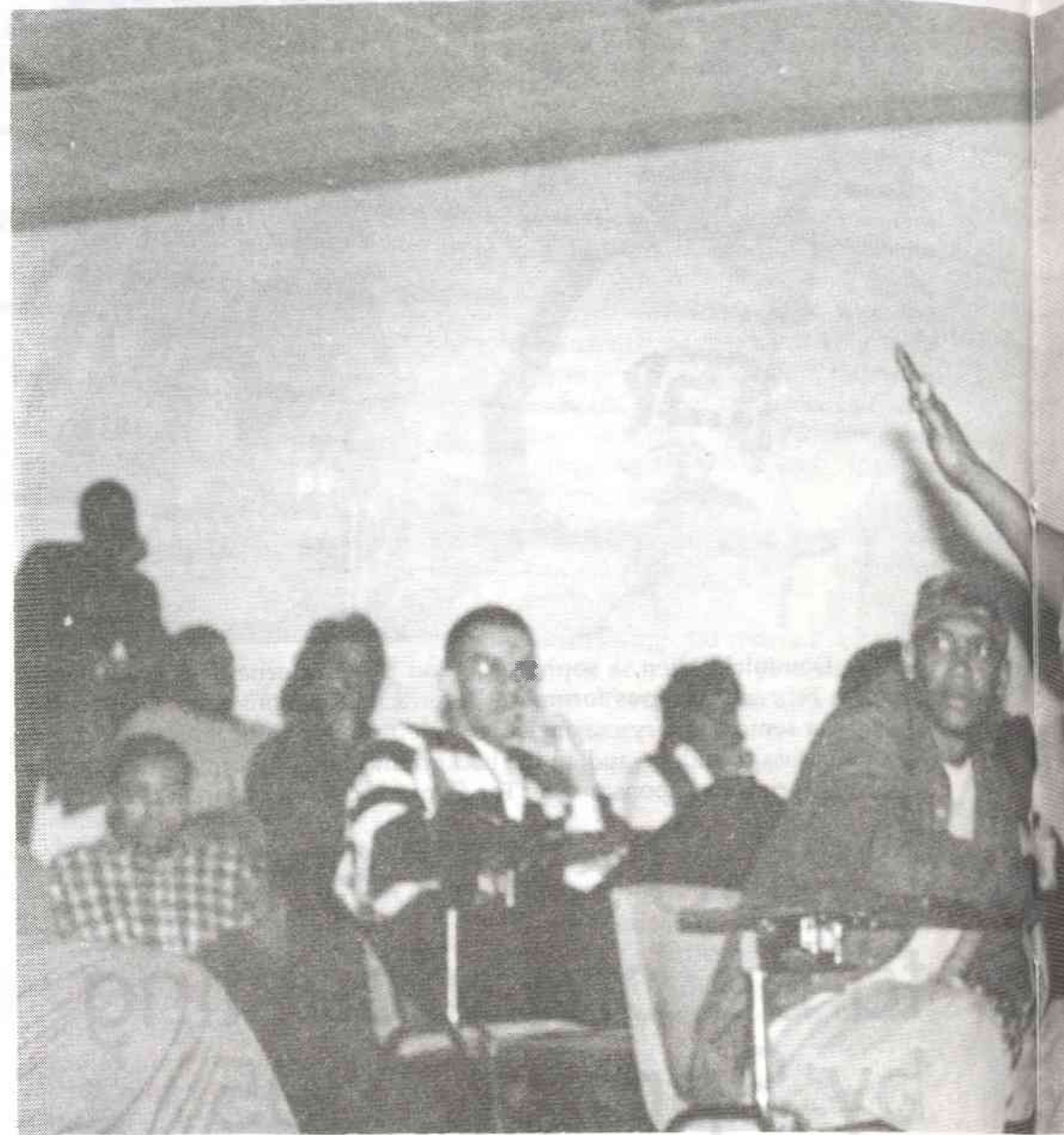
My soul cried out in long exultation like the angels of old. I had the power! I had the power of the Holy Ghost deliverance! Those desolate blackbirds, enslaved and shackled by the chains of the blues...if they only knew the joy that was released in my spirit.

That fire had done been shut up in my bones for so long that I didn't even know what it felt like. In all my thirteen years of singin' the blues, not one time had the fire even been lit. Somehow or another I got them folks to singin' with me the song that my grandma always sung on the back porch while she was feedin' them chickens...

*I got a new home over in glory,
I got a new home over in glory,
I got a new home over in glory,
And it's mine, mine all mine.*

From "Jezabel Blues", by Lynn Jordan

'Black love is Black



Dr. Glenda Griffin, gives it all she's got during her moving rendition of the Negro spiritual, "No One Knows The Trouble I've Seen," during a February program designed to celebrate African-American history and literature. Griffin, an associate professor in the Department of Language, Literature & Communication, is the advisor to the course in African-American literature.

Poetic Picks

By Jonathon Lee

ECSU students celebrated African-American literature and history on Feb. 25 in Johnson Hall's auditorium with music, poetry and song.

The event, "Poetic Picks," was sponsored by the Pickwick Society, an honor society in the Department of Language, Literature and Communication.

About 100 students listened as a group of seven ECSU students and a faculty member, Dr. Glenda Griffin, read from the works of prominent African-American writers, like Langston Hughes, Paul Lawrence Dunbar and Maya Angelou.

Three students, Lynn Jordan, Eric Walton, and Ursula McMillion read original works.

Osie M. Parson read "Genius Child," by Langston Hughes.

Reneta Boone read Sonya

Sanchez's poem, "Nigger," ending with "That word don't turn me on. I am black and beautiful."

Next Dr. Glenda Griffin recited Langston Hughes' "Mother To Son." Griffin also sang a Negro spiritual, "No One Knows The Trouble I've Seen."

An associate professor in the Department of Language, Literature and Communication, Griffin teaches several upper level courses, including the department's course in African-American literature. She is the advisor to *The Viking Yearbook*.

Bruce Copeland, a senior English/News Media major, read Paul Lawrence Dunbar's poem, "Sympathy." In his introduction to his performance, Copeland said Dunbar's poem inspired Maya Angelou's moving autobiography, *I Know Why The Caged Bird Sings*.

Nakeisha Silver read Nikki Giovanni's poem "Nikki Rosa," a