



***Celebrating The Life of Lorraine Morris
a.k.a. Lorraine Douglas
Beloved mother, grandmother,
great grandmother, aunt, cousin, friend
~In golden memories***

***Sunrise: August 19, 1917 (or September 28, 1929)
Sunset: April 26, 2008***

Lorraine Morris (b. Lurene Crawford) was born on a fishing boat in a river in Wagner, Oklahoma. Her birth was never recorded in a hospital or on any legal document. Based on the family record kept in a Bible, she was told that she was born in 1929. However, it is likely that she was born between 1917 and 1919. She never knew for sure. She attended school until the third grade. That school has since burned down with all the records included. At an early age Lorraine migrated to Grand Rapids, Michigan where she met and married Emory Douglas, Sr. They had a set of twins who were born still. Then they had Emory Douglas, jr. who is their only living child.

Lorraine moved to California between 1949 and 1951 where she later remarried Douglas Morris. She was fortunate to secure a job with The State of California as a vendor in the Juvenile Youth Corrections Facility. Although blind for most of her life (she could see slightly in one eye thanks to an operation), she still managed to prepare home cooked meals, which she would sell at her snack bar. She became so popular because of these culinary treats that her clientele grew as did the love and warmth of those who interacted with her on a daily basis. Some patrons even became her very close friends and on many occasions would travel to Reno with her. Lorraine retired after 30 years of service.

Lorraine had several brothers and sisters. She was preceded in death by her parents and siblings. Lorraine is survived by her devoted and loving son, Emory Douglas. She also leaves behind to carry on her memory two grandchildren: Dessaline Douglas and Meres-Sia Gabriel (Cyndi Douglas), four great granddaughters: Kayla and Lauren Douglas, Anelisa Clachar and Isandla Blanc, as well as many friends, extended family and relatives.

Memories of My Mom - from Son Emory

My mother was someone who left a lasting impression on people. She had so much pride. She never wanted to act like someone with a handicap. Even though she was blind, she still wore her high heel shoes. If she fell, she didn't want anyone to help her up. She'd get up on her own and keep walking. She worked at the San Francisco Juvenile Correctional Facilities cafeteria and concession stand for over thirty years until her retirement in early nineteen-nineties where she sold snacks, sandwiches, and homecooked meals which were always in demand by many of the employees during lunch hour, she was much appreciated by all the correctional facilities employees and on a personal level became good friends with many of them and would travel together to Reno and Los Vegas and awhile back before her homecoming she traveled across country with one of her good friend. On occasion, she would give food to some families visiting their children whom were incarcerated at the facility. Many of them were underprivileged and they really appreciated her generosity. For years after she retired, as long as I can remember, whenever we were out somewhere she would on numerous occasion run into someone who remembered her from that time in her life. They'd be so happy to see her and remind her of how she touched them with her kindness.



In fact, one really interesting thing happened while I was visiting Geronimo Ji Jaga in prison, prior to his unconditional release from prison for a crime he did not commit. One of the inmates, who'd unfortunately been in the system since he was a child, remembered when he was in the same Juvenile facility where mom worked. Sometimes on occasion those who were the decision makers would grant the privillage and allow some of the youth to assist my mom with dishwasing and other chores in the cafeteria it so happened he was one of those youth, he too had respectful memories of my mother. She had that kind of lasting effect on people.

During my activist days as a member of the Black Panther Party in the sixties and seventies, when Panthers came into town, sometimes they didn't have anyone close to be with during the holidays. I'd invite

them over and mama would be happy to cook for them. Her whole life she cooked with feeling because she couldn't see that well. She cooked sensitively and felt her way around the kitchen. People seemed to feel this because they always talk about how good her food was. It was like it sparked up their lives or something. All family, extended family and friends have had the same kind of loving experience.

Childhood Memories

As a young boy I'd always ask my mother about her age. As you can see, her birthday was a mystery. I'd ask and ask until finally she got tired of it. One day she just hauled off and spanked me. She told me it was none of my business how old she was, that it was grown folks business and to quit asking. So I did. But I asked my aunt once and she laughed, "Oh no! Can't tell you that. That's young blood!" Elders would tell me, "Boy you got a job ahead of you. Take care of your mama!" That's just what I did. Though my mother was strong willed and driven, I made sure to be there when she needed me. Through all her illness and deteriorating health I wanted to take care of her. I never thought of sending her to a nursing home.

My mother worked hard for everything in her life. When I was a little boy before we came to San California from Grand Rapid Michigan she had a night job at a box-making factory I'd sneak out the house some evenings and run down to the factory to peek at her working through the window. I wanted to be

near my mother. When I grew older and had children of my own she embraced each child with her whole heart. She would take Dess and Cyndi on trips with them sometimes to Fresno and San Jose with her husband. She lived to see their children- her great-grandchildren. I am thankful that she was able to have known them all and to have shared her tender love and caring with them.

Memories of My Grandmother - from Granddaughter Cyndi (Meres-Sia)

Where do I begin? First, I have always taken for granted the blessing of having two grandmothers in my life. I had such a loving relationship with them both that I would always be shocked if someone told me that they didn't get along with their grandmother very well. I didn't think such a thing was possible between grandmothers and their children. Of course in any relationships there are ups and downs. But my granny provided such a warm space for me to grow in my childhood. I could count on her. She bought me the prettiest dresses. I remember my father brought me over to the house once in elementary school and as soon as I walked into the living room, there were two of the prettiest sundresses I'd ever seen laided neatly on the living room floor (rug) to surprise me when I entered. I felt like a princess, from the way they presented the dresses to me to the care taken to pick out something that she felt suited my personality. Granny always seemed to know my style and I admired hers as a child. I liked the care she took to get herself ready before she left the house: earrings that dangled, red lipstick, scented perfumes, face powder, handbags and shoes that matched the color of her clothes. She always wore an outfit. Never something mixed and matched.

As I grew I enjoyed lying in the bed and listening to her life stories. There is nothing like a grandmother's love. Home cooked meals, sweet potato pies, stories, and wit. She was an amazing woman who demonstrated an example of beauty, pride, creativity and insight for me. I loved to laugh with her.

When I told my friends that my granny passed away they remembered her fondly. Even those who'd only met her once. "Remember those sweet potato pies she used to make?" one said. "She made the best pies!" Granny loved to cook and share with people that way. She seemed happiest when others were happy around her. She liked just being in company with others.

I am most grateful that she was able to know my children. Isandla knew her best of my two because I lived with granny when she was first born. Granny was more able at that time to play and coo with the new baby. When Anelisa came along, granny wasn't as able, but Anelisa seemed to take to her, asking my father often over the phone, "How's granny?" I am very grateful that they knew each other. This is a huge blessing in my life.

Granny, you have been a constant presence in my life. You filled my spirit with loving childhood memories and even what I don't remember with my mind, my soul remembers. You helped make me who I am. Sometimes as children when things go wrong we wonder if we were born in the right family. But I always knew I was given the right grandparents. I loved to see you and Madeline (maternal grandma) talk and sip wine. Both of you so clever, intelligent and warm. How I was blessed to have you both strong, beautiful matriarchs in my life!

Granny, I keep you with me. They say those who have died haven't really died. You are with us in the whispering leaves... and everywhere. I still feel your presences. Thank you.



Memories of Granny - from Grandson Dessaline

I remember coming over to my grandma's house as a little boy. I used to be so happy. I remember going up the stairs and into the backyard where there was a donkey made of concrete. I remember playing on this donkey for hours and pretending it was alive. That was one of my fondest memories of being at my grandmother's house. I remember a long time ago when I was young. My grandmother took me to work with her. She took me from door to door introducing me to all her co-workers. She was so proud of me, her grandson. Whenever my dad told me that I was going to my grandmother's house I would get so happy. She liked to make me steak and ice cream. Dad didn't like it but there wasn't much he could do about it. That was just my granny. Every time I came to visit, she gave me money. And then, when my kids, her great grandchildren, would come over, she would do the same for them. Even the times when she was in bed and couldn't do a lot or couldn't move, she would always ask about her great grandchildren and how they were doing. She was a very special woman.



GIVING

*Life is given to us
Then we earn it by giving it back.*

-Tagore, Nobel Prize Winner for Literature