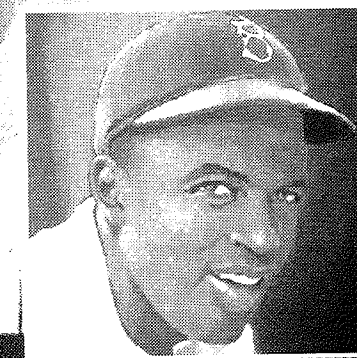
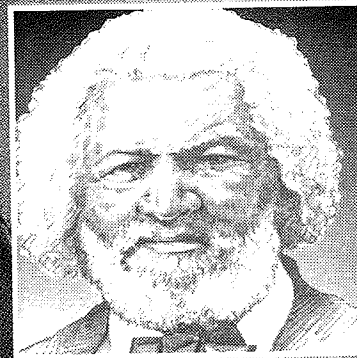


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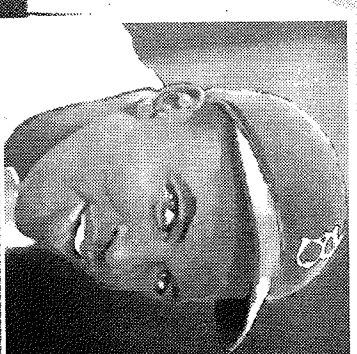
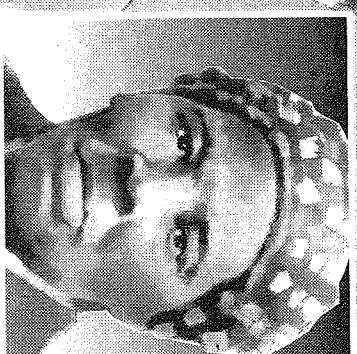
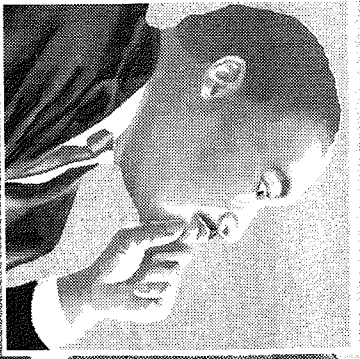
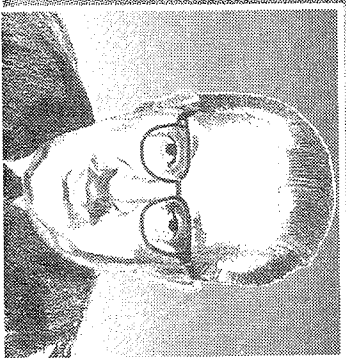
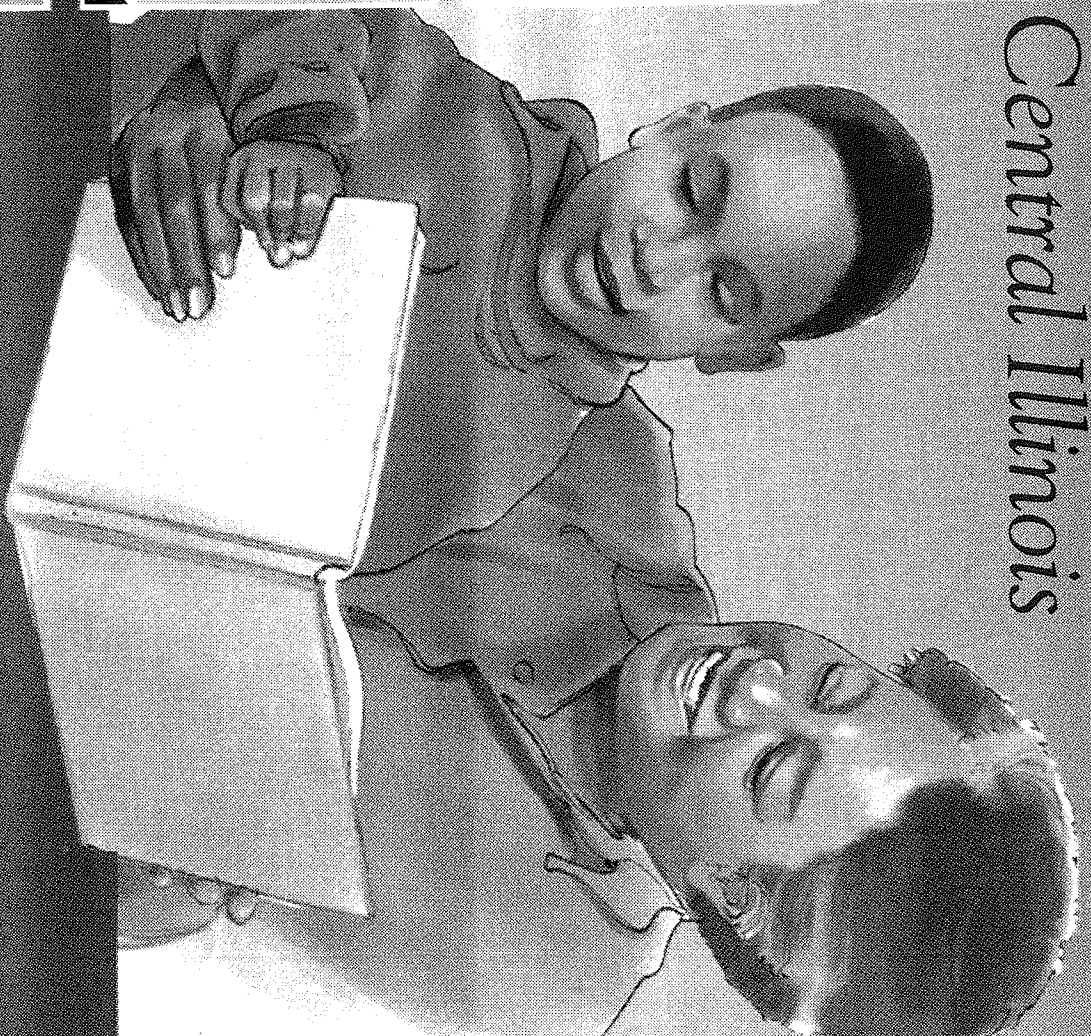
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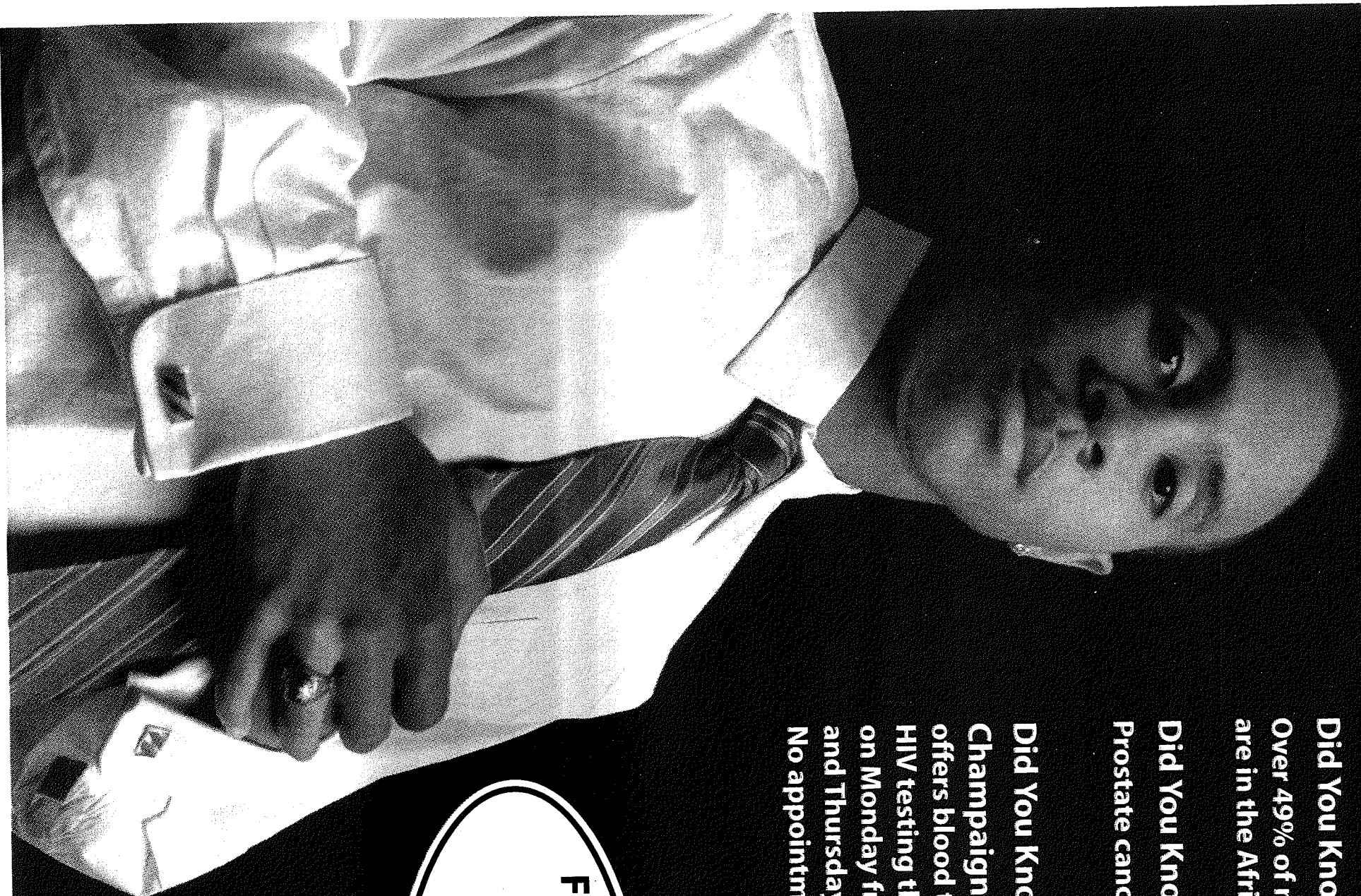
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Inspiration from above

Ultra-involved Champaign couple attributes dedication to a higher power

By PATRICK WADE

pwade@news-gazette.com

CHAMPAIGN — Ask them where they get their motivation, and without a word or a moment of hesitation, evangelist Mary Gwin points to the sky: the Lord.

Soft-spoken but with an overwhelming aura of faith, Mary makes the answer seem obvious: The church is what gives her and her husband, Bishop Lloyd Gwin, the resolution to pack their daily schedules with outreach.

For 30 years, the two have been a powerful presence at The Church of the Living God in Champaign.

"This is what I tell everybody: They're real," said Eldress Gail Redding, who works with the couple. "What you see is who they are."

The two met in a Chicago church in the 1970s when Lloyd was on leave from the military. A friend introduced them.

"I held ministers in such high esteem," Mary said. "Through high school, I felt like I would probably be a minister's wife."

"And she's a real blessing too, I want to say that. Has been for many, many, many years," Lloyd said.

They spent weekends in Champaign between 1979 and 1981, when they officially relocated to the city. They brought three children along with them, two of whom now work for The Church of the Living God.

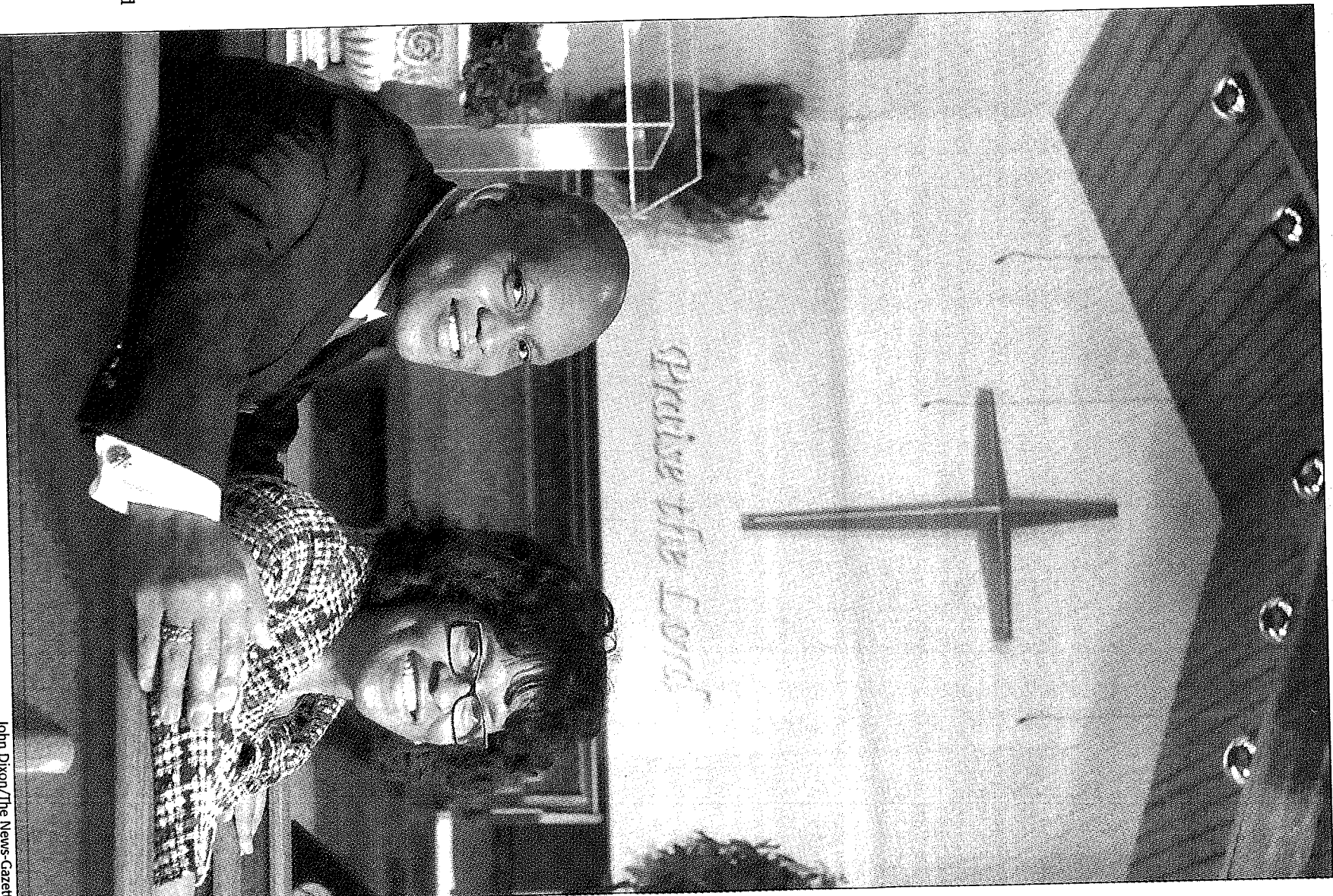
The couple tries to be the last to leave the church every day, and Champaign City Council member Will Kyles said he often sees their car in the church parking lot late into the night.

Their work in the church is one thing, but often their jobs extend into the community.

Lloyd sits on several local boards and commissions, including the Housing Authority of Champaign County and the Champaign Community and Police Partnership. And Mary joins him for an after-school program, for which they work with Bottenfield School students and tutor them in math and reading.

"They speak to all ages, basically," Redding said. "What they do, it doesn't favor any particular age."

"(Lloyd) can relate to the young and the old," Kyles said. "Those are just a couple



Bishop Lloyd Gwin and his wife, evangelist Mary Gwin, in The Church Of The Living God in Champaign.

John Dixon/The News-Gazette

examples of the extent of their activity. Lloyd can rattle off a list of the things they do from week to week.

But ask either of them, and they will tell you that the "love of Christ" is the common element present in all their

events. "Our activity is an extension of our love of Christ."

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**Black History
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Henson helped break basketball color barrier

Frightfully poor and backward a half-century ago, the state of Mississippi was a racial battleground.

Coming out of the 1950s, it was 45 percent black with only 5 percent registered to vote. It would soon be the site of sit-ins and marches, violence and arrests, lynchings and beatings, not to mention bombings and assassinations (Medgar Evers qualified on both counts).

If you were black and wandered into a white Mississippi community, or if white and in a black neighborhood, safety was a concern.

The Ku Klux Klan was very much in evidence.

So it was that Mississippi State's 1959-61-62 Southeastern Conference basketball championships declined NCAA invitations because of an unwritten law that forbade the Bulldogs from competing against integrated teams. And when they finally partici-

ated in March Madness in 1963, they did it by narrowly outrunning Sen. Billy Mills' injunction that would have prevented them from leaving the state. While coach Babe McCarthy and athletic director Wade Walker drove away as a decoy, the team slipped to the Starkville Airport and flew to East Lansing, Mich., where the Bulldogs lost a 61-51 game against predominantly black Chicago Loyola, the eventual national champion.

It was in this atmosphere that a youthful Lou Henson began to build his basketball coaching reputation.

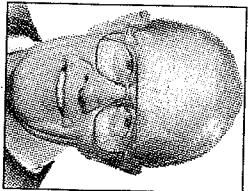
No, Henson didn't coach in Mississippi, but he used it as his favorite recruiting ground because, in his words, "There were a lot of athletes there, and we didn't have to go up against Mississippi and Mississippi State."

On to the college level

Henson, who had no black teammates during his playing days at New Mexico State, ran a fully integrated high school program that won three state championships at Las Cruces. When he received an offer to take over a troubled program at Hardin-Simmons University in Abilene, Texas, in 1962, he hesitated.

Said Henson: "I had an offer to join Bob King as an assistant at New Mexico. So when I was contacted by Hardin-Simmons, I said no. But eventually I agreed to meet with the board, and I told them I'd consider it if they would allow me to integrate the team. I told them there was no way we could be successful if we couldn't recruit black players. The board met the next morning and agreed, and I took the job.

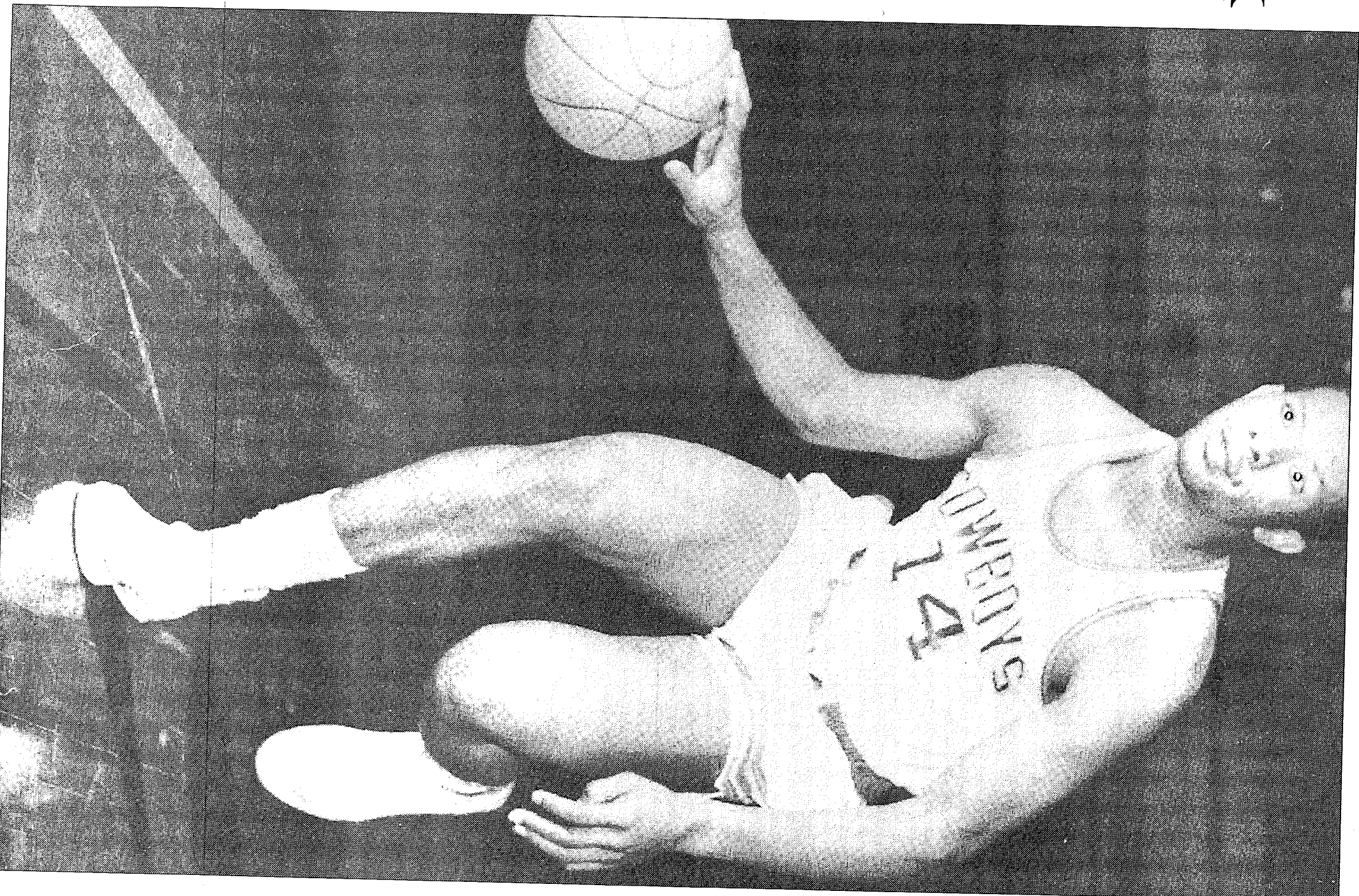
"I had a recruiting budget of \$1,000 and a Volks-



LOREN TATE

— TATE LINES

Please turn to Page 5



Nate Madkins was Lou Henson's first black player at Hardin-Simmons and the first in school history.

Lou Henson



Lou Henson, sporting his signature flat-top haircut from his early coaching days in the 1960s, directs his Hardin-Simmons team from the bench. Henson was 67-36 in four seasons (1962-66) at the Abilene, Texas, school.

HENSON

Continued from Page 4

wagen with a Texas license which, with the marches and all in Mississippi, wasn't good. It was a hassle just to get them to sell me gas. And I stayed overnight with coaches just to be safe."

Henson struck Mississippi gold immediately, landing several prospects, including high-scoring Nate Madkins, who later tallied 54 points in a single game.

During Henson's first practice in Abilene, a longtime member of the department watched practice for about 10 seconds and told him the next day, "I can't stand to watch our players with them."

Racial feelings were that extreme, even in Abilene. And when Henson took his team on the road, there were restaurants in Texas that would not serve them.

"We took sack lunches and went to drive-ins," said Henson. "We lost eight of our first nine games, but we improved. And in the last three years, we had good teams (20-6, 17-8 and 20-6)."

Hardin-Simmons had never won 20 games previously. That led Henson back to his alma mater, where he continued to use Mississippi as a recruiting ground in the late 1960s.

"The previous coach (Jim McGregor) at New Mexico State had left the team in the middle of the season," said Henson. "We had no players. And Williams Gym was a rundown place that seated 1,800 on concrete bleachers."

"When I got there, it was dusty and sandy from the windows being left open. I almost left before I started, but (wife) Mary reminded me that 'You accepted,' so overnight I decided to stay."

New Mexico State and Illinois
Texas-El Paso, which is now attached to Las Cruces via the Lou Henson Highway, was the darling of the nation, having shocked Adolph Rupp's all-white Kentucky team in the 1966 NCAA finals. The Miners had most of their star players returning.

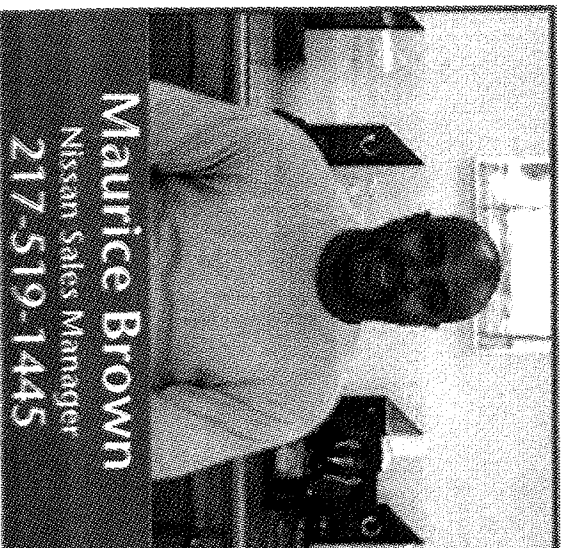
Somehow, Henson pieced together a Miracle Midget lineup (6-2 forwards, a 6-5 center) that beat UTTEP twice and split with New Mexico. A year later, Sam Lacey from Indiana, Miss., and Jimmy Collins from Syracuse moved into a lineup that posted consecutive 23-6, 24-5 and 27-3 records, contributed to a nine-game win streak over Texas-El Paso, and lost to John Wooden's great UCLA champions all three years in the NCAA tournament, the last year in the Final Four.

"When I went to Indianapolis, I stayed with the coach, Andrew Brown," Henson recalled. "Lacey was about 6-8 and 180 when I met him, and came without ever seeing the campus. The same was true of Collins. He had been recommended to me at Hardin-Simmons, but I didn't take him the first time. He rode a bus for four days to join us."

"And then there was Charlie Criss. The coach (in Yonkers, N.Y.) said I could check him out if I didn't measure him. He was no more than 5-6 and he had no grades. So we put him in Hobbs Junior College, and he joined us later. Charlie was a battler and made it to the NBA eventually."

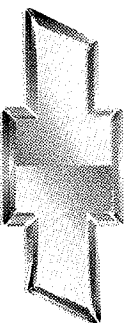
For all his success at New Mexico State, Henson's problems with race relations were not over. When he took the Illinois job, the program was just one year removed from having no black squad members. The 1974 club had a crack guard in Duke transfer Jeff Dawson, but was composed mostly of area players: Brad Farnham

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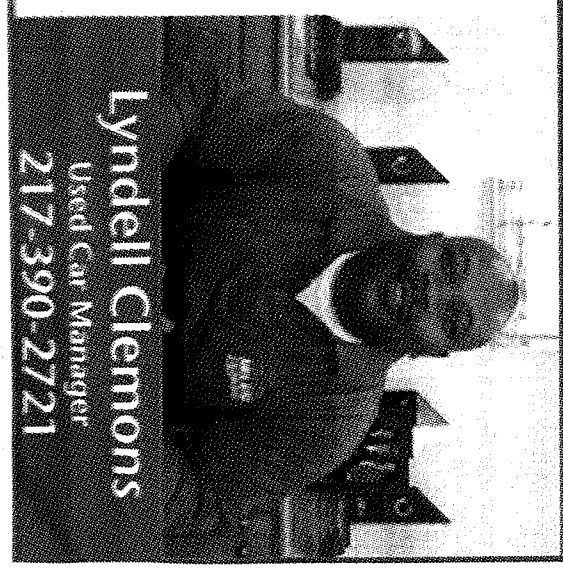


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COUPLE

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sion of the church, and we just say that, whatever we do, it is designed to help people," Lloyd said. "But it's the arm of the church that's really making that happen."

With so much going on, scheduling personal time can be difficult in between their church appointments.

"We have to schedule whatever else we're going to do other than what we're doing for the church," Lloyd said. "We found it doesn't work any other way."

Vacations are scheduled. Dates are scheduled. The concerts they see at Krannert — one of the reasons Mary was pleased to move to Champaign — are scheduled. And still they have to leave room for unexpected events — maybe a death in the church.

"Whenever you go anywhere with them, people are going to know them," Redding said of the impact of their activism.

And everything they do, they attribute to a higher power. Even when Lloyd gave up meat, he said it was prayer that gave him the strength to stay away from the steaks and stick to carrots, nuts and protein drinks.

"It hasn't been tough because I prayed, and I know the Lord helped me there," Lloyd said.

He said he gave up meat to stay healthy. They agree that staying fit is essential to staying emotionally healthy.

"I think the Lord gives us other things such as exercise, eating right," Mary said. "I think that all plays a part in your well-being."

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That message is among the others when they preach "the love of Christ" during food or clothing drives. And when they are helping church members cope with the death of a loved one, and the next minute celebrating with two people as they marry.

And still, the couple say they pray, wondering if they've helped touch enough lives that day.

"We just do the best we can until the day is over," Lloyd said.

"And then we collapse, and get ready for the next day."

HENSON

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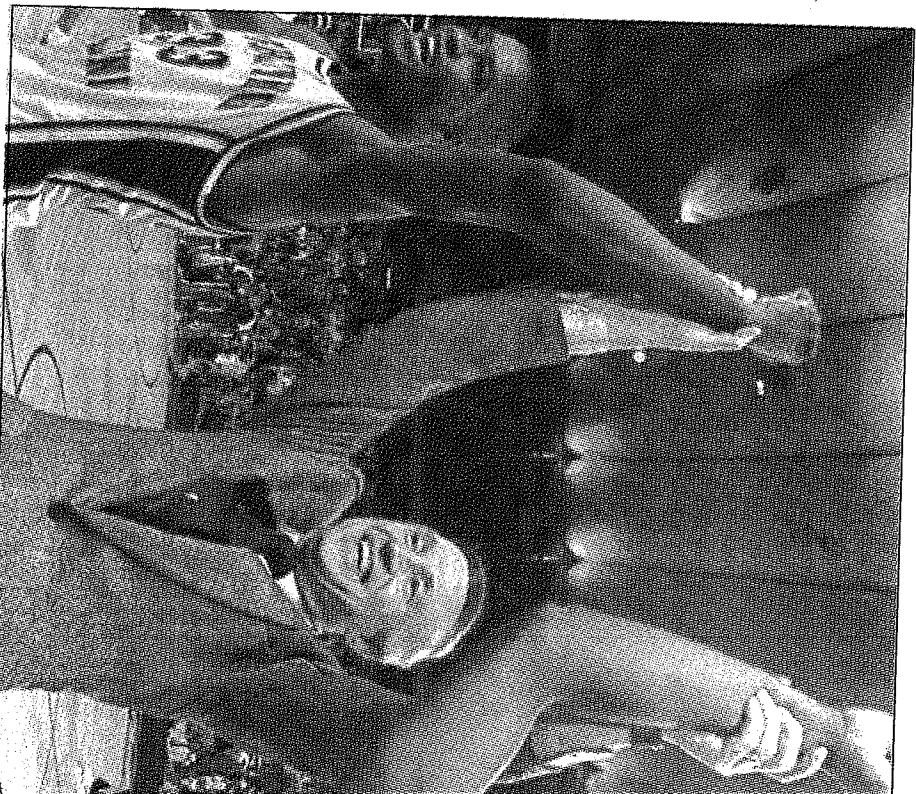
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In his lone year at Illinois, coach Gene Barrow and recruiter Tony Yates changed that with Audie Matthews from Bloom, Rich Adams from Cincinnati and junior college transfers Mike Washington and Nate Williams. But it was left to Henson to crack the talent-laden Chicago Public League when he arrived in Champaign in 1975. Henson had no idea how difficult it would be.

"It wasn't just the Public League," said Henson. "We had a major problem with veteran coaches throughout the state. They controlled the state, and they just didn't like the University of Illinois."

"Nobody was supportive. So we met as a staff and decided to hit 400 schools personally. We wanted to get to know the coaches."

The breakthrough came with Levi Cobb, a Morgan Park star, but Henson was obliged to fight through a period where the state's blue-chip players, black and white, tended to look elsewhere — Larry Williams to Louisville, Jay Shidler to Kentucky, Isiah Thomas and Glen Grunwald to Indiana, Doc Rivers to Marquette, Russell Cross



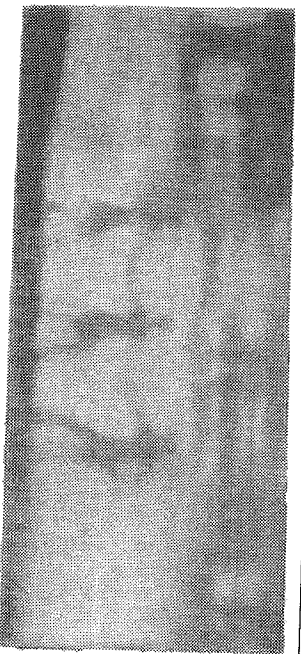
Illinois head coach Lou Henson walks from the court with players Nick Battle after their 83-69 victory against Louisville in NCAA tournament Metrodome in Minneapolis.

to Purdue.

Henson and Yates landed a big fish in Eddie Johnson from Westinghouse, though his running mate, Mark Aguirre, joined the then-potent forces at DePaul. Johnson was a breakthrough, and the strong relation-

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It took a while, but Henson



Birmingham, Alabama. 1963. Doyoch (After Matisse), Charcoal & white

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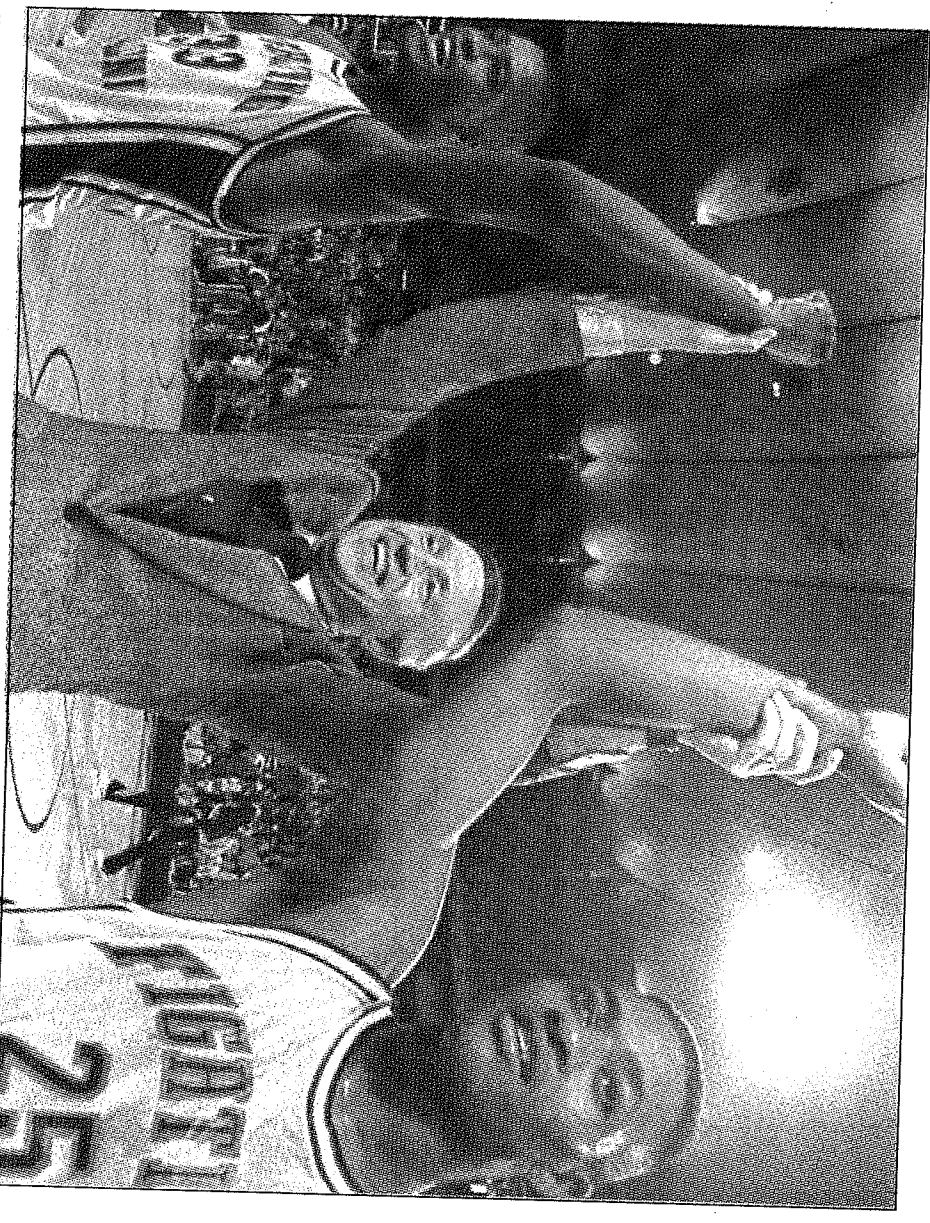
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AP Illinois head coach Lou Henson walks from the court with players Nick Anderson, left, and Kenny Battle after their 83-69 victory against Louisville in NCAA tournament action on March 25, 1989, in the Metrodome in Minneapolis.

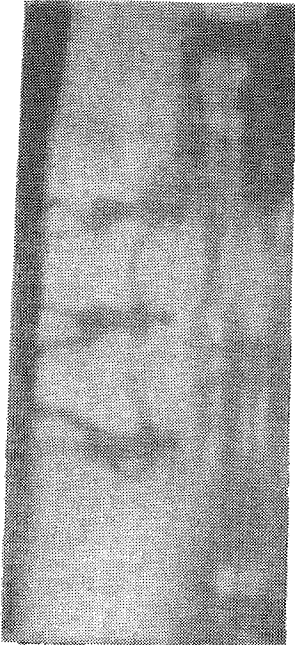
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It took a while, but Henson cleared the racial divide and, while recruiting in Chicago is forever challenging, he created better circumstances for the coaches who followed.

Loren Tate can be reached via e-mail at hate@news-gazette.com.



Birmingham, Alabama, 1965. Dipped in liver, Marisque, Charcoal & white pastel on raw canvas, under polymer giza, 2006.

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Please turn to Page 5

It's a tough job doing genealogy on African-Americans

Danville library offering program for those interested

By PAT PHILLIPS
pphillip@news-gazette.com
DANVILLE — The best way to trace your ancestry is to start with yourself.

That's what Jacqueline Woodard-Smith, reference and archives assistant at the Danville Public Library, tells anyone interested in genealogy.

In 2008, Woodard-Smith created a new library program, "Pardon Me, Brother," to help develop the library's collection of local history and genealogy information about blacks in Vermillion County. She coordinated an African-American Family History Day for people to bring in photos, family histories and other memorabilia that were

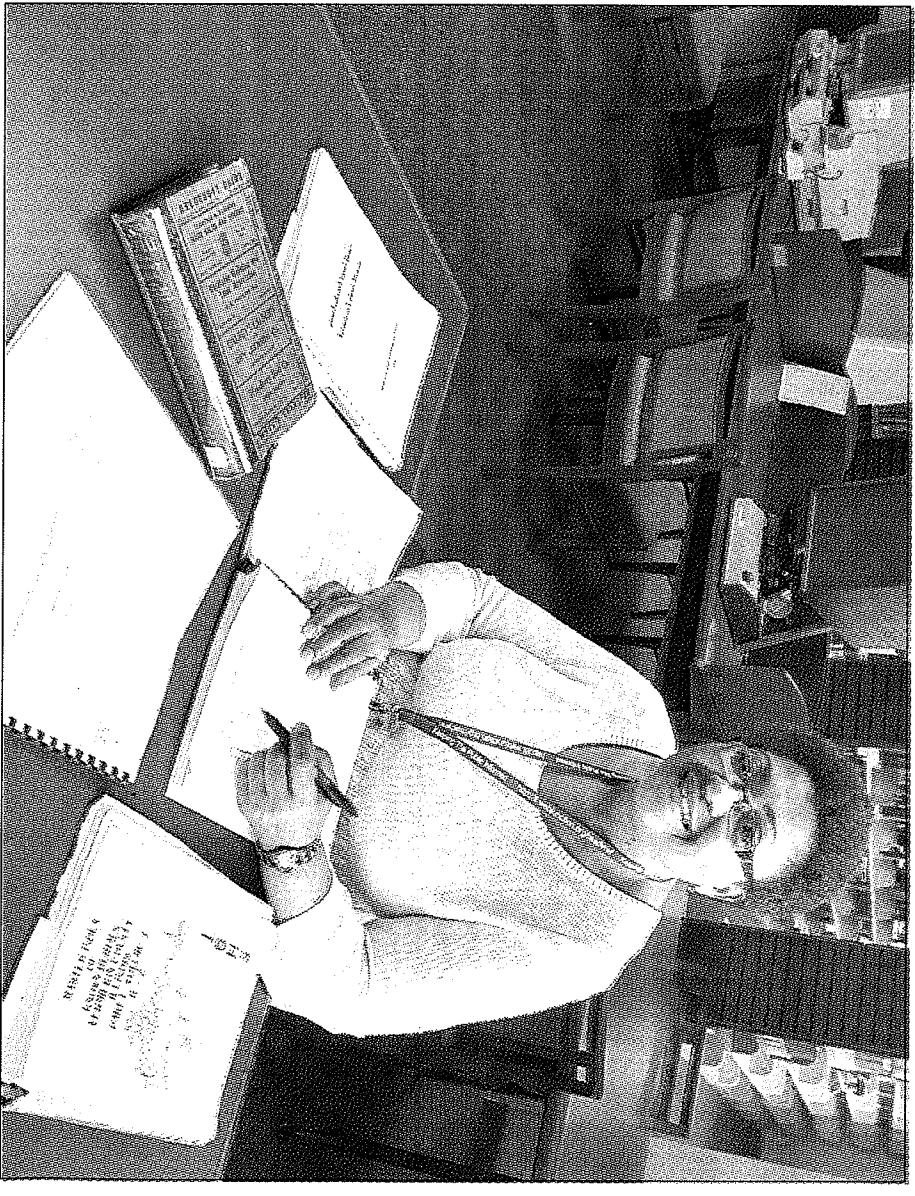
photocopied and added to the library's collection. She also has been interviewing area black residents for the project.

Last year, she coordinated a family history and genealogy workshop series at the library to teach people how to trace their genealogy and to organize and record their family histories.

For her efforts, Woodard-Smith received a Support Staff of the Year award from the Reaching Forward South Conference for Library Support Staff. Only two such awards are given each year in Illinois.

Although Woodard-Smith works with anyone wanting to trace their family tree, she spends a lot of her time working to add to the library's collection of local black history and genealogy by scouring newspaper

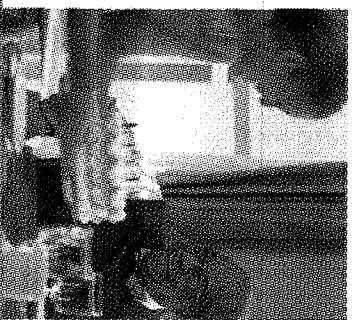
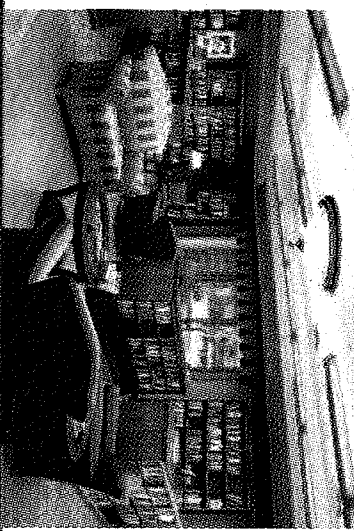
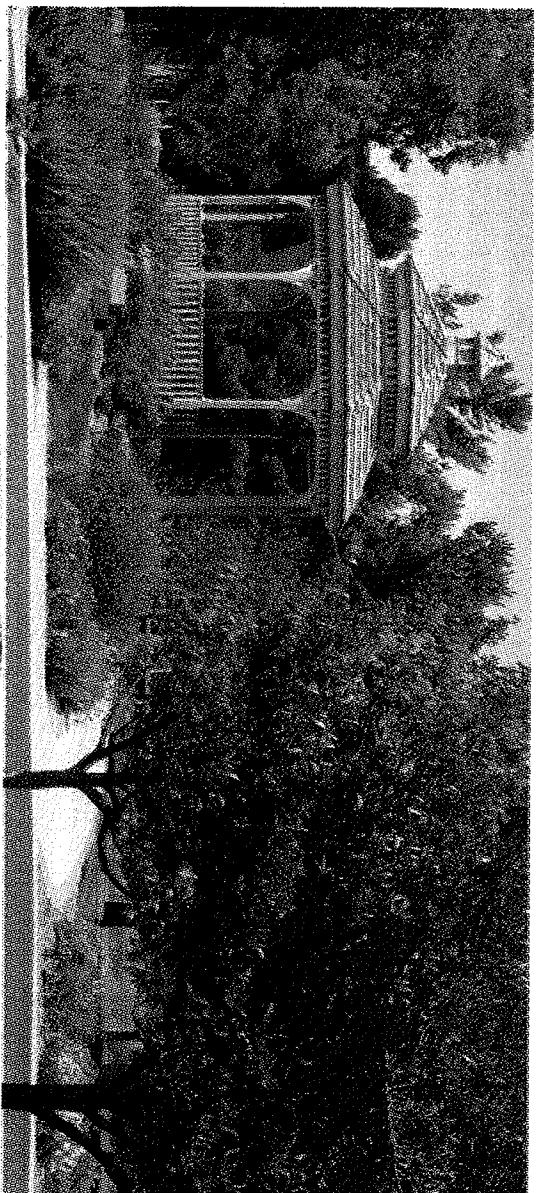
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Rick Danzl/The News-Gazette
Jacqueline Woodard-Smith, reference and archives assistant at the Danville Public Library, encourages African-Americans to share their family histories and helps everyone with tracing their roots. Woodard-Smith is working to increase research materials available for genealogical searches.

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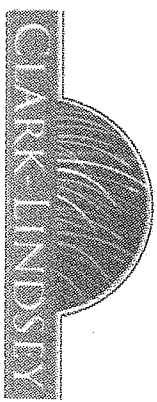


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National Archives holds records of African-Americans

When Debra Newman Ham first went to work at the National Archives with black history specialist Robert Clarke, she admitted, "I expected to encounter little snatches of black history here and



JOAN GRIFFIS

—ILLINOIS ANCESTORS

there, but instead I literally found millions of documents relating to African-American life and culture." [i] For example, working with archivist Donald King, she was amazed at the amount of information created by the Bureau of Customs, including slave manifests and records pertaining to black customs officials and African-American crewmen.

Learning about some of the genealogical treasures at the National Archives can be an overwhelming task. However, a good place to start would be to read the special issue of Prologue magazine. (This is a subscription-based National Archives publication. This issue is no longer in print but it is downloadable online at www.archives.gov/publications/prologue. Click on "Genealogy Notes" and then "African-American History.") This issue "focuses on the documenta-

tion of the African-American experience (making the records) ... accessible to the American Public." [ii]

Some of the articles in this special issue include: "Civil War and Reconstruction," "Freedman's Bureau Records," "Slave Emancipation," "African-Americans and the American Labor Movement," "Panama Canal Workers," "Black Domestic During the Depression," "Black Government Photographers," "Photographing African-Americans During World War II," "The Freedman's Savings and Trust Company" and "African-American Genealogical Research."

For example, one can learn that Carter G. Woodson is considered to be the "father of Afro-American history," who inaugurated Negro History Week in 1926. [iii]

The amount of military information pertaining to African-Americans is noteworthy, since they have served their country in every war beginning with the Revolutionary War. For example, "compiled service records of the U.S. Colored Troops must not be overlooked." [iv] Information on manumissions as well as wives of service personnel is often included in such service records.

In 1994, the National Archives, in conjunction with the National Park Service's Civil War Soldiers and Sailors System, or CWSS, began the compilation of a

computerized database, which identified veterans from both the Union and Confederacy. The first index that was compiled pertained to U.S. Colored Troops. It should be one of the first places to look for information on African-American veterans. After going to www.id.ams.gov/CWSS, click on the featured article, "Black History," for a comprehensive overview of the subject. At that page there are also links to "Civil War," "Military History," "Parks — Civil War," "Medal of Honor Recipients" and "Sailors Project."

One of the 23 African-Americans awarded the Medal of Honor for bravery during the Civil War was Christian A. Fleetwood. He was "Sergeant Major, 4th U.S. Colored Troops. Born in Baltimore, Maryland, in 1840, Fleetwood entered service in Baltimore on August 11, 1863. He saw action on September 29, 1864 at Chaffin's Farm, Fort Harrison, VA. His citation stated that he 'seized the colors, after two color bearers had been shot down, and bore them nobly through the fight.' Christian Fleetwood was a 23-year-old clerk when he enlisted in the U.S. Army. He stood 5'4" tall. He was promoted to the rank of Sergeant Major on August 19, 1863. Fleetwood described the act, which won him the Medal of Honor, as follows: 'Saved the regimental colors after eleven of the twelve color guards had been shot down around it.' The rank

of Sergeant Major was at the time the highest rank a black soldier could attain in the U.S. Army." [v]

Pfc. Luther Woodward was awarded the Bronze Star, which was later upgraded to the Silver Star, for his bravery in Guam during World War II. His award was the highest earned by a black Marine during that war. [vi]

"Among the most underused bodies of federal records useful for African-American genealogical research are the records of the Freedman's Savings and Trust Company." [vii] Chartered by Congress in 1865 for the benefit of ex-slaves, the bank's surviving records are a rich source of documentation about its depositors. (Please note: "The Freedman's Bank records are a part of Record Group 101, Records of the Comptroller of the Currency. Because of the bank's close association with the Freedman's Bureau, researchers often confuse these records with those of the bureau, which is a separate body of records, Record Group 105." [viii])

A search for African-American information begins the same as for any genealogical research. Begin with yourself, write down specific information (births, deaths, marriages) and then record similar information for your parents, grandparents, etc. A Web site that can be

Please turn to Page 10



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Rick Danzl/The News-Gazette
Barbara Buford inherited what appears to be a family history from a Bible with recorded information from 1898 to 1933, a great place to start when doing genealogy.

GENEALOGY

Continued from Page 7

files at the library and reorganizing them for easier use by researchers, including herself.

Woodard-Smith has been able to trace her Woodard line back to 1890.

"It's not easy to trace African-Americans," she said. "The census didn't list the names of slaves, only the number owned. At times, surnames changed from owner to owner with sales, they might be spelled phonetically, or even when someone just didn't get along with a relative, they would change or alter their name."

A key to unlocking family history is to get the oldest relative to give as much information as possible, but it can be an uphill battle because some older people prefer to forget the past, not wanting to share what went on in a life or an embarrassment.

"Once the slaves were set free, they tended to follow the same geographical pathway.

Knowing as much as you can about your living family, you can see if you're on the right track," Woodard-Smith said.

"You'll have gaps. Sometimes

you wind up searching cousins and aunts because families moved together. That's called cluster genealogy."

Many times stories were related to friends that were not shared with family, and that can give a researcher new leads.

Woodard-Smith recently sat down with a framed, ornate page from a Bible. It listed marriages, births and deaths for the Boyd family, which gave Barbara Buford some insight into her past. An 1898 marriage entry was the oldest item, and the most recent was a death entry for 1933. That gives the researcher a starting point.

Woodard-Smith went on ancestry.com, available at the library, and was able to find information on basically every name on the Bible entry page.

"That's how it happens sometimes. The family can take it from there because they could see how to go about doing the research themselves, but it was a great start," Woodard-Smith said. "There was more than one marriage and a number of children. An obituary we found laid it all out. It was a terrific find because it can become very complicated."

Please turn to Page 10

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Black History Month Perseverance: Then and Now

959586

GRIFFIS

Continued from Page 8

helpful for African-American research is AfrIGeneas, at www.afrigenaes.com, and also an extensive source of helpful links can be found at Cynndi Howells' Web site at www.cynndislist.com/african.htm. Researchers of African-Americans are becoming more aware of the availability of many helpful records, especially at the national level.

FOOTNOTES

[i] Deborah Newman Ham, *A Guiding Light*. Prologue, Special Issue: Federal Records and African-American History (Summer 1997, Vol. 29, No. 2)

[ii] John W. Carlin, *Voices of African-Americans in Federal Records*, Prologue, Special Issue: Federal Records and African-American History (Summer 1997, Vol. 29, No. 2)

[iii] Walter B. Hill Jr.

Institutions of Memory and the Documentation of African-Americans in Federal Records, Prologue, Special Issue: Federal Records and African-American History

(Summer 1997, Vol. 29, No. 2)
[iv] Budge Weidman, *Preserving the Legacy of the United States Colored Troops*, Prologue, Special Issue: Federal Records and African-American History (Summer 1997, Vol. 29, No. 2).

[v] The information on all 23 African-American Medal of Honor recipients is provided online at www.ildmns.gov/cwss/history/aa_medals.htm.

[vi] Barbara Lewis Burger, *The Lions' History: Researching World War II Images of African-Americans*, Prologue, Special Issue: Federal Records and African-American History (Summer 1997, Vol. 29, No. 2).

[vii] Reginald Washington, *The Freedman's Savings and Trust Company and African-American Genealogical Research*, Prologue, Special Issue: Federal Records and African-American History (Summer 1997, Vol. 29, No. 2)

[viii] Reginald Washington, *ibid.*

Queries, genealogical questions from researchers and genealogical materials to share can be sent to Joan Griffith, Illinois Ancestors, 105 Poland Road, Danville, IL 61834.

GENEALOGY

Continued from Page 9

"I thought it was wonderful," Barbara Buford said. "My granddaughter is getting involved because she knows a lot more about using the computer."

Barbara's husband, Thomas, isn't into writing things down right now, but he loves history and has discovered that his great-grandfather was an American Indian from Florida and his great-grandmother a white woman from Oklahoma. They met when the Indians were driven west on the Trail of Tears.

Thomas Buford has immersed himself in a series of DVDs: "How to Trace Your Native American Heritage and Black Indians: An American Story from the Circle of Life Series," along with many others.

"I find it fascinating," he said. "I've learned a lot by watching History Channel and PBS presentations."

Woodard-Smith has genealogy packets at the archives desk on the second floor of the library that can help people get started. The African-American Family History Packet features a family pedigree chart for six generations,

five family group sheets, source summary for family information, research calendar and a guide to family history research, all of which can be reproduced as needed. It also features a list of Danville Public Library resources, an oral history questionnaire and interview tracking sheet.

Instructions are also available for completing the packet sheets. Woodard-Smith included black genealogy resources from Family Tree magazine, including Web sites, books and CD-ROMs, as well as organizations and research facilities that can help with family searches.

Searches should always start with yourself, working backward through the generations. Gather personal papers such as birth certificates, marriage licenses, divorce records and death certificates. Family diaries are great resources, as are military service records, newspaper clippings and wills. Save and identify all family photos. Be sure when doing research to note the book, microfilm, newspaper or court record where information was found, including the page number and explanations of any codes used.

Libraries also feature many informative "how-to" books that can help you head in the right direction with the least amount

of trouble. Once you've located a possible source, libraries can order various microfilms from other local as well as from other states.

Woodard-Smith is attempting to compile more information on local black clubs and fraternal organizations, as well as families, and has found that what some people might find offensive has been a godsend for black genealogy.

"Birth records would record the color of a baby's skin. City directories identified residents as 'colored,'" she said. "If it weren't for those indications, I would have no idea how to trace African-American families."

Doing a family history is a learning process.

"There's always something different, and it can be very time-consuming," she said. "Some families kept their slaveowner's name, so when you find that out, it can send you in another direction. After emancipation, some took the name of someone they admired. After the Civil War, people were required to have a surname, but were allowed to choose their name. This adds to the importance of gathering an oral history from the oldest member of your family.

"It's very important to find that person and get a record before they die."

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A sweet time for Charity

Champaign native part of hottest musical tour today

By MELLISSA MERLI

mmerli@news-gazette.com

CHAMPAIGN — Last summer Charity Davis competed to become a backup singer for rap impresario Diddy's band, via an MTV program called "Make His Band."

She was one of six finalists but didn't make the final cut to two singers.

Now something way better has happened to Davis.

Lady Gaga, the biggest act now in pop music, selected Davis as a backup singer for her upcoming Monster Ball Tour, kicking off Feb. 18 in Manchester, England.

Lady Gaga had auditioned 600 female backup singers and chose three for her band. Davis

hadn't known about the auditions until a friend telephoned her and asked whether she was trying out.

Then at home in Champaign, Davis told her mother, Orlie Watts Davis, of the opportunity. They arranged for a flight out of town that night to New York for the auditions.

"It was a week's process, with callbacks," the 21-year-old Davis said. "Finally I got to sing for Lady Gaga. She liked me the first time she heard me."

Not too long after that, Davis and the rest of the band were rehearsing 10 hours a day in New York — even before Lady

Gaga was to return from Los Angeles. There she sang with Elton John in the opening act of

the televised Grammy Awards ceremony Jan. 31.

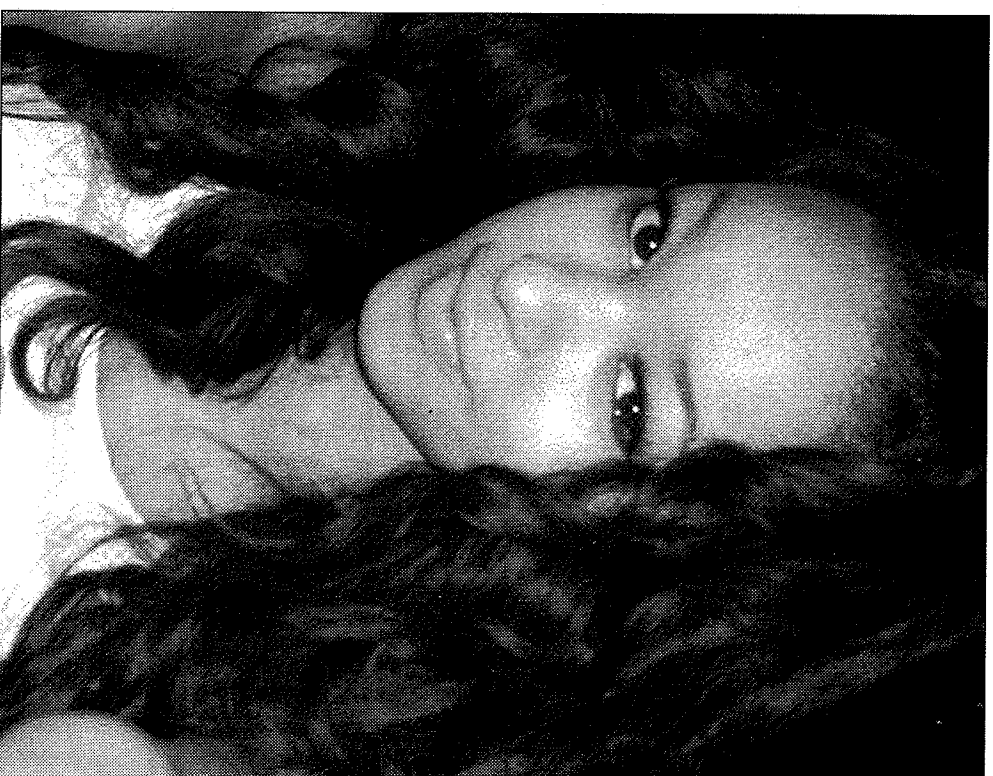
Davis will be with the Monster Ball Tour for a year and a half. Just through this April, the tour will take Lady Gaga and crew to the United Kingdom, New Zealand, Australia and Japan.

Davis has never been out of the country before.

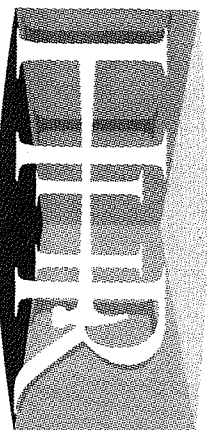
"I'm really excited," she said during a telephone interview from New York. "I know it's going to be a lot of work, but I'm ready for it, and I'm so excited."

Davis wasn't sure yet what kind of clothes she'll wear on stage, but she assumes they will be less elaborate than Lady

Please turn to Page 14



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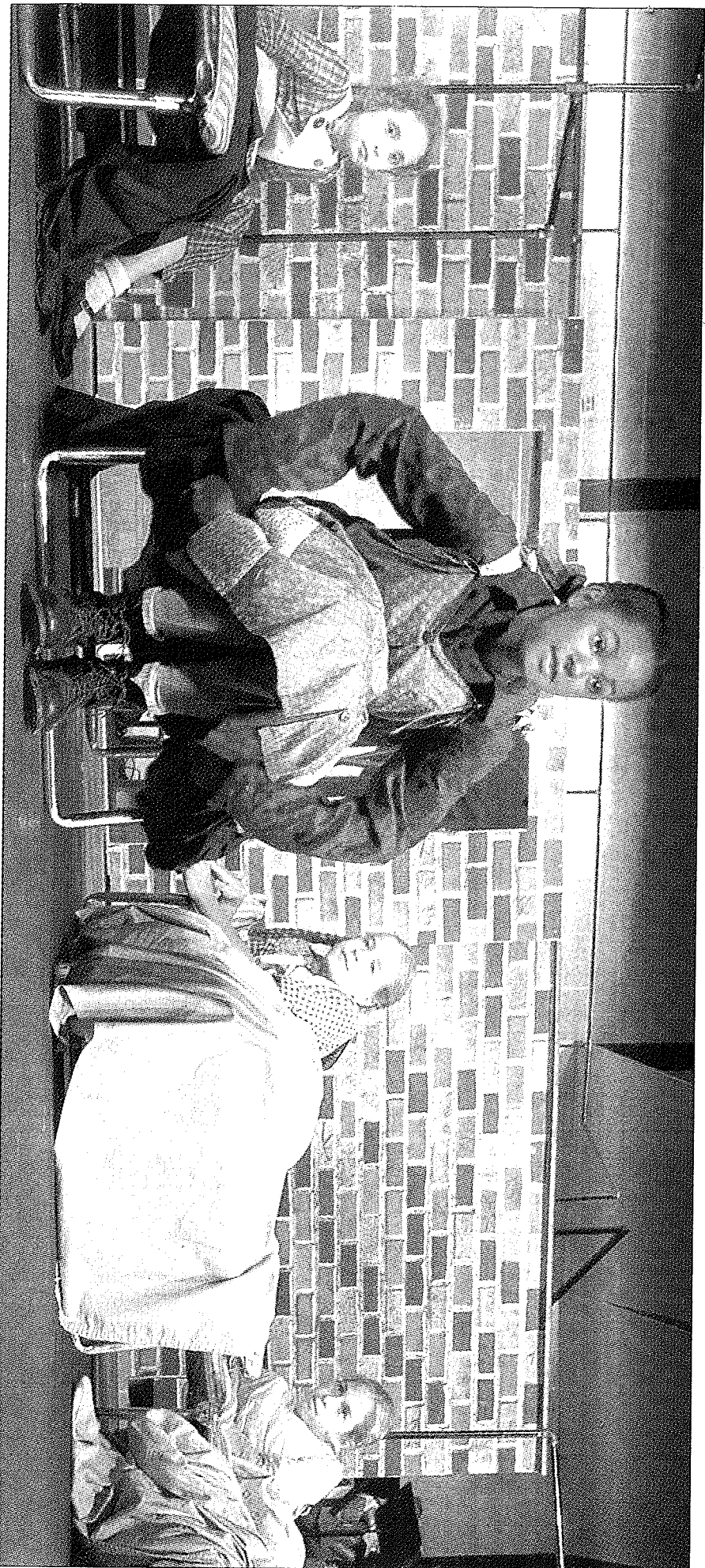
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Robin Scholz/The News-Gazette

Charity Davis rehearses a musical number as the lead in 'Annie' in 2003. Davis will tour with Lady Gaga as a backup singer.

DAVIS

Continued from Page 10

Gaga's costumes.

"All I know is she said it will be really nice and fly," Davis said.

On her Web site, Lady Gaga describes herself as "that little girl from a good Italian New York family, turned into the exhibitionist, multitalented singer-songwriter with a flair for theatrics."

Davis described the singer, who's known as much for her wild fashion statements as her voice, as "really humble, down to earth, funny and nice.

"When she's onstage and in the public eye, her stage presence is what is going on," she said. "Off-stage, she's really human.

"She's a fresh face for music. Her style is ever changing. I can appreciate it. As a musician, she's very talented. I feel very honored to be able to work with her."

Davis was a University of Illinois sophomore

majoring in English, intending to become an English teacher, when she took time off to audition for Daddy's band.

She might eventually go back to school. But for now music is her calling.

An alto, Davis has been singing all her life. Naturally, her primary voice teacher has been her mom, who is chair of the voice division of the UI School of Music and a soprano with a lengthy performance career, mostly in classical and sacred music.

"When she taught people I'd listen to her," Davis said. "She coached me for the Lady Gaga auditions. She showed me breathing techniques and walked me through the songs."

Davis is the youngest of four children of Ollie Watts and the Rev. Harold Davis. Though Charity Davis said she's never had formal voice lessons, her mother said her youngest took a few semesters of voice lessons from UI graduate students and always listened in on the lessons she gave.

Ollie Watts Davis also prepared Charity for roles in musical theater when she was in elementary and middle school. Among her lead roles were the title roles

in "Annie" and "Kala" and as Dorothy in "The Wiz." Mom also prepped her daughter for solos at church and with the UI Black Chorus, which she conducts.

With the Black Chorus, Davis was a "signature voice" and made her Krannert Center debut at age 7 or 8, as a vocal soloist and as a dancer.

Ollie Watts Davis said her youngest daughter is "gifted with an amazing vocal instrument of considerable size, range, warmth and beauty.

"She brings an intelligence to vocal performance that honors African-American vocal tradition and is faithful to contemporary vocal expression," she said. Mom said Davis' opportunity to tour with Lady Gaga came in response to many hours of prayerful and careful searching for the best path for her journey to becoming a performing artist.

"I am delighted that her willingness to listen to my counsel and patiently follow guidance has been rewarded with this incredible lifetime opportunity," Watts Davis said. "I regard this tour as a premiere internship for an aspiring commercial artist.

"She will see the world and learn many aspects of the business."

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Carrying the torch

Mini's Law one of few black female head coaches

By TONY BLEILL

tblleill@news-gazette.com

CHAMPAIGN — When Joliete Law left her tiny burg of Florence, S.C., in 1986 to play basketball at the University of Iowa, she had little idea how much her new coach would change her life.

Law, the Illinois women's basketball coach, chose to play for C. Vivian Stringer, leaving the warmth of her home state — and family — for the cold winters and new faces of Iowa City. Four years later, Law had become devoted to a woman who changed the path of her life.

"I just thank God daily for being in her presence," Law said. "For half my life, I've dealt with Coach Stringer." The first half of her life was spent in Florence, where Law grew up emulating two brothers who were into sports. Law named brightest in basketball.

"She would bother me," older brother Michael Law said. "I would hang around with my buddies at the gym, and I would always tell her, 'You can go today, but you can't go tomorrow.' But somehow, some way, she was always there tomorrow."

Law's best sport in high school was football, but her passion was basketball.

She wasn't highly recruited in basketball but got an offer from Stringer and jumped at it. Law didn't even own a winter coat. "It was a gut feeling," Law said. "I trusted her."

Law became an All-American at Iowa, leading the Hawkeyes to four Big Ten Conference titles. After four years playing for the Harlem Globetrotters, Law entered coaching and, one year into her college career, was asked by Stringer to join her new staff at Rutgers. Again, Law didn't hesitate to say yes.

At Rutgers, it was Law who took over the role of mentor. One of her star pupils was a point guard from Chicago, Tasha Pointer. Pointer eventually followed Law into college coaching, and is now one of Stringer's assistants at Rutgers.

"She helped my transition and my whole maturation process and made it smoother," Pointer said, "because she mentored me from a basketball perspective, as a young lady in America and then being an African-American young lady."

After 12 seasons as Stringer's aide at Rutgers — a period that included two trips to the Final Four — Law accepted

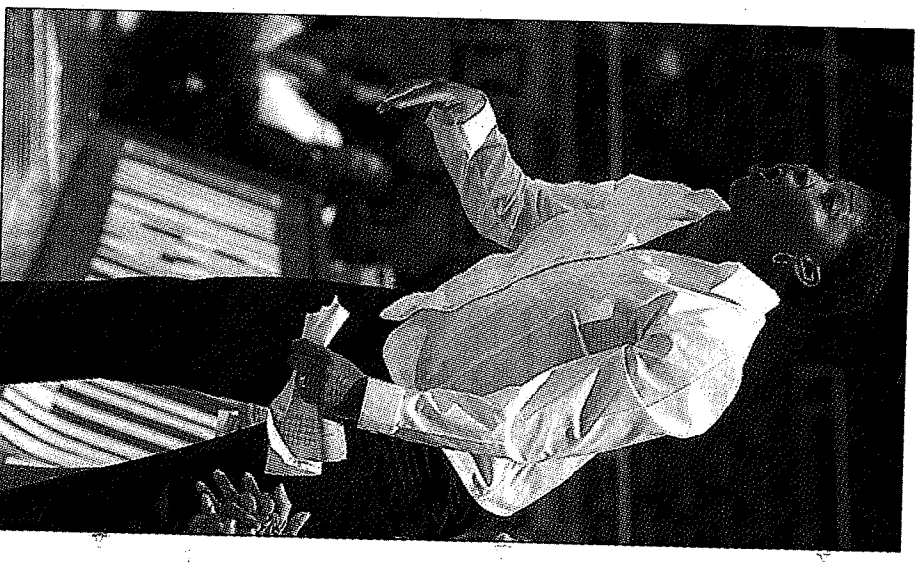
her first head coaching job at Illinois in May 2007.

There were times she wasn't sure the opportunity would arrive. Law said she turned down some head coaching positions — she declined to name them — and, most notably, was a finalist for the Charlotte job in 2007 before the school hired Karen Aston.

"You get a little discouraged that you worked so hard and you're not getting some of the opportunities," Law said. "But God has already made plans on where you're going to be and what you're going to do, so I couldn't worry about that. I just knew one day my time would come."

Law is in her third season at Illinois, and now it is her duty to affect lives, not unlike Stringer's role. It is one Law takes seriously, she said. She is one of 10 black female head coaches in the six major conferences.

"It's a remarkable time," Law said. "Right now it's my responsibility to carry that torch for African-American women. In the future, I'm sure there will be other opportunities for Afro-Americans. I'm covering both; I'm female and Afro-American."



Holly Hart/The News-Gazette
University of Illinois women's basketball coach Joliete Law shouts directions from the sideline.

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Douglas County once site of black settlement

By KIRBY PRINGLE

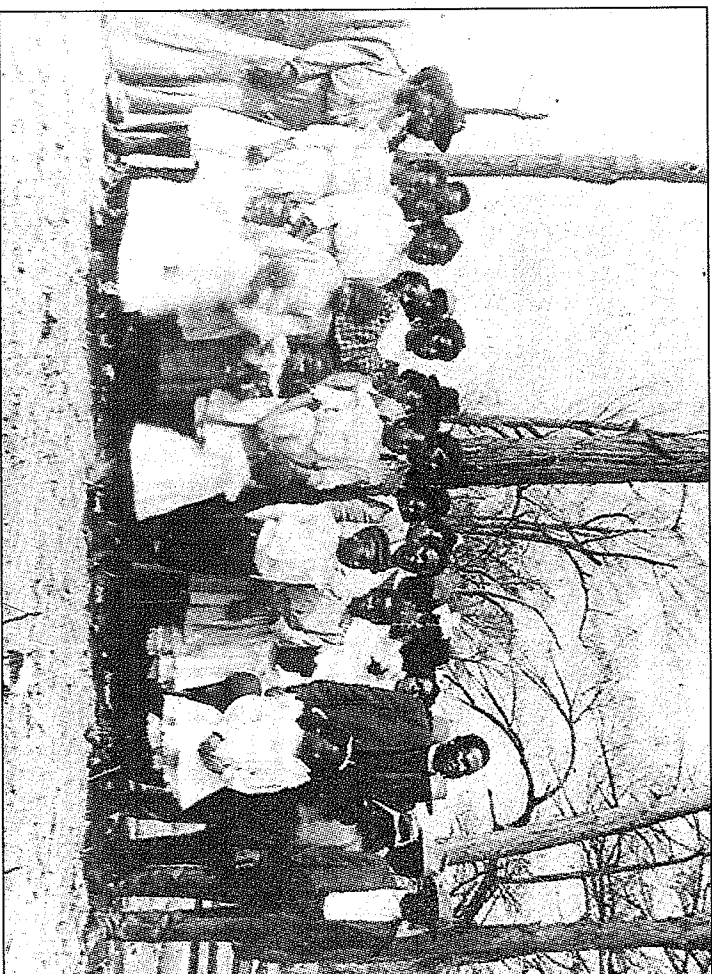
For The News-Gazette
DOUGLAS COUNTY — At the side of a crooked, desolate gravel road, a granite boulder announces a forgotten and mysterious chapter in the history of Douglas County.

Engraved on the boulder are the words “Old Negro Cemetery 1840-1876.” The marker and a broken tombstone are set in concrete on the north side of the road. There is nothing else to indicate a cemetery exists; what headstones there were are long gone — either vandalized, stolen or both. But under the surrounding brush and bramble lie still the bodies of up to 30 black men, women and children.

The cemetery is all that remains of a black settlement in Douglas County’s sparsely populated Sargent Township. The settlement was actually a scattering of shacks, tiny log cabins and a log church along Brushy Fork, a tributary of the nearby Embarras River. The nameless community, which apparently never had any businesses, was the only black settlement in East Central Illinois.

None of the homes remain and neither does the church. All signs of structures have been obliterated by time or the hand of man.

The cemetery, located on private land, is about 12 miles east and slightly south of Tuscola and about 30 miles south of



This photograph, taken around 1875, is believed to be of the blacks who lived around Brushy Fork in rural Douglas County.

Champaign-Urbana.
“I think it’s significant for Douglas County because Douglas County has

had very few blacks in its history,” said Lynnita Brown, director of the Museum Association of Douglas County.

Please turn to Page 17

But for a short time in the county’s early history — it was separated in 1859 from Coles County — black farmers and tenant farmers worked the land along Brushy Fork. That much is known, but other facts are hard to come by.

For example:

— It is not clear when the black settlers arrived or from where they came.

— No one is certain how many blacks lived in the area.

— The blacks sold their meager holdings and moved to Kansas in the summer of 1877, but no one knows for sure what prompted the move.

Some accounts have blacks coming to the Brushy Fork area as early as 1833.

However, that cannot be substantiated by any historical record. It is possible that blacks came to the area later, perhaps sometime around the Civil War. There are at least two versions of where the blacks came from:

The late Oakland historian Helen Parkes believed they were slaves set free in 1850 by Kentucky slave owner Robert Matson. Matson owned land in the area and around 1840 started bringing slaves up from the South every year to plant, cultivate and harvest crops.

Coincidentally Matson was involved in a highly publicized slavery trial in 1847

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SETTLEMENT

Continued from Page 16

ed at Charleston. A runaway family of slaves was rebored by Coles County abolitionists Dr. Hiram therford and Gideon County Ashmore. Watson, who was represented by Abraham Lincoln, sued for their urn, but lost, and the family was set free. But other longtime residents of the Brushy Fork ea have heard another version of how blacks ame to Sargent Township.

"I've always heard that a man by the name of in brought them up here from Georgia. He had ot of land. He put up shacks and they worked for n," said Marvin Frahm, who lived a quarter-mile rth of the black cemetery for 45 years.

Douglas County census records from 1860 and 70 also give credence to the notion that many of blacks were tenant farmers. Most blacks were ed as farmers with no land holdings or as labor- s. However, the 1870 census also shows a few cks with valuable land holdings. (Both census cords note whether a person was black or mulat-) A Lucy Dewey owned land valued at \$2,400 and oseph Martin owned land valued at \$1,200.

Other names of black settlers included Z. Butcher, bert Cogman, J. Fuller, James Lewis, George and cy Manuel, and Joseph and Sarah Martin. Popu- tion estimates of blacks in the Brushy Fork area nge from 30 to 70 people.

"I would imagine those people had a very difficult ne," said Ron Elam of Oakland. "I think most of em were probably very poor."

Elam, along with Frahm and others, helped place e granite marker at the cemetery. Parkes was the ime motivator behind the project. The boulder

was placed at the cemetery in 1987. Two previous attempts to commemorate the cem- etery with painted wooden markers failed. Vandals stole both signs.

Although there is no record of trouble between the blacks and their white neighbors, rumors persist that whites either tricked or pressured the blacks into moving to Kansas.

One account has whites telling the blacks of free land in Kansas to get them to leave. But other accounts say the black settlers left of their own accord in order to buy better farmland.

From her research, Parkes wrote that a group of about 70 blacks packed all their belongings, includ- ing pigs and chickens, into covered wagons and left for Lyons, Kan., in the summer of 1877.

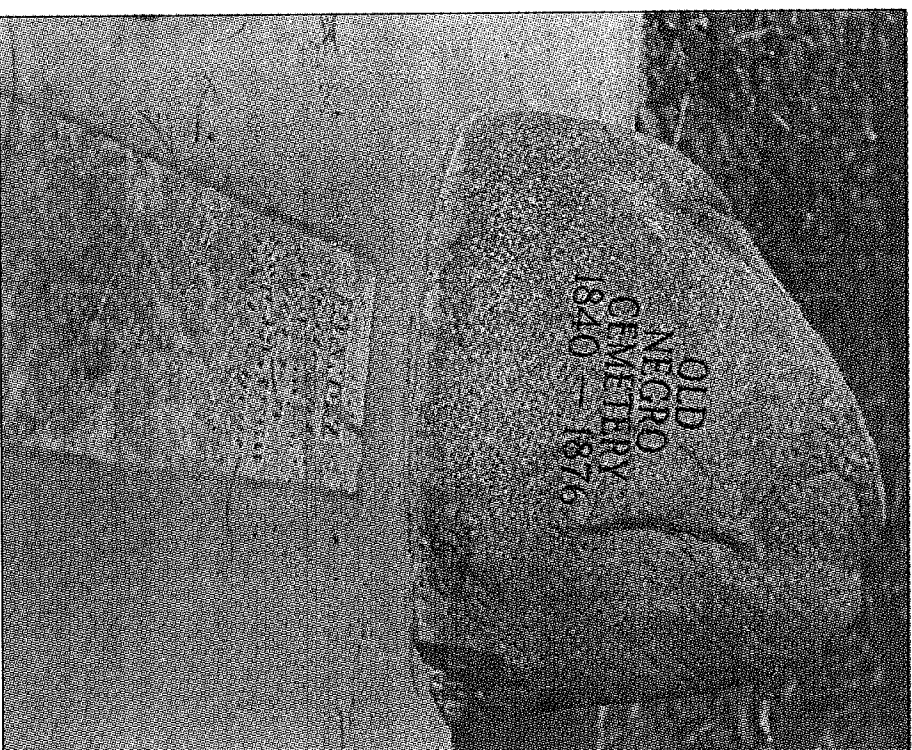
As the years passed, the cemetery was the only landmark that remained from the black settlement. And even it was turned into pasture for cattle for many years.

Frahm recalled hunting on the property in the late 1930s and seeing many simple marble headstones strewn about.

"The stones were all gone 10 years later," he said. The headstone set in the concrete with the gran- ite marker is for a Nancy James, who died Sept. 19, 1860, at the age of 76. The simple marble marker was found about 3 miles away in a pasture, but some county historians question whether Nancy James was white or black, and whether the stone even came from the cemetery. It's a debate that may nev- er be settled unless more documentation is found on the settlement and the cemetery.

The site "is just one of those mysterious things," Brown said.

This story was originally published in 1993 in The News-Gazette.



Museum Association of Douglas County
The granite marker and embedded headstone that mark the site of the cemetery of the former black settlement in the Brushy Fork area of Douglas County.

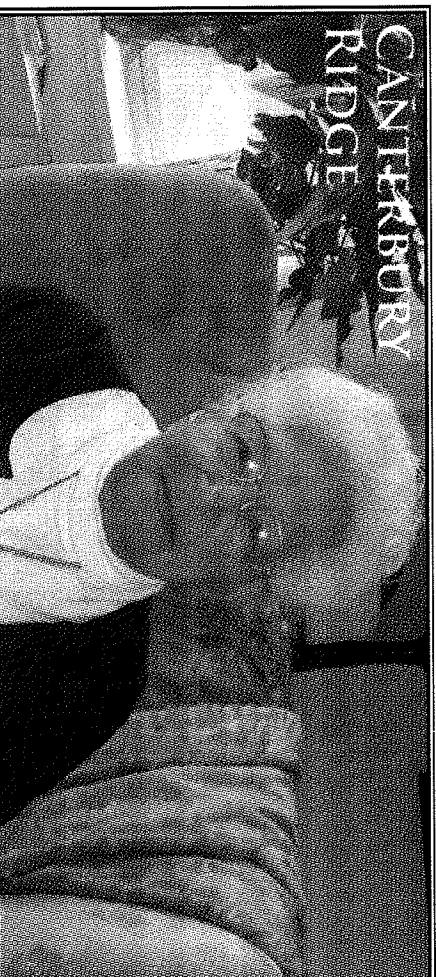
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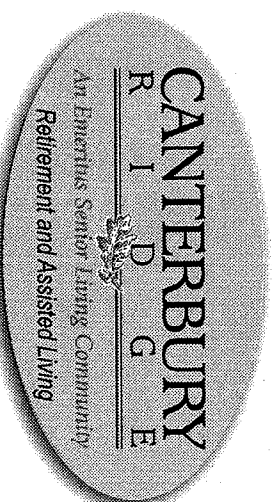


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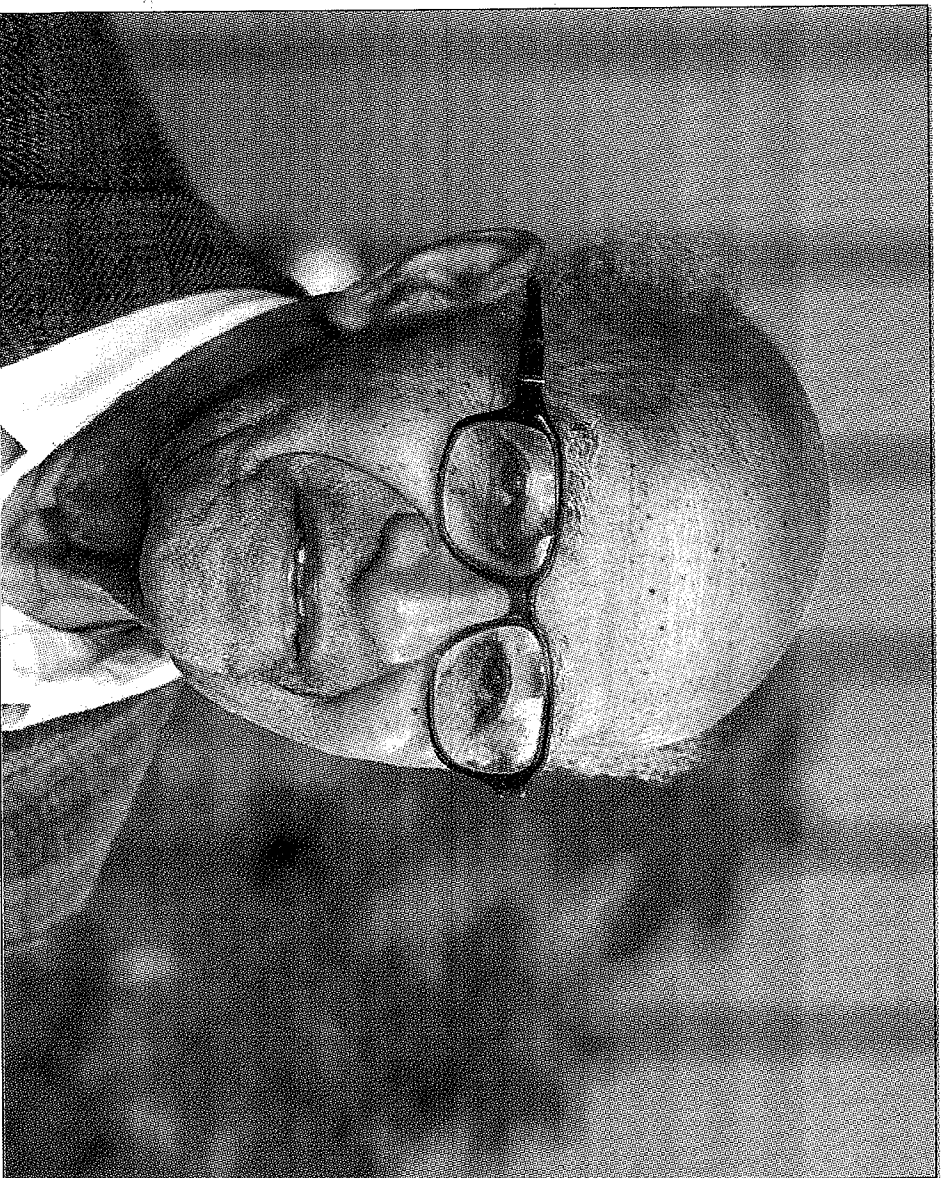


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University of Illinois Alumni Association
David H. Blackwell is one of the top theoretical mathematicians in the world — and a generous mentor to many.

Class acts

University of Illinois graduates who are luminaries in their fields

By The News-Gazette

Through the years, passage through the halls of the University of Illinois has been a step on the road to success for a host of black men and women.

Some of them are well known to the general public, such as Sheila Crump Johnson and Robert Johnson, co-founders of BET Television; Mannie Jackson, who engineered the resurgence and success of the Harlem Globetrotters; and the other Jacksons, the Rev. Jesse, who attended the UI in 1960, and his son, Jesse Jr., who earned his law degree here.

Following are some other UI grads who are luminaries in their fields.

David H. Blackwell

What would be the odds of the son of a railroad worker from Centraia — whose parents did not complete high school and

whose Depression-era teaching prospects were limited to segregated schools — becoming one of the top theoretical mathematicians in the world?

David Blackwell started as an Illinois undergraduate in 1935 and finished with a doctoral degree six years later, all accomplished at a time when residence halls were whites-only, and approximately 100 blacks were in the student body of nearly 12,000.

While he showed an early aptitude for reading, he didn't display much interest in math. At Centraia High School, Blackwell remained unimpressed by algebra or trigonometry, although he thought calculus might be useful — for engineers. But a geometry teacher, Caroline Luther, opened his eyes to the beauty and elegance of mathematics.

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GRADS

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In 1935, at age 16, Blackwell entered the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign, where his interest in mathematics continued to grow.

After earning a UI doctoral degree in mathematics in 1941 at the age of 22, Blackwell completed a year at the Institute for Advanced Study in Princeton, N.J., where he worked with, among others, John von Neumann, father of modern game theory. In 1942 he applied to 105 historically black colleges, received three offers and eventually, in 1944, landed at Howard University in Washington, D.C., where he remained for 10 years.

It was at Howard and during his summers at the RAND Corp. that Blackwell met statistician Abe Girschick, with whom he co-authored the classic "Theory of Games and Statistical Decisions," and Jimmie Savage, who helped Blackwell's career and reputation to blossom via the work they did in game theory.

Blackwell's efforts haven't gone unnoticed. He was the first black tenured faculty member at the University of California, Berkeley, and in 1965 became the first black elected to the National Academy of Sciences. In addition, several theorems have been named after him. In 1979, Blackwell was awarded the John von Neumann Theory Prize for his "many contributions in probability theory, mathematical statistics and game theory that have strengthened the methodology of operations research and management science."

Blackwell can count among his many accolades some of the most prestigious professional prizes and honorary doctorates from, among others, Harvard, Amherst, Yale and Carnegie Mellon. In 1994, the University of Illinois Alumni Achievement Award was bestowed on him by the UI Alumni Association.

Today he is professor emeritus of statistics at Berkeley, and is known as a "gentle giant" who is always helpful to anyone who can benefit from his attention.

Sharon Patton

Until 2008 the director of the Smithsonian Institution's National Museum of African Art, Sharon Patton is a black woman who reached the pinnacle of accomplishment in a profession dominated by white men.

Patton started out as an artist. As an undergraduate at Roosevelt University in Chicago, she wasn't sure if she would create art or study it, so she majored in both studio art (focusing on painting) and humanities (art history). It was when Patton came to the UI for graduate study that the balance tipped to art history.

After finishing her master's degree in Renaissance art history, Patton embarked on her professional life. Her first stop was Mankato College in Mankato, Minn. There she joined three other blacks in the art history department, bringing the total black population in that small town to six.

When a colleague suggested she teach a course on black art, Patton's first response was, "Why? Art is art; it shouldn't be separated by race." But as she read more history, she discovered that many outstanding blacks had been omitted from the canon of American art.

It was quite an eye-opener," she remembered, "so I taught the course. Of course, my class was almost all white students; it was quite a revelation."

That experience led Patton to her own revelation:

"This was in the 1970s, and Africa was becoming very important in the Black Pride movement. I began reading new publications in African art, including a book on African art by Frank Willert that was very well-written. I realized you could retrieve information and history about objects, that there were elders in the community

who remembered the rituals, remembered the history." Soon after, Patton discovered that Willert, reputedly a brilliant teacher, taught at Northwestern University, which has the oldest program for African studies in the country. Patton applied, and Northwestern accepted her immediately and offered her a fellowship.

Once she completed her doctorate, Patton continued to teach at numerous colleges and universities, including the University of Maryland, College Park; the University of Houston, Lake Forest College in Illinois; and Virginia Commonwealth in Richmond. When denied tenure at the University of Maryland, Patton became director of the art galleries at Montclair State College in New Jersey. That position started her on her trajectory of museum directorship.

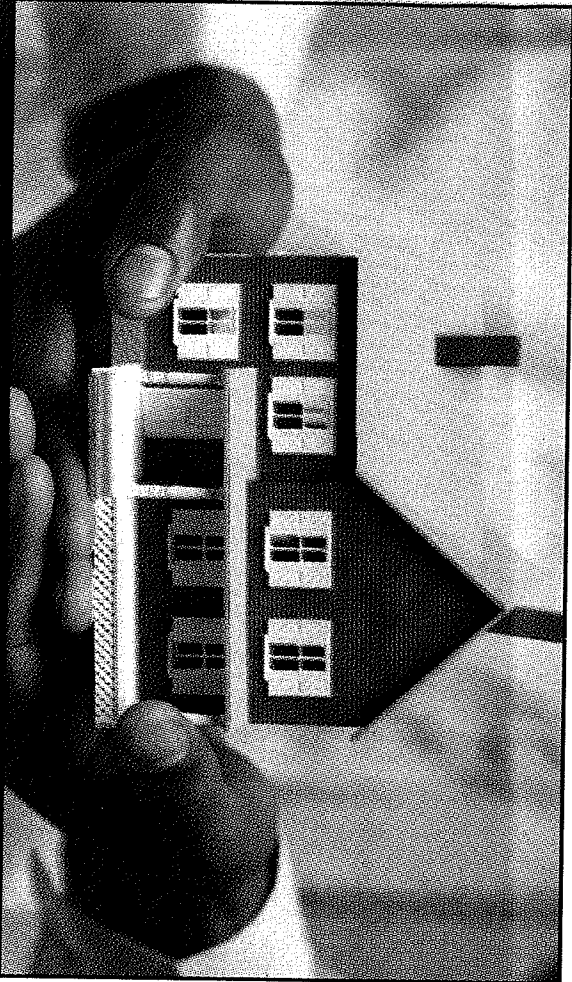
Her work at Montclair brought Patton to the attention of the museum world, and she was appointed chief curator of the Studio Museum in Harlem. During her tenure there from 1988-1991, she organized 20 exhibits, including several that gained wide critical acclaim.

After directing the Studio Museum, Patton returned to academic research, this time at the University of Michigan, where she was an associate professor, as well as the director of the university's Center for Afroamerican and African Studies. In 1998, after seven years of teaching and research, Patton returned to the museum world, this time as director of Oberlin College's Allen Memorial Art Museum.

Patton was surprised at first to be asked to head the Smithsonian's African art museum. The museum holds 7,000 objects of traditional and contemporary works of art from Africa.

Patton came to the museum in 2003. During her tenure, the Walt Disney-Tishman African Art Collection, a significant survey of 500 objects, was given to the museum, and Patton worked to broaden the public's

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knowledge of African art by increasing the number of shows on contemporary works.

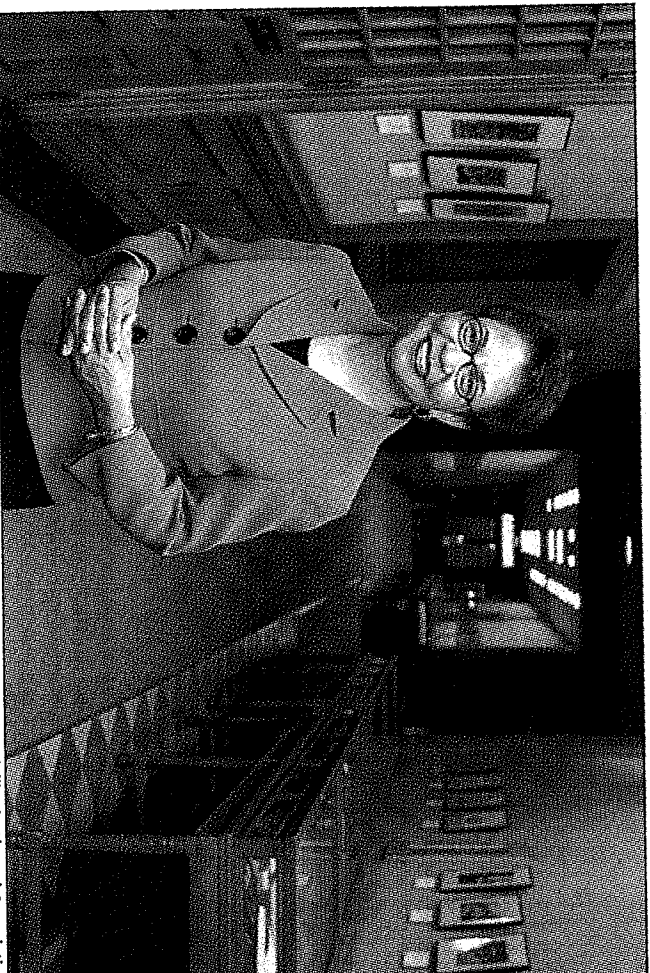
Edna Greene Medford

Abraham Lincoln's Emancipation Proclamation, a complex document with international implications that changed the nature of the Civil War from a struggle simply to save the political union of the American states to a struggle for human liberty, has been studied and argued about since the day of its publication.

Those studies continue today, and one of its foremost scholars is Edna Greene Medford.

Medford grew up in Charles City County in Virginia, among several former antebellum plantations and a strong sense of the history of slavery and the Civil War. She followed her interest to the UI, where she earned her master's degree in American history in 1976, before moving on to the University of Maryland, College Park, where she earned her doctorate in 1987. She joined the faculty of Howard, a historically black college, as an assistant professor in 1988.

"Edna Greene Medford is one of the great treasures of the American history



University of Illinois Alumni Association
Edna Greene Medford is one of the world's leading authorities on Abraham Lincoln's Emancipation Proclamation.

field," said Harold Holzer, one of her co-laborators on "The Emancipation Proclamation: Three Views" (Louisiana State University Press, 2006). "She is that rarest of scholars who combines interests in documentary history, social history, political history and forensic anthropology. And all the while, she maintains a devotion to teaching her students at the highest levels of engagement."

Since 1996 she has served as the director of history for the African Burial Ground Project, which helped establish a national monument to 16th- and 17th-century free and enslaved Africans who were buried in an unmarked cemetery in what is now New York's Lower Manhattan.

She has also appeared on several segments of the History Channel's "Civil

War Journal" and on a number of C-SPAN programs. She is a member of the board of trustees of National History Day Inc. and a member of the Lincoln Forum and the Lincoln Group of the District of Columbia, and serves on the Abraham Lincoln Bicentennial Commission's Advisory Council. She served as a member of the Scholars' Advisory panel for the Lincoln Presidential Library and Museum, and is a recipient of the Order of Lincoln, one of the highest honors bestowed by the state of Illinois.

Dina Griffin

Dina Griffin came to the UI after making a fateful choice in high school. Faced with two options — home economics and industrial education — she chose the latter, which required an architectural drafting class.

It was the first step on a path that has led her to the presidency of an architectural firm, Interactive Design Inc., that collaborates with architects and designers from around the world. Case in point: the new Modern Wing of the Art Institute of Chicago, whose cornerstone reads: "The Art Institute of Chicago, the Modern Wing, Renzo Piano Building Workshop and Interactive Design Architects, 2009."

Interactive collaborated with the internationally renowned Renzo Piano

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GRADS

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and his team for 10 years to make the 264,000-square-foot structure a reality.

After graduating from the UI in 1986, though, she wasn't entirely committed to architecture. She dabbled in engineering, real estate and law, but eventually landed a job in the facilities department at a major corporation. She got her hands on aspects of architecture she hadn't known existed. Then Griffin knew she was doing what she wanted to do.

The path hasn't always been smooth. While she was studying at Western Illinois University, an engineering professor advised her to choose another major because she would never become an architect. In 1994, she proved him wrong, becoming only the sixth licensed black female architect in Illinois. Even today she is a member of a group that still numbers less than 200 nationwide.

Griffin's projects have ranged from the Modern Wing to academic laboratories to housing for disabled veterans. She also has worked to encourage minority involvement in architecture, serving as president of the Illinois Chapter of the National Organization of Minority Architects from 1998-2000 and as NOMA Mid-West regional vice president in 2001.

Freeman Hrabowski

Marthin Luther King Jr. had a dream. Freeman Hrabowski shared that dream, and continues working to make it come true.

As a 12-year-old boy living in racially charged Birmingham, Ala., Hrabowski marched as a youth leader in King's 1963 Children's Crusade. Now he's president of the



University of Maryland, Baltimore County

Freeman Hrabowski chats with students at the University of Maryland, Baltimore County, where he serves as the school's president.

University of Maryland, Baltimore County, crusading to eliminate the race and gender gaps in math and science.

In his 12 years as president, Hrabowski has helped the 36-year-old university land federal grants to become a national leader in undergraduate math, science and engineering. Hrabowski is especially proud of his school's national reputation as a chess powerhouse. It has won six of the last seven Pan-American Intercollegiate Chess championships.

But even more notable than the statistics are the minds being cultivated at UMBC. In fields where drastically few minority students graduate and even fewer go on for advanced degrees, Hrabowski, using UMBC's Meyerhoff Scholarship Program as a springboard, has enabled hundreds of talented minority students to enter, excel and graduate in math, science and engineering. The goal is to produce minority doctoral degrees, research scientists and physicians.

When he was 13, he met a black Tuskegee Institute

dean and mathematician and was further inspired to seek an academic role.

"Every morning since, I would face the mirror and say, 'Good morning, Dr. Hrabowski,'" Hrabowski said, "but I never let anybody hear me."

He entered Hampton Institute in Virginia at 15, and despite the age disparity between himself and his peers, became a campus leader. He was studying abroad in Egypt when, without his knowledge, his class elected him their future senior class president.

Hrabowski enrolled in graduate study at the UI. In 1975, UI master's of mathematics and doctorate in education in hand, the 24-year-old Hrabowski stayed at Illinois another year as a visiting assistant professor in educational psychology and assistant dean of student services. He was also in charge of the local Upward Bound.

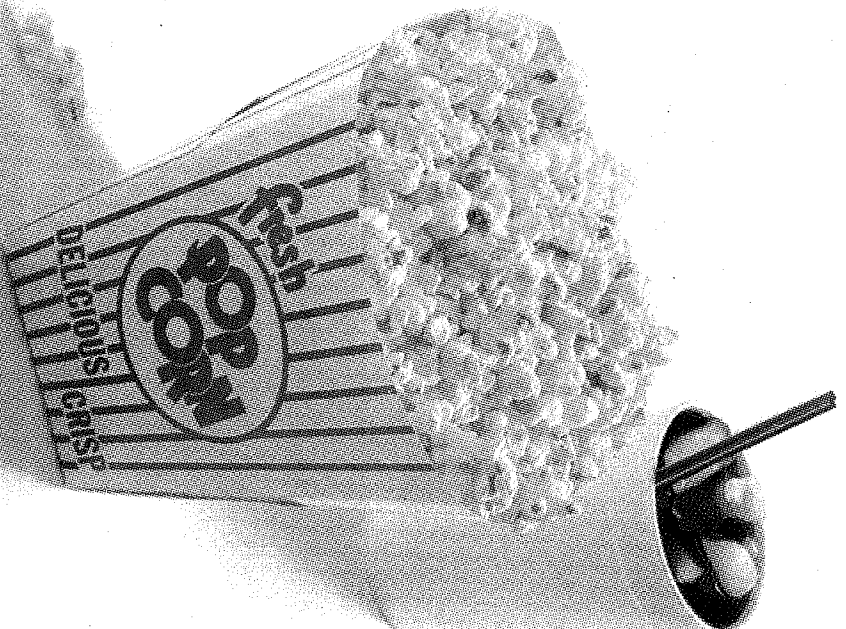
By 1977, he was a professor of math at Coppin State College in Baltimore. He was also the college's dean of arts and sciences.

In 1987, Hrabowski moved to UMBC, first as vice provost, and in 1992 as president of the mid-sized research university in the Baltimore suburbs. With the Meyerhoff program, Hrabowski set out to prove that if academically excellent minority high school students were put in a situation where they were expected to excel academically, they would rise to those expectations.

Hrabowski serves as a consultant to the National Science Foundation, the National Institutes of Health, and universities and school systems nationally.

He is a member of the American Academy of Arts and Sciences and the American Philosophical Society. He also holds honorary degrees, including most recently from Duke University, the UI, Gallaudet University, the Medical University of South Carolina, Binghamton University and Goucher College.

The University of Illinois Alumni Association contributed to this report.



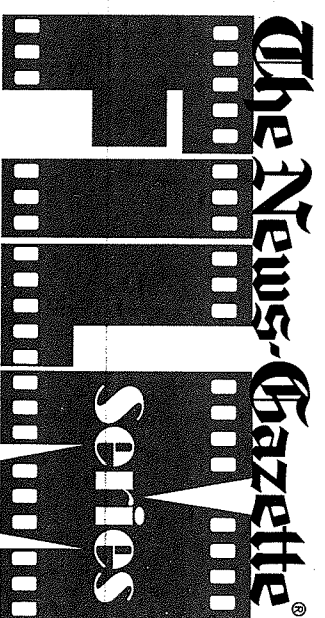
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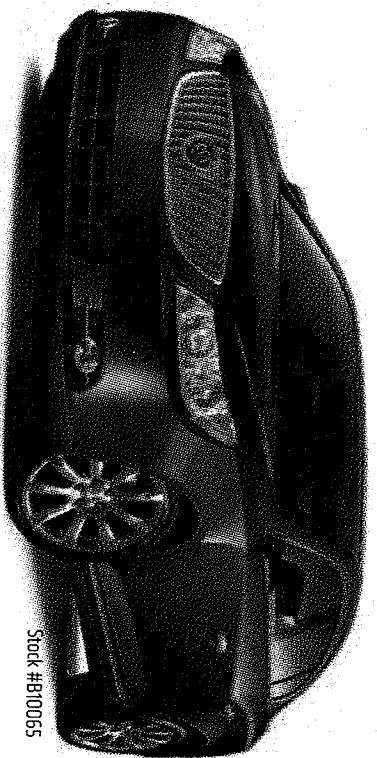
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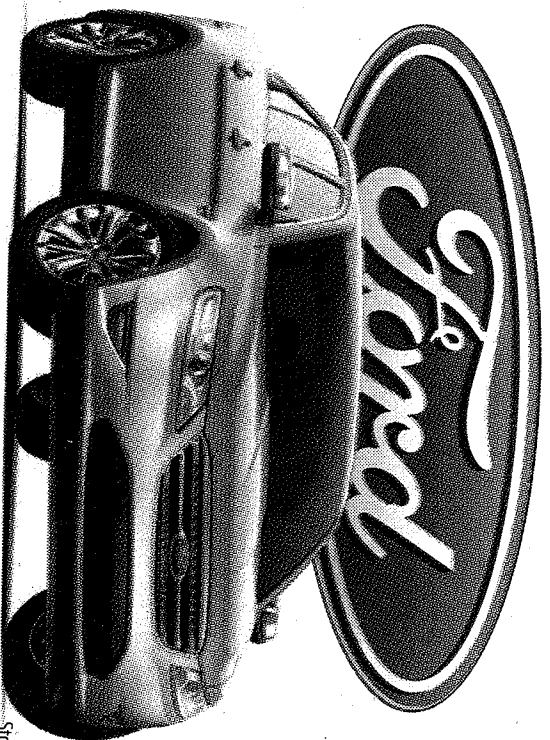
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Need a few new ideas for the kitchen? Try these family favorites

By The News-Gazette

Seems as though every family has a few favorite recipes. Here are two that will take you from dinner to dessert.

Elizabeth Vasser of Champaign devised this meatloaf recipe more than 20 years ago, and has been making it ever since, especially at large family gatherings.

"Every time we have a big dinner, or family reunion, they want me to make the meatloaf," she said.

With potatoes it constitutes a main course.

Her tip: The ground turkey stabilizes the meatloaf and keeps it from shrinking in the oven. Cooking a pinch in the microwave and trying it gives a preview of the flavor that lets the cook know whether to adjust the seasoning.

The salt in the recipe comes from the beef base and the soy sauce, so no other salt is needed.

Although there are other no-salt seasoning blends on the market, her favorite brand is sold at Big Lots, the only place she has found it.

LIZ'S FAMOUS MEATLOAF

- 3 pounds ground beef
 - 1 pound ground turkey
 - 3 eggs (well beaten)
 - 2 cups seasoned bread crumbs
 - 1 tablespoon beef base or bouillon (dissolved in 1/4 cup water)
 - 1/2 cup chunky salsa
 - 1 teaspoon onion powder
 - 1 tablespoon soy sauce
 - 1 teaspoon no-salt seasoning
 - 1 tablespoon minced garlic
- Mix all ingredients in a large mixing bowl.

Pinch off small amount and place in microwave to taste for seasonings; if more is needed, add more.

Shape into long loaf in roasting pan.

Pour ketchup over the top of the loaf.

Pour 1 cup of beef broth or water into pan.

Cover with foil and bake at 400 degrees for 45 minutes to an hour.

Crystal Womble, community liaison for Krannert Center for the Performing Arts, makes this



Sandra Gorman/The News-Gazette

Ola Clements and Crystal Womble have a pound cake recipe to tickle the taste buds.

one often.

"My mother, Ola Clements, shared this recipe with me. We get together on Sundays and do desserts," she said, "and I make this one a lot."

Noting the lack of baking soda or powder in the recipe, she said that's no mistake.

"It makes a really good, dense pound cake, very rich."

POUND CAKE

- 3 cups all-purpose flour
- 3 cups granulated sugar
- 1 teaspoon salt
- 1 cup unsalted butter (2 sticks)
- 1 teaspoon vanilla extract
- 1 8-ounce package Philadelphia Cream Cheese
- 6 large eggs

Blend cream cheese and butter together on medium speed of mixer.

Add sugar and blend well.

Add eggs one at a time, on medium speed, until the egg is blended thoroughly. Stir in vanilla extract. Don't overmix. In a separate bowl, whisk flour and salt together.

Add flour mixture to batter all at once. Blend just until flour is incorporated.

Bake in prepared Bundt or tube pan at 350 degrees for 1 hour and 15 minutes.