

***Louisiana Photographic Society Presents: Present Day Traces of Segregation,  
Civil Rights, and Collective Memory in Louisiana***

On display at Louisiana's Old State Capitol February 5 - March 14, 2026.



Mary Ann Caffery, 2025. Composite Photo.

In the 1956 lawsuit "Davis v. East Baton Rouge Parish School Board," Black parents sued the East Baton Rouge Parish School Board. This became one of the longest running desegregation cases in American history. In this composite photograph are pictured 11 of the first 28 African American graduates who desegregated four Baton Rouge high schools during the 1963-64 school year. These students courageously sacrificed their senior year to become pioneers in the desegregation movement.

These students suffered unbearable hardships during their senior years in their new integrated schools, including being ostracized, called degrading names, and not being allowed to participate in any extracurricular activities. In 2024 the EBR School Board honored the 1964 graduating class of 28 with a plaque with each of their names engraved on it and commemorated at a school board meeting. The plaque hangs in the school board headquarters today.

From Left:

Murphy F. Bell, Sr.  
Carmen L. Williams-Dwyer

Velma Hunter Jackson, D.D.S.  
Marion T. Greenup  
Charles Burchell, Ph.D.  
Freya Anderson Rivers, Ed.D.  
Merrill A. Patin, Pharm.D.  
Patricia Wells Witson  
Vervian Elaine Boyle Patin, J.D.  
Yolanda Laws  
Grace Henley Birt, CPA

### **Excerpts from**

“Tribute to the Students who Desegregated East Baton Rouge Parish Schools 1963-1964: In Recognition of their Courage and Commitment to Equality and Justice” Compiled for the East Baton Rouge Parish Schools Board Meeting April 25, 2024.

#### **Murphy F. Bell, Sr.**

Murphy Bell resides in Baton Rouge with his wife Jacqueline D. Bell. They have three children; Murphy F. Bell Jr., Dionne Bell, and Julian E. Bell. Murphy received his B.A. from southern university in political science. Occupations: The United States postal service, and Associate Broker- REMAX De La Louiziane real estate.

*At the beginning of the desegregation of the east Baton Rouge parish schools, I applied for entrance t the previously all- white Robert E. Lee high school. Upon acceptance, I felt this was the beginning of a new era in Baton Rouge, the United States, and the world.*

#### **Carmen L. Williams-Dwyer**

*I am just beginning to remember some things about that year but for the most part what happened is a blur in my mind. I recall being threatened daily—both collectively as our group of six approached and left school and alone in the isolation of my classes. At the time I was bombarded with emotions that I could not articulate. I can remember select moments when I was pleased at some event but I remember no real joy. The fact that I graduated from that high school and finished in the top 10 of my class was not enough to compensate for the daily insults that I endured that year or for the sadness, anger, and pain that I felt years after as a result of the experience.*

*I imagine that our experience at Glen Oaks different a bit from what occurred at the other schools given that many of the Glen Oaks students were from a lower socioeconomic sector of the society that was heavily influenced by the Ku Klux Klan. In our interactions with them there was no attempt at civility; there was just raw, naked aggression from the parents and their children. I remember having to go to school in a taxicab and being met by a brutish shouting mob of angry, raging, threatening parents with bulging eyes and throbbing veins ranting “Nigger.” Somehow, we walked from the taxicab to the building without getting hurt. There were only six of us and we*

*were dispersed in classes throughout the school. Most of us were in classes in which we were the only "one." Our classmates refused to sit next to us. Besides the daily taunts going to and from our classes, there were daily pranks. Someone put cherry bombs under our chairs and some students tried to get physical with us. I can remember being in the lunchroom and dumping a tray of food on a boy who tried to touch me. Tray dumping occurred several times throughout the year at different schools.*

*I can remember being shocked and appalled at my classmates' reactions to President Kennedy's assassination. When the principal announced his death, the math class erupted in cheers. I could hear the whole school cheering. It was devastating to think that these students and I were so far apart in how we viewed the world and in what we wanted for our future.*

*As the year progressed, the students and faculty learned more about us. As the students learned more about our capabilities, I was especially amused to hear and watch this big, burly football jock whine about how smart we were. We didn't conform to the stereotype painted by his father. Even though we were menaced daily by threats of physical violence and verbal abuse and nightly by threatening telephone calls, we soldiered on. Our teachers watched us apply ourselves. In light of our efforts, some of our teachers were fair and quietly encouraging. But as we approached graduation, our school counselor discouraged my going to college and I vaguely recall the principal doing the same.*

*Finally, we were ready to graduate. There was either no prom or if there was one, we were not allowed to attend. I remember only one event in the graduation ceremony: the biggest hatemonger in the senior class sang a hymn extolling the virtues of Christ and proclaiming Christian treatment of all. That was the only time that I felt bitter cynicism. In that moment, she embodied what I thought of all White people at the time: sinister, deceitful, violent, reprehensible, corrupt, menacing. I felt that we—Black people—had the moral high ground. We and our parents were seeking a better life for themselves and for those who would follow us.*

*Days after graduation, we students were honored at Mount Zion. Justice Thurgood Marshall spoke at our church and we received Bibles. Here we are full circle, being honored at Mount Zion again. But the applause and accolades should go to all in our community who participated in this effort. We students were the face of the integration effort but we had many people behind us and beside us—our parents and brothers and sisters, the NAACP, the churches, the maids and other workers who were in the homes of the city fathers, the FBI, and others. Some people regret that integration of the schools took place at all but I am glad that it occurred. I am very proud to be a part of the group of 27. This experience shaped my life in many ways. It gave me a resilience, focus, and ability to deal with adversity that I possibly would not have gained without this experience. Although I paid the price, I would definitely do it again.*

**Velma Hunter Jackson, D.D.S.**

Two Sons: Donald C. Jackson, & Brion K. Jackson Education: BA, Fisk University, DDS, Doctor of Dental Service Meharry University, Nashville, Tenn. 33 years as Practicing dentist: New Orleans, Detroit, & BR. First female dentist to practice in LA

*The passage of time can edit memories so that only what is meaningful and instructive remains. At least, that's what the past forty years have done for me. I am thankful that I have been able to place my participation in the desegregation of public high schools in East Baton Rouge Parish into a positive perspective that works for me.*

*When I reflect upon that period today, the first thing that comes to mind is that I had absolutely no hesitation about volunteering for the transfer. As a teacher who knew how difficult it could be for all of us, my mother expressed her concern about my decision. I assured her that this was what I wanted to do, even though it meant leaving my classmates and friends at Southern High during my senior year.*

*Hanging in the balance was an opportunity to attend Baton Rouge High, where the best facilities and resources the parish had to offer had been reserved for white students. It was an offer I could not refuse. Why should I? My youthful logic convinced me that I had as much right to be there as any other student.*

*Perhaps it was this mindset that enabled me to endure a year of constant harassment and go on to graduate as a member of the Baton Rouge High Class of 1964. In retrospect, the negative incidents merely strengthened my resolve to make the most of it as an academic and character-building experience.*

*In doing so, I learned the lesson of a lifetime: how to keep focused on your goals despite serious challenges and distractions. It is an ability that has served me well through the years in meeting the demands of personal and professional multi-tasking—from rearing two sons alone with a full-time dental practice to pursuing civic work that allows me to give back to the Baton Rouge community some of what it has given to me.*

*We stood on the shoulders of so many without whose support often at great personal risk—our brief journey into civil rights history would not have been possible. We owe a special debt of gratitude to our families, as well as the community and church leaders, attorneys, educators, and just ordinary citizens who encouraged us simply because they believed we were doing the right thing.*

*Although many of these individuals have passed on, I look forward to our "Trailblazers" forum on Saturday to publicly thank all of them for the first time—a well-deserved gesture of appreciation that is four decades overdue.*

### **Marion T. Greenup**

Two children: Ingrid Kelly (deceased), Ian Kelly Degrees:

BA & M. Ed from Tulane University (Newcomb College)  
MPH from Columbia University

Experience: New Orleans (1970-1981): Community Action Agency and City government positions New York 1981-present: Columbia University, Administrator - 1981-1985 March of Dimes Sr. VP - 1995-2002 Columbia University Administrator - 2002-present  
Great travel experiences: Senegal, Egypt, Ghana, Kenya, Zanzibar, China, Europe, Australia, and all over the U.S.

*When I talk about our 1963-64 school year, I refer to it as the desegregation of Baton Rouge Public Schools. It was not integration and my memories of the year are vivid images of school days of tension and turmoil. I remember the application process and the meeting with the school superintendent Mr. Aertker, the first day of school and our progress up the long walk to the doors of Baton Rouge High School, the sometimes-anxious taxicab rides to school; fights in the hallways, some excellent teachers, some mediocre teachers, and most startling, teachers who provoked and motivated students to taunt or attack us. I believed then and believe now that what we did was an important contribution to the civil rights movement.*

*Our participation required us to give up our senior year in our old high schools. This was a monumental sacrifice for me and I deeply grieved for my friends and Southern Lab School and I missed my best friend Freya who desegregated Lee High.*

*The best school day was the last day of the school year. The worse day was November 22 - the day of Kennedy's assassination. Years later in New York City I attended the annual NAACP Defense League Fund luncheon held in May to commemorate Brown v. Board of Education. I was invited by a friend and was seated between two women, one white and one black. We introduced ourselves just as the lights went down and the program began with a welcome. The speaker said, "Brown v. Board of Education changed the lives of many people in this country." The black woman on my left and I said in unison, "It certainly changed mine!" When the lights came up and we began to eat, we questioned each other.*

*She was from a small town in Tennessee and she desegregated the public schools with one other girl in 1963-64. We finished each other statements and it became clear that we shared similar and often identical experiences. She remembered November 22 with the same details that I recalled - an announcement over the school's intercom reminded the football cheerleaders and boosters to bring rain gear to the evening's football game that ended with the news that President Kennedy was dead. Her school erupted in cheers too. Our Baton Rouge experience was not as isolated as I had hoped.*

*I was encouraged by all our classmates and especially by Gail, Patricia, Doretha, Charles and Aurelius. They were models of courage for me. In addition to the support of my parents, we were fortunate to be nurtured through the school year by a few community leaders and church congregations. The opportunity to meet together again after so many years is important to me. Forty years later, the gains in civil rights are tangible but equality remains elusive. Racial discrimination is common. I believe it is important that we share our memories with young African-Americans and commemorate our year as pioneers. There is more work for all of us. We are proof that ordinary people can do extraordinary things.*

### **Charles Burchell, Ph.D.**

*I have two children from two marriages; a daughter, Kimberly Burchell McClintic and a son, Charles R.R. Burchell. My daughter is married and lives in Texas with her husband and three children (two girls and a boy). My son lives with me and his mom and attends high school. I have been living in the big easy (New Orleans) since 1981 after obtaining a PhD in psychology from LSU in 1980. I also received an M.A. from LSU and my B.A. from southern U. I currently enjoy an independent practice in clinical psychology. I do individual and couple therapy, consult with law enforcement agencies, provide workplace trauma assessments, and a few other things. I have, over the years, also dabbled in and out of radio and television journalism. The only remnant of that is acting as a correspondent reporting on the southwestern athletic conference for the American urban radio network's "Black College Football Weekly." As for interests, I enjoy movies, live theatre, live music (especially jazz), the New Orleans hornets, reading when I get the chance, internet surfing, and movie extra work when I can get it. As for as retirement...what's that?*

### **Freya Anderson Rivers, Ed.D.**

Spouse: Griffin H. Rivers 3863 Waverly Hills Lansing, MI 48917 517-484-0428

Children: Monica Ann Rivers Shariba W. Rivers Sanford W. Hawkins-Rivers LaMailede Assata Moore

Grandchildren: Ausar Sekou Kyles Asha Coincoin Hawkins-Rivers Angela, Kasi Lynn Rivers

*November 22, twenty-five years after the assassination of President John Fitzgerald Kennedy, and I'm still crying. Today I cried not for Kennedy - I cried for me. I selfishly cried for myself and my 27 Black friends for the tragedy we suffered the year he was killed. I cried today realizing for the first time how much we lost and how we suffered in the 1963-64 school year. Most of the twenty-eight didn't begin to face the trauma we suffered until our 13th year reunion. We had repressed the anger and bitterness. Many of us had forgotten the things that happened only to be reminded by another, "Remember that day when you...." After 13 years, we talked, laughed and cried about the year that turned us from innocent teens eagerly awaiting our senior year of high school to frightened and hostile adults at the ripe young ages of 16-18. I was bitter and hateful and resentful-not that I shouldn't be-but I was possessed. Freud says we repress things that remind us of pain, and I guess I'm fortunate because I was able to block the pain for 25 years and go on with my life. So, I thought.*

*I may not have remembered but that cancerous pain was eating at me and destroying my life. LSU Black Alumni had a reunion to honor the black pioneers and I would not attend the whole weekend of activities. My body would not walk on that campus as a pioneer. My mind could not recall those days of desegregation without tears. My soul was still not ready to open up and forgive. I've only talked about my feelings with two or three very close friends, and even then, I couldn't cry because my hate and anger took over and refused to allow the pain to penetrate. "I am not going to break down and cry and tell my innermost secrets. I am aggressive, strong, determined, successful, and I can and will survive without anyone else's help." (My survival technique) Yet, this morning with the replay of John saluting his father as the caisson passed, I*

*found myself crying privately, realizing I was not mourning Kennedy. I was thinking, "Damn you, Kennedy, for dying! Damn you for leaving us all alone."*

*November 22, 1963, was going to be my last day at Robert E. Lee High School and our last day for integrating the public school system of East Baton Rouge Parish, but Kennedy's assassination changed all our minds. We became determined to stay and fight it out. We were not going to quit. This was the first year of school integration in Baton Rouge, Louisiana. It was my senior year and I transferred to the previously all white Robert E. Lee High School. Lee High had a student population of about six to eight hundred (I guess) and that year there were 4 new faces - three Black males and one Black female, me. This is usually where I stop. I still block. It was the worst year of my life. I am hoping that writing about it will be a catharsis. Maybe the weight will be lifted and I can begin to live free of the hate and pain, or at the very least, maybe I'll be able to face it and survive as a whole human being.*

*That was 1988. Today, 2004, I am a different person. I no longer hate but the pain still exists. My only regret is that 50 years after the Brown Decision and 40 years after we began desegregation in Baton Rouge, African American children are still not being educated to their maximum potential. The people who suffered, died and endured the pain did so in vain. We did not cross the line to be with whites. We were trying to give all children a better educational system. We failed. We have not yet resolved the issue, but excellent education is a possibility and a reality, and I will continue to fight for it. Yes, desegregating East Baton Rouge Parish Schools was painful and a challenge, yet, it gave me the strength to become the person that I am today. I am an excellent educator who allows the dreams of children to be their only boundary.*

## **Merrill A. Patin, Pharm.D.**

### EDUCATION

Doctor of Pharmacy Degree, Xavier University of Louisiana, New Orleans, La, May, 1990  
Graduate Studies (Management), Southern University, Baton Rouge, La, 1974-1976.  
Bachelor of Science Degree in Pharmacy, Xavier University of Louisiana, New Orleans, La, August, 1970.

### PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCE

1997-Present

Co-Owner, Pharmaceutical Specialties, LLC. (Compounding-only pharmacy), Baton Rouge, La.

1990-1997

Assistant Professor of Pharmacy Practice and Director of Professional Experience Program, Xavier University of Louisiana College of Pharmacy, New Orleans, La.

May, 1995-May 1996

Acting Director of Pharmaceutical Services, Medical Center of Louisiana, New Orleans, La.  
1983-1988

Program Manager, Drug Reimbursement Division, Louisiana Medical Assistant (MEDICAID) Program, Baton Rouge, La.  
1977-1983

Pharmaceutical Consultant, La. State Department of Mental Health, Greenwell Springs, La.

1970-Present

Registered Pharmacist, State of Louisiana

## PUBLICATIONS

Patin, M., Leonard, T., Hussein, G.I., Grace, M. "Educational Program To Improve Students' Comprehension Of Pharmaceutical Education", American Journal of Pharmaceutical Education, Vol. 56 - Winter supplement 1992 (p. 928).

Forsell, T., Patin, M. "Understanding the Angry or Difficult Patient: A Challenge for Pharmacists" U.S. Pharmacist, October, 1994.

Patin, M., Forsell, Haslett, N. "Depression in The Adolescent" U.S. Pharmacists, August 1996.

## PRESENTATIONS

"Drug Utilization Review" Seminar presented At Xavier University Of La Continuing Education Program, Kenner, La. January 19, 1991.

"The Medical and Legal Issues Relating to HIV Testing". Seminar presented at AIDS - 1992 SYMPOSIUM, New Orleans, LA., April 19, 1992.

"Estrogen Replacement Therapy". Seminar presented at Westminster Tower Adult Complex, Kenner, La., August 13, 1992.

"Osteoporosis". Seminar presented at Westminster Towers Adult Complex, Kenner, La., August 13, 1992.

"Educational Program to Improve Students' Comprehension Of Pharmaceutical Education". Poster presented at the Federation International Pharmaceutique Congress, Lyon, France, September 14-18, 1991.

"Pharmaceutical Considerations Based on Drug Delivery Systems". Continuing Education Seminar presented at the St. Louis Pharmacy Association Continuing Education Program, St., Louis, Mo., March 15, 1994.

"Pharmaceutical Considerations Based on Drug Delivery Systems". Continuing Education Seminar presented at the National Pharmaceutical Association Meeting, Chicago, Illinois, May 15, 1994.

"Drug Utilization Review". Poster presented at the La. Society of Hospital Pharmacy Annual meeting, New Orleans La., March 15, 1995.

## **Patricia Wells Witson**

Married: Charles E. Witson,

Two children: Derek & Danielle, one daughter-in-law, Lisa and 4 grandchildren.

*For eight long years a desegregation case against the East Baton Rouge Parish School Board lasted. Finally, the court decision to force the school system to integrate became a reality. In the*

*summer of 1963, with the blessing of my family, I became one of 28 high school seniors selected to integrate the EBR School System. Little did I know that my decision to go to an all-white school setting was fulfilling the work and dream of my deceased grandfather, George Eames, Sr. My grandfather had made two of my sisters and myself plaintiffs in the lawsuit demanding integration and equality for black students.*

*Quickly things begin to happen, meeting with black community leaders to get support and instructions on how to deal with unforeseeable problems and summer vacation coming to an end. The anticipated day finally arrived. Bus transportation wasn't an option because of safety precautions. A taxicab blew in front of my house and with butterflies in my stomach, I stepped into the cab. Two other passengers (Clara and Beta) were to be picked up. We arrived in front of the school and there were two other cabs waiting. Across the street white demonstrators were picketing and chanting racial slurs-"like Nigger go back were you come from." The long walk to the front doors of the school was frightening. As we walked the long walkway, looking up, we could see white students and teachers staring down at us. That very moment I started to reflect back to the things I was giving up to attend this school. Once inside, we met with school officials, receiving class schedules and other instructions. I could feel the uneasiness and see the unfriendly faces. I thought to myself this is going to be a long and difficult year. Being the only black in all of my classes, except one, was even more difficult. Majority of my teachers taught; however, they did not seem to care whether or not if you understood the assignments. The only explanation I received came from tutoring sessions on Saturday morning by the efforts of community leaders or some black teachers at my formal school.*

*The disheartening part of my BRHS stay was the fact that I could not mingle and share day-to-day peer comrade. Attending the Pep-rallies was not a joy and not being able to go to the dances or other activities after school hours added more frustrations. The only consolation that I had was I could go to the sports activities, dances and prom at my formal school. However, I was just there and not displaying my talents. One of the most devastating days of my life was on November 22, when President John F. Kennedy was killed. I experienced the hatred for our race like no other. That day impacted my life so much that it left fear and anger in me for several years. My family knew what I was thinking and gave me a sermon, "you committed yourself to this cause and you are going to stick it out to the end."*

*Finally, that long awaited day in May arrived. I felt relieved for the 27 black students including myself who made a sacrifice.*

### **Vervian Elaine Boyle Patin, J.D.**

Ms. Patin has served as a lawyer, consultant, and administrator in the public and private sectors dealing with state, local and federal governmental issues. She currently serves as the Deputy Director of Litigation for the Louisiana Department of Justice. This is her third stint in the Attorney General's Office. She previously worked in the Civil Division, primarily handling cases involving state revenue and tax laws. She was the third attorney to join the Risk Litigation unit in its infancy, and handled medical malpractice and workers compensation claims.

During her time away from the Attorney General's Office, she served in Governor Edwards' cabinet as Secretary of Urban and Community Affairs and as Assistant Dean and Assistant Professor of Law for the Southern University Law Center. She has consulted with a range of governmental clients on municipal finance and business diversity issues.

Ms. Patin received her B.S in Economics, cum laude, from Southern University. She received the Masters of Public Administration and J.D. degrees from the University of Southern California. She was selected as the first Unisys Corporation Fellow to the Program for Senior Executives in State and Local Government at Harvard University. She is married to Dr. Merrill Patin, a fellow pioneer in the desegregation of the Baton Rouge schools. They are the parents of three children; Darren, David, and Alexis; and two grandchildren, Deryn and Cole.

*Upon reflection, my year at Baton Rouge High certainly helped to build a sense of resilience, fortitude, and maturity which served me well in my pursuit of higher education and career opportunities. Either the brilliance of Dr. King's strategy of non-violence seems much clearer in the context of today's world, or this is a realization due only to the conservatism that comes with aging. However, I believe that facing the adversities of the desegregation experience with non-violent responses staked our claim to the "moral high ground" and intensified our ability to persevere-both in our senior year and in life.*

## **Yolanda Laws**

Name: Yolanda Laws Marital Status: Divorced  
Number of children if any: 2 – Names of Children: Rhan E. Burrell & Ursula J. Burrell  
BBA Finance Sam Houston University-1986  
Real Estate Brokers License-1987  
Mortgage Broker-2002  
Enterprise Realty Broker/Owner-1990 to present  
Baylor College of Medicine -Office of Admission -1993 to 2001

*Community leaders came to my house to speak with me and my parents about an opportunity to help integrate the school system in Baton Rouge. It was explained that if no one volunteered, we could never complain about not having an opportunity to better ourselves.*

*A taxi cab transported the 6 of us to Glen Oaks every day for the whole year. On the weekends, tutors and moral supporters made themselves available to help wherever they could. Sometimes a math teacher from Southern University would stop by my house at night or on Saturday when I needed help with algebra.*

*On our first day at Glen Oaks a white lady waited for us out front, I thought she was on the welcoming committee, she walked over to us and said, "I hope this will be the worst day of your lives for what you are doing to white people". As it turned out. It was the best day of the whole year. Every day that followed was a trying, draining experience. There were never ending*

*degrading comments like about how ugly or how fat we were. White students held their noses like we smelled and made comments like "if a nickel won't get it a quarter will".*

*We were held hostage several times by white students blocking us in the bathroom with the school's candy machine. By the time a teacher arrived to free us, a crowd had gathered and as we were released, they laughed and clapped like they had accomplished something.*

*Class night and prom occurred without our knowledge. The day after the event we continuously heard about what a great time everyone had. A few times some boys followed the taxi when we were going home. Consequently, the taxi driver would get to an overpass and go over it, under it, then back around it several times until they gave up.*

*On the way to school one day, we saw that a cross had been burned on someone's lawn. Anyone that treated us with respect was harassed and called nigger lovers. The nice principal resigned as a result of political pressure. When the assistant assumed responsibility, harassment by white students increased. Under this "new" principal, no actions were taken when we were harassed, however, if we retaliated, everyone involved was suspended from school for a few days.*

*This whole experience was a big eye opener for me because we were hated solely for the color of our skin. I have come to realize that most of the things done to us were by teenagers simply having fun and today I am thankful that I don't harbor hate for them. Back then I thought many times of Jesus saying "Father, forgive them for they know not what they are doing". I learned from this experience that when we put our resources together and strive for our betterment, we can do great things. I support black businesses. I believe in participating in P. T. A's, Homeowners Associations, community churches, voting and continuing education. Until I have done all that I can do to help, I refuse to complain or listen to another person complain if they have not done what they could to solve our own problems.*

*Thanks to all those behind the scene, parents and supporters, who prayed for our safety, paid for the taxi, gave of their time to tutor, met with us to let us vent and just loved us through. We could not have made it without your support.*

### **Grace Henley Birt**

*After Bayou girls state in the summer of 1963, I had the opportunity to participate in the "integration" of the east Baton Rouge parish schools. I had asked to attend Istrouma high but was assigned to Glen Oaks high school. I can remember all of the unpleasant things that happened to us and today I realize that it was a 'must do' to move civil rights to the next level. After 40 years, I can see the benefit and the harm it caused our community and our people. Before Sept. 1963, I had attended a segregated black school with all black students, teachers and administrators. I had a lot of pride in what I had learned and achieved during my 11 years of schooling. Our teachers really cared for us and did all they could to encourage us to achieve and make something of ourselves. The white teachers that I had were totally different. Most were just afraid to help or show any concern for us. They realized that we were very smart students but we were still black. Looking back, I can see how difficult an experience it was and also the impact*

*that it had on my life. I was only 15 years old in 1963, 2 years ahead of my peers but I was determined to fight for equal rights as I “had seen the students at southern university fighting through the ‘sit-in” demonstrations. When I think of glen oaks, I still feel some anger at how hard it was to not be accepted by your peers-students and administrators. I had a fight that year, because a girl tried to trip me down the stairs and I pulled her with me as I fell. I was put out of school for a week but this did not stop me from excelling and being in the top 12% of the graduating class.*

*I attended LSU after graduating from glen oaks and this was also a challenge. I did meet a professor there that encouraged me to become a certified public accountant. Dr. Lucas was a key influence in my life and I am thankful for that experience. I married while a sophomore at LSU and relocated to the Los Angeles area. I completed my education at California state university, long beach. This is a majority institution, but I had a black professor who also encouraged me to become a CPA. When I look back over my life since glen oaks, I see that I was very angry for the way I was treated, I did not trust whites and I expressed that anger in the form of mistrust and confrontational behavior. Early on, I did not realize why I felt the way that I did, but many years later I realized that it was from that early on experience of “Integration”. I have had to prove myself over and over again but nothing like that experience at glen oaks high school. I look forward to meeting other students that also participated in the integration movement and sharing our stories. Thank you for taking the time to coordinate this event. It will put to rest a lot of raw feeling from the past.*