



# THE SECOND HALF MAGAZINE

DEDICATED TO THE 50+ GENERATION

**HAIR  
CARE**

## AL JOHNSON

**HEALTH  
ISSUES**

**Singer  
Songwriter  
Producer  
Founder of  
The Unifics**

**LIVING BEYOND THE  
SHADOWS**

**10 Tips for losing  
weight at 50+**

**Sports Talk**  
LFBall on Hoops

**Judith A. Cook**  
**50 + CENTERFOLD**  
**Sexy & Gorgeous**

**Dee Dee Sharp**  
**1962 Mashed Potato Time**

SUMMER 2011

www.50secondhalfmagazine.com \$3.00

# Greetings from the Publisher

Welcome to our “summer” issue of 50+THE SECOND HALF MAGAZINE. In each issue, we try to bring you 50+ news you can use. We are in the most wonderful part of our lives, a time to celebrate our accomplishments and contributions to society. A time to rejoice be active in our communities, and with our families and friends. It is a time to travel if possible, and do whatever you want to do.

In this edition of 50+THE SECOND HALF MAGAZINE we are covering topics ranging from health, International people, charity events, hair care, to entertainment with you specifically in mind. Our cover story is about the great Al Johnson, founder of The Unifics, who many in the music industry and outside consider a musical genius, from Washington, DC via Newport News, Virginia. Al talks about yesterday, today and the future.



On October 22, 2011 we will hold our First Annual Black Tie Charity Affair (see flyer pg.5). We hope you will join us for this great cause. The reason behind this is

in memory of my dear belated mother Thelma T. Griffin 1935-2008, who had kidney disease, my sister Diane Carthens who is now living with Lupus and others living with Lupus and Kidney disease. If you can, please join us as we raise money to help fight lupus and Kidney disease. The foundations truly need your help! Will you join us?

**Lupus** is a chronic inflammatory disease that can affect various parts of the body, especially the skin, joints, blood, and kidneys. The LFA relies on the generous support of individuals, who recognize LFA’s important role as the national leader in lupus. Join us by helping the LFA bring hope to individuals with lupus and their families.

**Chronic kidney disease** includes conditions that damage your kidneys and decrease their ability to keep you healthy. If kidney disease gets worse, wastes can build to high levels in your blood and make you feel sick. Your gift will help fund research, patient service activities, and public and professional education programs.

Now, sit back in enjoy this AWESOME magazine. Please feel free to email me at [pab@50plusthesecondhalfmagazine.com](mailto:pab@50plusthesecondhalfmagazine.com) or visit our website at [www.50plusthesecondhalfmagazine.com](http://www.50plusthesecondhalfmagazine.com).

*Thank you*  
**Patricia Atkinson-Brown**  
**Publisher**

EDITOR -IN-CHIEF  
PATRICIA ATKINSON-BROWN

EXECUTIVE EDITOR  
Andra Henderson  
Lydia Brown

SALES & MARKETING DIRECTOR  
Sonny Brown

SENIOR WRITERS  
Patricia SMITH  
L.L. Jordan  
Arthur Evans  
L. Sessoms  
Steven Allen  
Addie Hall-Scott  
Orlandus Thomas

PHOTOGRAPHER  
Renee Wilhite  
Khari Vine

ART DIRECTOR  
CJ Wilson

RESEARCHER  
Myrtle Daye

#### Contributors

Al Johnson and the Unifics, Jeff Majors, Thelma T. Griffin, Ceaser Atkinson, Diane Carthens, Orlandus Thomas, Beverly Lindsay-Johnson, Steven Allen, Ray Apollo Allen, Lydia Brown, Judith A. Cook, JoAnn Atkinson, Lincoln Sessoms, Rev. Sam W. Harris, Lupus Foundation, National Kidney Foundation of Maryland, Dee Dee Sharp, Dave Bass, Mark Down, Brother Ron Sharp, Kelley Putman Jr., Barry Flechter, Renee Wilhite, Angel Guzman, and Janet Odunusi.

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DEDICATED TO THE 50+ GENERATION

## Features

### 9. LIVING BEYOND THE SHADOW

"I see the fear and insecurity that's in your soul. I see the passion in your pursuit for something better."

### 10. INTERNATIONAL SECTION - NEW YORK RICAN

Angel Guzman, talks about his Puerto Rican (PR) background. "New York City continues to be the home of the largest PR community in the US."

### 12. THE 50+ CENTERFOLD

Judith A. Cook, 61 years beautiful. Raised in Newark New Jersey and loving life.

### 13. THE UNIFICS - AL JOHNSON

Al talks about his big hit "*The Beginning of My End*." "Is it a true story? Did it really happen?"

### 16. DEE DEE SHARP

"I can't dance a lick. I faked it all these years. My brother taught me a few little things. Praise God."

### 18. DAVE BASS

A native of Lakewood, NJ. Dave began his skills in the church choir at an early age.

### 20. THE TIES THAT BIND

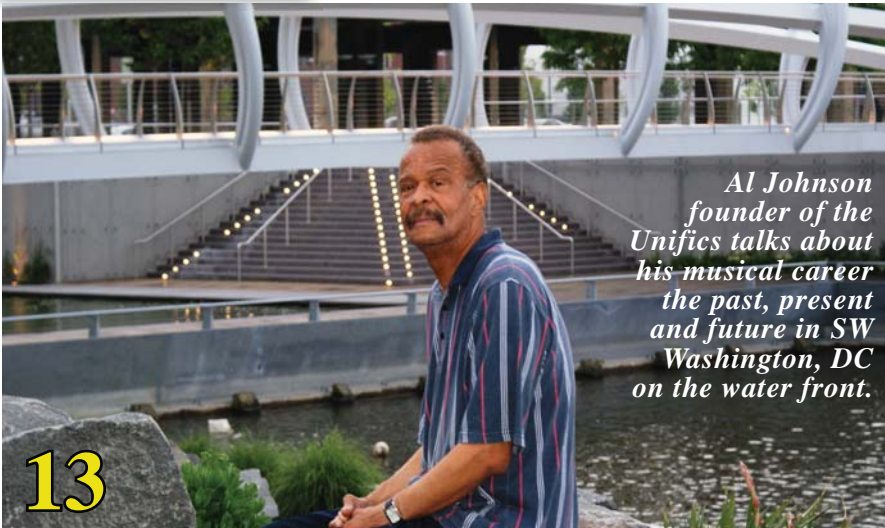
He dreamed of playing professional football, running track, and becoming a musician.

### 18. FACING THE INEVITABLE

We can't stay here.

**\*Correction** Homeless "Not Helpless" (Spring issue) was written by Ms. Addie Hall-Scott.\*

50+THE SECOND HALF MAGAZINE



*Al Johnson founder of the Unifics talks about his musical career the past, present and future in SW Washington, DC on the water front.*

## Departments

### 2. GREETINGS FROM THE PUBLISHER

In this issue Al Johnson talks about today, yesterday, and future. We are having our First Black Tie Charity event. Come out and support a great cause. Lupus and Kidney Foundations.

### 4. OUR FIRST ANNUAL BLACK TIE CHARITY AFFAIR

An evening with Harold Melvin's Blue Notes, DC own Skip Mahoney and the Causuals, William "Poggie" Hart (Delfonics), Eban Brown (Stylistics) and so many others. You don't want to miss affair!

### 5. HAIR CARE

Press -N- Curl Wax - Carrot Oil

### 6. SAVE THE CHILDREN

Rev. Sam W. Harris Director of Rescue Liberian Children Inc. needs your help.

### 7. FOR YOUR HEALTH - SARCOIDOSIS

Sarcoidosis is a disease of unknown cause that leads to inflammation. It can affect various organs in the body. What causes Sarcoidosis?

### 11. 10 REALISTIC TIPS FOR LOSING WEIGHT

Plan to have your favorite foods once or twice a week so that you have something to look forward to.

## JUST MY OPINION

### 19. ARE WE FORGETTING CLASSIC R&B MUSIC - (my opinion)

"It is so unfortunate that we see not only age discrimination with record companies, but now also with national concerts and events."

### 21. JUST MY OPINION

LFBall on HOOPS...Great entertainment but at what expense!

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SUMMER 2011 3

THE SECOND HALF MAGAZINE PRESENT  
**50+** 1<sup>st</sup> ANNUAL  
LUPUS & KIDNEY FOUNDATIONS

*Black Tie Affair*  
FUNDRAISER

PATAPSCO ARENA  
3301 ANNAPOLIS ROAD BALTIMORE, MD 21230

OCTOBER 22, 2011  
6:30pm - 12am

*Featuring*

HAROLD MELVIN'S BLUE NOTES  
W/ SHARON PAIGE  
SKIP MAHONEY & THE CASUALS

*With...*  
DJ RON V

*Special Guest:*  
WILLIAM HART  
OF THE DELFONICS

*And More...*

THE SECOND HALF MAGAZINE PRESENT  
**50+** 1<sup>st</sup> ANNUAL  
LUPUS & KIDNEY FOUNDATIONS

*Black Tie Affair*  
FUNDRAISER

*Silent Auction:*  
6:30PM

*Dinner:*  
7:00PM

*Tickets:*

SINGLE: \$60\*  
COUPLE: \$90\*  
V.I.P.: \$100\*

*Contact Information:*

PATRICIA 240.401.1758  
JOANN 202.704.0202  
MISCHELE 202.705.7618  
DOROTHEA 301.499.2813



National Kidney  
Foundation  
of MARYLAND

\*TICKETS AVAILABLE ONLINE

WWW.50PLUSTHESECONDDHALFMAGAZINE.COM

**HELP US HELP OTHERS!**

Harold Melvin's Blue Notes are being replaced by **Ray, Goodman and Brown**

An evening you will not want to miss!

An evening for a worthy cause that you will not only enjoy, but be proud that you came out to make a difference.

Supporting two great causes, and networking all under one roof!

Order your tickets online at the website provided below.

*Please look at the flyer for additional information.*

[www.50PlusTheSecondHalfMagazine.com](http://www.50PlusTheSecondHalfMagazine.com)

*The ultimate in*  
**Protection and Hold**  
**Press-N-Curl Wax:**  
**Featuring Carrot**  
**Oil!**

This humidity Resistant curling wax protects the hair from hot styling, hot weather, and hot flashes ... any kind of heat. The special blend of carrot oil, soy bean oil and bees wax helps to penetrate natural or chemically altered hair giving added moisture and protection against pressing comb, flat irons and curling irons.

*“Press-N-Curl Wax renders the hair silky smooth with a long lasting satin finish.”*

Message a small amount throughout your hands, massage evenly thought out each section of hair that has been wrapped, set or to create a spiky look on straight hair, so that you feel a very light coating throughout the texture. After blow drying the hair approximately 75 percent dry, massage the Curling Wax in, and finish or complete the blow-dry process, (blow-dry in the direction of the style you desire) this will help with distributing the product evenly. At this point, you may decide if you want firm curls or soft curls.

If you want to keep your curls soft, spray a little of my new Lasting Desire, light workable aerosol shaping spray, (normally used on my wigs) on the section before pressing, using the flat irons or curling irons. This will help resist the moisture in the air, hold the press or curl longer and keep the hair soft. For a more firm hold use the Memory Mist a non-aerosol medium hold, holding spray which can be used for firmer curls or press. Hold the spray 10-12 inches away from the hair to prevent over use. The harder the press, the more curling wax you should place on the hair.

I use Press-N-Curl Wax on relaxed hair as well, for a more lasting curl and style. This product really makes the difference in the shine, durability, and longevity of your hair design. Try my Silk-N-Shine finishing spray for extra sheen. Try my new Risque` Spray for a very light sheen (normally used on my wigs).

I suggest that you apply the Press-N-Curl wax on your hair before you go swimming and place a swim cap over it. This

product very readily shampoos out with any of my Moisturizing or Stimulating Shampoos.

*“Hold the spray 10-12 inches away from the hair to prevent over use.”*

Thanks for your support!  
 Where healthy hair begins,  
 Barry

**Carrot Oil!**



# Rescue Liberian Children INC.



Rev. Sam W Harris - Director

## Rescue Liberian Children INC.

4002 Larga Vista Court, Suite 100  
Bowie, MD 20721

### OUR NEEDS:

- Medical supplies
- Non perishable food
- Clothing and shoes
- School materials, computers, printers
- Financial donation
- Sanitary & hygienic supplies
- Toys

### About Rescue Liberian Children

Rescue Liberia Children, is a Christian non-denominational, US 501 (C) (3) nonprofit organization working to help produce self sufficient and productive children in Liberia.



All donations are tax deductible  
and payable to

## Rescue Liberia Children

4002 Larga Vista Court, Suite 100  
Bowie, MD 20721 • Tel: 240-778-4977

or

P.O.Box 415  
Glenn Dales, MD 20769  
Tel: 240-472-6271



### Our Mission:

to promote, provide needed care, support and conduct health and HIV/AIDS educational awareness. We're all volunteers with over 90% of our income going to mission. Our mission is assist the poor, disadvantaged and war affected Liberian children in making real, lasting and positive changes in their lives.

You can give to help fight hunger, diseases and poverty through your generosity which will help change the lives of many children. They are the future leaders of our country and are precious to us.

Please send your tax deductible  
donation today!

### Background:



Rev. Sam W Harris - Director

Liberia suffered a senselessly civil conflict for 14 years that killed over 250,000 people and displaced 1.4 million families. As a result, there are thousands of abandoned and disadvantaged children living in orphanages and some roaming the streets of Liberia with no care. Often these children are orphans because of the devastation of war that brings about poverty and unpleasant societal conditions. When these infants are not provided the proper parental guidance for growth, the consequences could be quite unbearable to society. This lack of attention may also lead to poor physical, emotional and intellectual development.



The consequences of war to children, especially detaching from parents, leaves lasting memories with the victims that can be challenging to their growing processes if nothing is tangible done. For the most part, these children have been exposed to mental and physical abuses and traumatized. Because of their vulnerability, they are exposed to various illnesses include but not limited to HIV/AIDS, malaria and other infectious diseases.

We must see these orphans are the future generation and potential leaders for Liberia. If we fail to act swiftly to provide the needed care, we stand losing a good portion of the next generation. The Rescue Liberian Children (RLC), Inc. sees this as a challenge to humanity to help improve the conditions of these children by providing shelters and other basic needs to help them grow in an atmosphere that ensures their usefulness in the new Liberia. This is what RLC will champion for the sake of humanity.



*If you put an end to oppression, to every gesture of contempt, and to every evil word, if you give food to the hungry and satisfy those who are in need, then the darkness around you will turn to the brightness noontday sun.*

Isaiah: 58: 9-10



# FOR YOUR HEALTH

## ABOUT SARCOIDOSIS

Overview  
Outlook

The  
Causes

### What Do I Need to Know About Sarcoidosis?

#### WHAT IS SARCOIDOSIS?

Sarcoidosis (sar-koy-DO-sis) is a disease of unknown cause that leads to inflammation. It can affect various organs in the body.

Normally, your immune system defends your body against foreign or harmful substances. For example, it sends special cells to protect organs that are in danger.

These cells release chemicals that recruit other cells to isolate and destroy the harmful substance. Inflammation occurs during this process. Once the harmful substance is destroyed, the cells and the inflammation go away.

In people who have sarcoidosis, the inflammation doesn't go away. Instead, some of the immune system cells cluster to form lumps called granulomas (gran-yu-LO-mas) in various organs in your body.

#### OVERVIEW

Sarcoidosis can affect any organ in your body. However, it's more likely to occur in some organs than in others. The disease usually starts in the lungs, skin, and/or lymph nodes (especially the lymph nodes in your chest).

The disease also often affects the eyes and the liver. Although less common, sarcoidosis can affect the heart and brain, leading to serious complications.

If many granulomas form in an organ, they can affect how the organ works. This can cause signs and symptoms. Signs and symptoms vary depending on which organs are affected. Many people who have sarcoidosis have no symptoms or mild symptoms.

Lofgren's syndrome is a classic set of signs and symptoms that is typical in

some people who have sarcoidosis. Lofgren's syndrome may cause fever, enlarged lymph nodes, arthritis (usually in the ankles), and/or erythema nodosum (er-i-THE-ma no-DO-sum).

Erythema nodosum is a rash of red or reddish-purple bumps on your ankles and shins. The rash may be warm and tender to the touch.

Treatment for sarcoidosis also varies depending on which organs are affected. Your doctor may prescribe topical treatments and/or medicines to treat the disease. Not everyone who has sarcoidosis needs treatment.

#### OUTLOOK

The outcome of sarcoidosis varies. Many people recover from the disease with few or no long-term problems.

More than half of the people who have sarcoidosis have remission within 3 years of diagnosis. "Remission" means the disease isn't active, but it can return.

Two-thirds of people who have the disease have remission within 10 years of diagnosis. People who have Lofgren's syndrome usually have remission. Relapse (return of the disease) 1 or more years after remission occurs in less than 5 percent of patients.

Sarcoidosis leads to organ damage in about one-third of the people diagnosed with the disease. Damage may occur over many years and involve more than one organ. Rarely, sarcoidosis can be fatal. Death usually is the result of complications with the lungs, heart, or brain.

Poor outcomes are more likely in people who have advanced disease and show little improvement from treatment.

Certain people are at higher risk for poor outcomes from chronic (long-term) sarcoidosis. This includes people who have lung scarring, heart or brain complications, or lupus pernio (LU-pus PAR-ne-o). Lupus pernio is a serious skin condition that sarcoidosis may cause.

Research is ongoing for new and better treatments for sarcoidosis.

#### WHAT CAUSES SARCOIDOSIS?

The cause of sarcoidosis isn't known. More than one factor may play a role in causing the disease.

Some researchers think that sarcoidosis develops when your immune system responds to a trigger, such as bacteria, viruses, dust, or chemicals.

Normally, your immune system defends your body against foreign or harmful substances. For example, it sends special cells to protect organs that are in danger.

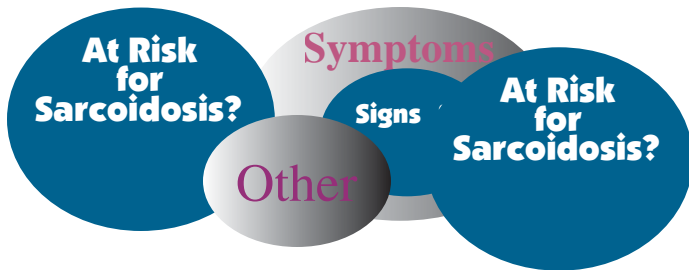
These cells release chemicals that recruit other cells to isolate and destroy the harmful substance. Inflammation occurs during this process. Once the harmful substance is destroyed, the cells and the inflammation go away.

In people who have sarcoidosis, the inflammation doesn't go away. Instead, some of the immune system cells cluster to form lumps called granulomas in various organs in your body.

Genetics also may play a role in sarcoidosis. Researchers believe that sarcoidosis occurs if:

- You have a certain gene (or certain genes) that raise your risk for the disease
- —And—
- You're exposed to something that triggers your immune system

Triggers may vary depending on your genetic makeup. Certain genes may influence which organs are affected and how severe your symptoms are.



Researchers continue to try to pinpoint the genes that are linked to sarcoidosis.

### WHO IS AT RISK FOR SARCOIDOSIS?

Sarcoidosis affects people of all ages and races. However, it's more common among African Americans and Northern Europeans. In the United States, the disease affects African Americans somewhat more often and more severely than Whites.

Studies have shown that sarcoidosis tends to vary in different ethnic groups. For example, eye problems due to the disease are more common in Japanese people.

Lofgren's syndrome, a type of sarcoidosis, is more common in people of European descent. Lofgren's syndrome may involve fever, enlarged lymph nodes, arthritis (usually in the ankles), and/or erythema nodosum. Erythema nodosum is a rash of red or reddish-purple bumps on your ankles and shins. The rash may be warm and tender to the touch.

Sarcoidosis is somewhat more common in women than in men. The disease usually develops between the ages of 20 and 50.

People who have certain jobs also may be at higher risk for sarcoidosis. Examples include:

- Health care workers
- Elementary and secondary school teachers
- People whose jobs expose them to agricultural dust, insecticides, pesticides, or mold
- Suppliers of building materials, hardware, or gardening materials
- Firefighters

People who have a family history of sarcoidosis also are at higher risk for the disease.

### WHAT ARE THE SIGNS AND SYMPTOMS OF SARCOIDOSIS?

Many people who have sarcoidosis have no symptoms or mild symptoms. Often, the disease is found during a chest x ray done for another reason (for example, to diagnose pneumonia).

The signs and symptoms of sarcoidosis vary depending on which organs are affected. Signs and symptoms also may vary depending on your gender, age, and ethnic background. (For more information, see "Who Is At Risk for Sarcoidosis?")

### COMMON SIGNS AND SYMPTOMS

In both adults and children, the disease most often affects the lungs. If granulomas (inflamed lumps) form in your lungs, you

may wheeze, cough, feel short of breath, or have chest pain. Or, you may have no symptoms at all.

Some people who have sarcoidosis feel very fatigued (tired), uneasy, or depressed. Night sweats and weight loss are common symptoms of the disease.

Common signs and symptoms in children are fatigue, loss of appetite, weight loss, bone and joint pain, and anemia. Children who are younger than 4 years old may have a distinct form of sarcoidosis. It may cause enlarged lymph nodes in the chest (which can be seen on a chest x ray), skin lesions, and eye swelling or redness.

### OTHER SIGNS AND SYMPTOMS

Sarcoidosis may affect your lymph nodes. The disease can cause enlarged lymph nodes that feel tender. Sarcoidosis usually affects the lymph nodes in your neck and chest. However, the disease also may affect the lymph nodes under your chin, in your armpits, or in your groin.

Sarcoidosis can cause lumps, ulcers, or areas of discolored skin. They may itch, but they don't hurt. These signs tend to appear on your back, arms, legs, and scalp. Sometimes they appear near your nose or eyes. These signs usually last a long time.

Sarcoidosis may cause a more serious skin condition called lupus pernio. Disfiguring skin sores may affect your nose, nasal passages, cheeks, ears, eyelids, and fingers. These sores tend to be ongoing. They can return after treatment is over.

Sarcoidosis also can cause eye problems. If you have sarcoidosis, it's important to have an annual eye exam. If you have changes in your vision and can't see as clearly or can't see color, call 9-1-1 or have someone drive you to the emergency room.

You should call your doctor if you have any new eye symptoms, such as burning, itching, tearing, pain, or sensitivity to light. Signs and symptoms of sarcoidosis also may include an enlarged liver, spleen, or salivary glands.

Although less common, sarcoidosis can affect the heart and brain. This can cause a number of symptoms, such as abnormal heartbeats, shortness of breath, headaches, and vision problems. If sarcoidosis affects the heart or brain, serious complications can occur.



### Resources:

[http://www.nhlbi.nih.gov/health/dci/Diseases/sarc/sar\\_what.html](http://www.nhlbi.nih.gov/health/dci/Diseases/sarc/sar_what.html)





## Living Beyond The Shadows

Shadows... many of us have lived in them. A shadow is merely a dark dis-figured representation or image of a physical object or person. A shadow never stands upright, nor is it made of any "real" substance. It can only exist where there is low level or no lighting or illumination. In this article, this illumination represents true self-knowledge and perception and the darkness represents the lack there of. A shadow's only characteristic is the darkness it's identified by. One must note that the least bit of light dispels and overpowers any shadow. Many of us have lived our lives as shadows or hiding in shadows as vague misrepresentations and dis-figured images of who we are really created to be. We often do adopt the behavior just to become someone that's accepted amongst our families and peers. More often than not, this so-called acceptance comes at the expense and sacrifice of the real you not being embraced, only your emotions.

To my sisters out there (wives, mothers, girlfriends and others), first of all I want stand up and apologize on behalf of all the men that have been a part of your life that have mistreated and mishandled you. This mishandling has come because of our own shadowy issues and personal dysfunctions. I see you everyday strong woman striving to maintain your elegance in a not so elegant society. You're special, even though I see the struggles behind the smiles. I hear the hurt and pain that's in your heart as you speak and the temporary escape when you laugh. I see the fear and insecurity that's in your soul. I see the passion in your pursuit for something better. Know that you are not alone. There are many like you around you everyday. I understand your pain and the pressures that are on you to perform. I know that you get tired, feel like no one understands or even cares at times, and yet you still press on. Just for the record, you are not an island that has to be isolated and left unto yourself to continuously be

slapped by wave after wave of the constant pressure that erodes away at your borders. I see you exerting your strength with the strain of motherhood. I see you in a self-guarded state, desperately determined to not be the next victim or prey of "Mr. Wrong."

Though these may be the facts, the truth can always outweigh the facts. The truth is, you're more than just a mother (and father in some cases) of your children. You are the mother of humanity. God has so equipped you and entrusted only you to carry in your womb and give birth to all generations of the human race. The truth is, you are more than just a sister or an aunt. You are the nurturer and caregiver of the human race. Even if you've aborted a child (in which God has forgiven you), you've not aborted your mission to nurture and care for humanity the way that you do. Truth is, if you had given up or had failed, humankind would have failed. Our very existence has been carried in your womb, replenished from your bosom, carried in your heart, and loved by your hands. The truth is, you are more than just a homemaker or just a spouse. You are the essence of love and warmth. Without you, home would just be another house, an outer shell void of the kind of love that bears life within. It would be like an orchard in the spring without the sweet fragrance of ripened fruit or the beautiful presence of flowers. It would be like an autumn season that's without the breath-taking array of colorful leaves and foliage decorating nature to the "umth degree" or the summer without a breeze. It really doesn't matter what background, race or culture you represent. It really doesn't matter where you've been. It doesn't even matter where you are right now. The only thing that matters more than the facts is the truth. Truth is, when God made you he was really showing off. He saved his best for last. He had to prepare the rest of the world, adorn nature, and decorate the universe first, before your arrival. He even designed a special place in a special garden to design you in and bring you to life. You were created with a thought from God, but have developed and evolved into a song, an enchanted melody. It's no mistake that you were created on the 7th day. The number 7 is the biblical number for perfection and completeness. The world was not complete without you. Creation was perfected when you entered the scene. God himself poured

so much into you that after he made you on that 7th day he rested... He did not rest until the work in you was finished.

Even on your worse day, you should roll your shoulders back and hold your head high. Not because you have a certain look, size or status. Not because of whom your husband is or children are. Not because you have obtained a certain desirable position or social status. Not because of where you live, what you drive or how you wear your hair or your dress. Truth is, who you are goes far beyond this. I take nothing at all from any of this; you've earned it I'm sure. Truth is you should roll your shoulders back and hold your head up just because you are you. Girl you're bad! You've walked through hell and back and haven't even broken a sweat. You're at your very best and strongest during adversity and you probably don't even realize it. You've been baptized by fire and still find a way to smell good. Not even a hair on your head is out of place, nor a chip in your nails. Who else but an awesome creature like you could withstand this? You've been mishandled and rejected to the point that you've even rejected yourself and even others that remind you of you. Of course you've made mistakes and poor choices but haven't we all? Keep on living and you'll make more but you'll bounce back more... Forgive yourself. It's not your fault that someone else didn't recognize the valuable treasure in you. How can they recognize it in you if they cannot first see it in themselves? Truth is, though you may have been ostracized and raped by society and even dogged, misunderstood and mistreated by your own, you're still surviving. Look at you now. You are a fighter and survivor. You've been an overcomer in every situation that the world has ever thrown at you and you still thrive. You've been hurt, healed and re-hurt and you still find it in your heart to give even more. Let me tell you something, don't you ever second guess or sell yourself short another day as long as you live. Your destiny is so much bigger than where you are and what you may be able to see right now. Your best is truly yet to come. Truth is, you are a very special breed, and you are unstoppable. Whenever you get focused and determined, you are an awesome force to be reckoned with. God built you with a lifetime guarantee and with a warranty that you would be able to carry and withstand the weight and responsibility

of all humanity. Gravity can't even hold you down. Truth is, your past does not represent or dictate your future, your present from this moment in time forward does. It's what you will do from today forward that matters.

Learn to love yourself. If you love yourself, learn to love yourself even more until you can do so wholeheartedly. Accept you just the way that you are. You're special no matter what your issues, circumstances, brokenness, failures, wounds, complexes, fears, insecurities, or shortcomings are. Start from now and charge forward. You are special and you can do it. You owe it to yourself. If someone has hurt you, find a way to forgive them. You may even have to ask God's help everyday until you can, but it's vitally important that you do it. It's not for the other person(s) that hurt you; it's for your sake. When you release them, you release their power over you and their influence in your life. Living in unforgiveness gives the person(s) power over your soul (mind, will, and emotions). Walk in forgiveness, peace and love as best as you can. Where you fall short, allow God to work in that area of your life to straighten it out. It will free you from the weight of the burdens, baggage, and the bondage that comes with unforgiveness. No matter what it takes, find a way to forgive and release them (and forgive yourself too while you're at it). Let God do what only He can do in and through you. Guard your heart with all diligence. Out of it are the issues of life. You have come so far. You can never give up. If you have already given up, it's because you've really given up on yourself and on God. All of us have felt like giving up at one time or another. It was during those times that your true strength was manifested. Your time to shine is coming. Ever wonder why the same wind that blows out a candle or match actually fans a fire? It is because where others give up you're just getting started. You go for it! Know that you are loved.

Keep on keeping on,  
Steven O. Allen  
Co-author "Alone in the Multitude"

## NEW YORK RICAN

What is a New York Rican? A New York Rican is a New Yorker with Puerto Rican Ancestry, as I am. My name is Angel Guzman, born in New York City and son of Puerto Rican born parents. I enjoy my Puerto Rican background with pride but not all cultures are just about being from another island or country, it's all about family and setting the right foundation. With so many races in this eclectic melting pot, RESPECT for each other is paramount. I, being of Puerto Rican descent, have learned that our culture and race are a result of the admixtures of the Aborigines, Spanish, African cultures and races.

About 1,000 miles southeast of Miami Florida, you can find this commonwealth Puerto Rican island in the Caribbean Sea. There are much culture activities in Puerto Rico: food, dance, entertainment, etc., If you go there you will enjoy the food: sapon de pollo con arroz [chicken soup with rice],

carne guisada [beef stew] and even alondigas [Spanish meatballs]. This is not even the full island menu. We have food that would have your taste pallet going crazy over the exotic flavors from dinner to desert. We know how to get are dance on including salsa, reggaeton. From many of our Puerto Rican super music stars like Marc Anthony, Jenifer Lopez, Don Omar, and Daddy Yankee gives us much music for dancing.

Super stardom does not end there, we have the 1st Puerto Rican federal appeal court judge that president Obama nominated to Jose Barea who is playing for the Dallas Mavericks in this year's NBA finals and don't forget all of our Puerto Rican heroes that are overseas fighting for our country.

November 19, 1493, was the date Christopher Columbus inadvertently discovered the island that would later become Puerto Rico. Columbus used this island as a stopover for rest and recuperation. This island would eventually become a unique racial and culture amalgamation of many different peoples.

There are over four million Puerto Ricans living stateside, with reports that this number exceeded the population in Puerto Rico for the first time in 2003. Despite new demographic trends, New York City continues to be the home of the largest Puerto Rican community in the United



States, with Chicago second, but Puerto Ricans live in all 50 states and the territories, with large numbers in Massachusetts, Connecticut, Illinois, Ohio, New Jersey, Florida, Pennsylvania, and Texas. The strong presence of Puerto Ricans in Hawaii, Arizona, and California is partially due to previous generations moving to those states in the early 20th century to work as farm laborers.

I take great pride in being a New York Rican with all its rich history and culture.

Con Mucho Amor (with lots of love)  
**Angel Guzman**



# 10

## Realistic TIPS

### [For Losing Weight]

As the summer season approaches, many of us are beginning to conjure thoughts of family

barbecues, outdoor evening concerts and stepper sets, summer vacationing, and trips to the pool and beach. As we prepare for these events that come along with the summer season, many of us begin to think about how we are going to “look” for the summer. As we lay out our summer outfits, we glance in the mirror and, for some of us, notice the remnants of holiday feasts (Thanksgiving, Christmas, and Easter) that still protrude from our girth. Instead of looking for the quick fix of fad diets, supplements, and homemade remedies to lose that unwanted weight, here are 10 realistic tips you can apply that will help you lose weight:

1. When you are dieting, do not ever completely cut your favorite foods out. Eventually, you will cave in and eat them by the gallon (ice cream), package (cookies), or bucket (fried chicken). Plan to have your favorite foods once or twice a week so that you have something to look forward to. If you are eating right for 6 days out of week, I call this your “cheat day.”
2. Find substitutes for the bad foods that you may currently eat. For example, instead of white bread, go with whole wheat or multigrain bread. Change your milk to low fat or skim, as well as fat-free condiments (sour cream, mayonnaise, salad dressings, etc.).
3. Adding more fiber to your diet cleans your internal organs, speeds up your metabolism, and helps you lose weight. Incorporating more fiber to your diet actually is a great way to lose weight rapidly, because it really speeds up the metabolism. Foods rich in fiber include greens (mustard, turnips, and spinach), beans (black, navy, lima and pinto), berries (blueberry, raspberry, and blackberry), squash, and nuts (almond and walnut).
4. Drinking plenty of water stops you from retaining water under your skin. In fact, you can lose subcutaneous water that looks like fat just by drinking enough. So at breakfast, drink your traditional orange juice. However, for the remainder of the day, focus on water instead of juice or soda. Water is also great for clearing the impurities in your skin, specifically in your face.

5. If you are a workout nut (like myself), try working out in a cooler temperature setting. People burn more energy during colder temperatures because the body works harder to warm itself up. This is a method often used by body builders, for they intentionally chill themselves in air conditioning to burn extra fat. Crank that air conditioner up and workout in the basement to burn some additional fat.
6. Establish a time in the evening when you will shut down the kitchen and stop eating so that you don’t give in to the late-night cravings and “empty snacking” while watching television. When these urges occur, instead grab some herbal tea, a piece of hard candy, or some frozen yogurt. Another trick is to immediately brush your teeth after these healthy treats, because you are less likely to eat or drink anything else.
7. Instead of opting for fast food restaurants and greasy food joints, find healthier alternatives when you have to eat out. One of my personal treats to myself is after a long week of work, taking in some fresh sushi. This is a classier (and tastier) way of rewarding your body for the hard work it puts in. Remember what you put in your body is reflected through your skin. If your body is like a Maybach, would you put in it unleaded (nachos, French fries) or premium (sushi, Middle Eastern food) gasoline?
8. Using fresh herbs to season your vegetables instead of butter or margarine will save you 100 calories per tablespoon. One suggestion would be Ms. Dash low sodium seasoning. Other seasonings could include oregano, thyme, paprika, and basil.
9. If you consider yourself a shy person, break that shell and live more! Studies tend to show that bashful people often weigh more, because they socialize less, watch more television, and eat more junk food. Therefore, this is a call to build up your social network, remove yourself from the couch, and find new ways to live and lose weight.
10. Be realistic about your weight loss goals, and, as you follow your plan of attack, set benchmarks inside of your overall goal, and reward yourself for reaching those benchmarks. For example, if your goal is to lose 40lbs. over 4 months, you set a benchmark to lose 10lbs. within the first month, and you accomplish that benchmark, reward yourself with a massage, manicure/pedicure, some roses, etc. Treat yourself for the small battles, so you can go all out win you win the war.

**“Follow your plan of attack” “ Set benchmarks”**

These are 10 simple and realistic tips, if you apply them daily, you will begin to see results. Good luck to you all on reaching your fitness and weight goals!

- Orlandus Thomas

# 50+ CENTERFOLD



## 50 + CAN BE SEXY TOO!!

Ms. Judith A. Cook was raised in Newark, New Jersey. Today she still resides in New Jersey. Cook retired in 2007 from the Veterans Hospital after 22 years working in Nutrition. Is this the reason for her youth fullness? Cook is the mother of three and grandmother of two. Cook says, “ I love to travel, cook, and enjoy entertaining family and friends.” Judith says, she never had a problem becoming friends with new people, because she is very gregarious. “I am a dedicated fan of classic R & B music and now that I’ve retired, I’m going to enjoy life doing WHATEVER makes me Smile!”

### Ms. Judith A. Cook

When you look at other magazines 50+ is not represented as beautiful, or better yet, not even represented when it comes to standards of beauty only young people. 50+ The Second Half Magazine wants you to know, that mentality is OVER. We are looking for men/women, groups, clubs, organization, churches, pastor, and more to be our “50+ Centerfold” . Sumit your photo and a short write-up.

We are waiting for you to showcase your beauty in this awesome magazine. See you in the Centerfold.

**Singer**  
**Songwriter**  
**Producer**  
**Al Johnson**  
**(The Unifics)**

— **Andra H.**

On May 9, 2011, we sat down with the lead singer and founding member of the Unifics – Mr. Al Johnson, the group formed at Howard University in Washington, DC, with big hits as “The Court of Love,” and The Beginning of My End.”

**PAB** - How are you today, Al?

**Al Johnson** – *I’m doing quite all right.*

OK; good. Al, I was on the Internet and I was reading your bio, and I love all of your music, but going back when *The Beginning of My End*, *Court of Love*, How did you come up with *The Beginning of My End*?

**Al Johnson** – *First of all, I did not write it; but the brother who did was our manager at the time, and who also produced our records, was a gentleman named Guy Draper. Guy wrote that song. I never knew where he got the inspiration from. Guy wrote that song as well as Court of Love. We had some great arrangers in the recording studio whose music really brought both songs to life. And, of course, the most frequently asked question for me, both back in those days and even now is “Did it really happen?” And, the answer is “No.” It never happened to me and to the best of my knowledge, it never happened to Guy either. That’s not the first song by the way that deals with losing a loved one in that manner. There were some white artists that did songs like that but; I think we were one of the first soul groups to do it.*

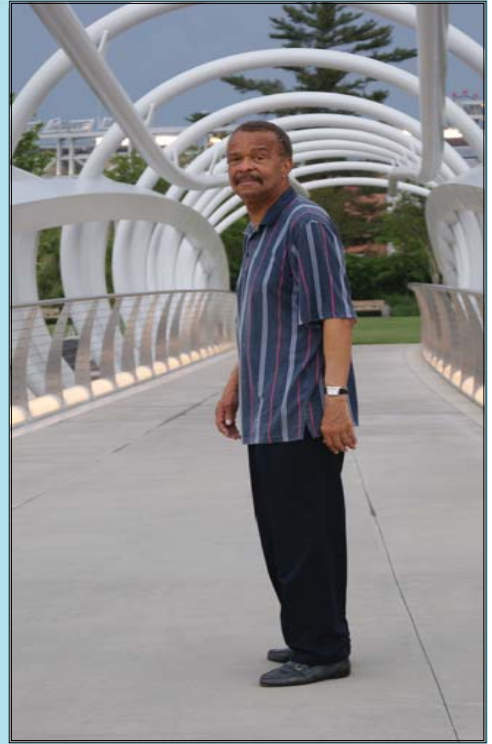
**PAB** - Great. I just wanted to go into that because I just love those songs. How did the Unifics form? I read what was on the Internet, but I want to hear it from you.

**Al Johnson** – *Probably so much that you’ve read on the web has left a lot of stuff out. OK, it started when I was at Howard; I came here from Newport News, Virginia in September of 1965, to attend Howard. It didn’t take me long to realize that where school was concerned I was kind of burned out. For all intents and purposes I was in Architecture School which I had no business being in because I don’t have the patience. I like to draw and design things but I don’t have the patience to go through the detail you have to go through to be an architect. So, I knew that early on, and to kill time and keep from being totally bored to death, I used to go in the basement of my dormitory. And, a whole bunch of guys would be down there, and at late night, there was a piano in that basement, we would have jam sessions and sometimes the sun came up before we left, and that was when I got the indication that maybe I should be doing music. I joined the group; another brother was forming*

*a group there, but I only stayed in it for a short time because I didn’t like the way it was going. And, then I went to see these guys at one of the campus variety shows, and they were just cutting up, and so I said, when I get back here, I’m going to form my own group and I’m blowing somebody out of the water. You know, I just thought about it like that.*

*In September 1966, I did come back here and I started selecting guys on campus to sing with me, and we had a quintet that we named Al and the Black Inks. We lasted for maybe seven, eight, nine months before Guy Draper approached us about working with us, and Guy at the time was also a Howard student. And, he was in a group, he was in a brilliant group of singers called the Cavaliers, and Curtis Mayfield signed them. Curtis Mayfield heard them, became very interested, and signed them and they changed their name to the Mayfield Singers. Guy left that group and decided to go into management and production on his own, he approached us about working with us, and he did. Now, several of the guys from the original Vikings were from out of town, and when school was out and we really didn’t have any immediate plans for the future, some of them went back home, and as they went back home, they were replaced by Washington area guys. One of the first ones was Guy’s cousin, Michele Ward and in September 1967, Gregory Cook came on board, and the following year Harold Worthington came on board, and that was the group that went into the recording studio to record Court of Love, the Beginning of My End, and all those tunes.*

*Now, the name came about as a result of, well it was obvious that Al and the Vikings was not gonna fly, and even I agreed to that, and Guy came up with the first name; it was a quintet at the time and he called us the Unique Five. OK, well after we lost the second member, we decided not to replace him and we’d function as a quartet, so the “Five” obviously had to be dropped and we were the Uniques. But we were playing around with names, and one of the out-of-town guys, who is back in Indianapolis now, came up with the name Unifics, and it stuck, and from the Summer of 1967, we’ve used it then on.*



**PAB** - Now your signature; those white gloves, how did that come about? *That was Guy's idea, and we weren't the first to do that... the Manhattans, a lot of people don't realize that the Manhattans, when they were a quintet, back in the days when Can I Kiss My Bride and some of those songs were being recorded, the Manhattans were the group that was wearing white gloves. And, evidently, Guy saw it and liked it and made the suggestion for us, and of course it stuck and for a long time when we had shows with the Manhattans, both groups were wearing white gloves.*

**PAB** -What is Al Johnson doing today?

**Al Johnson** – *Well, I just returned from a weekend in the United Kingdom where my fan base is still alive and kicking thank goodness. Basically, what I'm doing now is I'm in the studio more than I'm on the stage, because one of the things I developed early in my career was a love for putting things together; for putting music together. It started with song writing, and even before then with the group, it started with doing the harmony arrangements and directing the band and giving them their parts.*

**PAB** - Well, can I stop you right there for a minute, Al? I was at a show; I think it was at the Carter Barron here in DC. You guys were rehearsing and I was standing in the back watching, and the band was playing, and you were singing and then all of a sudden you just stopped and turned around and, I think it was the guitar player, and said, "Wrong key." How in the world could you do that to know what instrument? You are so brilliant... I said to Tony, "How did he..." He said, "Al is magnificent; he is nothing but excellence." Where in the world did that ear or what is it?

**Al Johnson** – *The ear was God given I think; if I had to guess; the ear was God given, and just working with some of the best and learning from them. I've never sat down with anyone one-on-one with the exception of Donny Hathaway, I never sat down with anyone and just said, "How do you do this?" or whatever the case is. But I watched everything they did and I listened to everything so many of the great ones did so, while not having a formal music education, I tell people that I had a bunch of great teachers.*

**PAB** - OK; that thing got to me. I think I thought about it for two days and Tony kept telling me, "Al is just like that. He will point you out. He can hear the notes." OK; I'm sorry; I interrupted you.

**Al Johnson** – *Oh, no problem there.*

**PAB** - OK, so you just got back from the UK, and they love you over there.

**Al Johnson** – *Oh, yeah, that was a great energy boost to say the least. But, again, what I'm doing mostly is producing and that applies to both R&B and gospel as well; I have some gospel singers and acts I'm working with in the studio. And, the group (Unifics) has been reinstated and has been now for some six years. We've been together now for some six and a half years or so, and things are working well. We recorded one CD two years ago; we released Unifics Return. We never did put them in stores; it was more of a web sell product, but it moved pretty well. And, then of course, my long-standing relationship with Jeff Majors is no secret. In fact, he has a brand new CD out that features a song that Donny Hathaway did, "For All We Know" and he's done a great remake of it, and I'm doing the vocals.*

**PAB** - Oh, OK. All right. And, you did Psalms 23. That is a wonderful song.

**Al Johnson** – *You know, when we did it... it really didn't occur to me... I tell this story... it's funny... I was not supposed to do it.*



*Initially, the original version of it, there was a sister, I don't even remember her name now who was supposed to sing it, and then when Jeff was ready to record it, she didn't show up and he said, "AJ, put something down, at least we'll have something on the vocal end" Now, here I am with no clue as to what I'm going to do and by the grace of God we came up with that vocal the first time out and it stuck, so we went on and recorded the final product but it's a hit and I told Jeff when we finished that session, I said, "You don't know what you just did. This thing is going to be a standout for a long time."*

**PAB** - Oh, yes, absolutely. Now, how does Al Johnson spend his time? **Al Johnson** – *Well, when I'm not making music, I just relax. I've gotten real good at relaxing here lately; I guess it comes with age. But music consumes a great deal of my time because as a creative person I love the idea of writing new songs or coming up with new concepts for old songs, and of course, with the client base like I have, people are always calling and wanting to go back in. As a matter of fact, one of the veteran groups of the area, the Velons, these are the guys I'm working with today and tomorrow. I did one CD with them quite a few years ago called It's All Good It's Alright, so we've established that relationship. That's pretty much it, and, then, of course, I am a huge sports fan, so I am watching most of the sporting events.*

**PAB** - Al, I have a facebook account, (Pabmagazine A-b) when we were supposed to get together a time before this. I mentioned I would be interviewing Al Johnson." Stewart from Black Ivory; [so many different groups made a comment on my page],said, "Oh

my God, Al, that's one great guy"; "I learned from him." So much, nothing but good stuff said about you on facebook. They also said; please tell him, "Hello." So, what would you like to say to the facebook fans who love you so very much?

**Al Johnson** – *Thanks for not forgetting. Those four words I think sum it all up because this is an industry where people can and do forget, and for them to remember me and still hold me in that same regard, it is very humbling; very touching. It just makes you feel good. So, thank everybody, and, as for the guys in the groups that you mentioned, we look forward to seeing them, again, somewhere down the pike.*

**PAB** – Do you have any upcoming shows?

**Al Johnson** – *We're working on some; we don't have anything unlocked. We have an agency that's working on some group shows. It is very possible I will be doing some solo shows in that area, too, because that's something else in the works. I have some appearances with Jeff Majors, too, but most of those are out of town. So, at this point, I'm back at the desk, working on the arrangements and all the other stuff. Lloyd Price, the veteran rock and roll singer who is still alive and kicking, will be in Italy in August, and I have been his music director since 1986.*

**PAB** - What advice would you give to upcoming musicians or singers? **Al Johnson** – *You know, the advice I'd give to them is not much different from the advice I'd give to anyone in any other field because there are three things that you have to be aware of at all times: one is where you want to go and, of course, most people can tell you that, but the most important component in this is you've got to be honest about where you already are, and if you have shortcomings, just be ready to work on them. It doesn't mean you can't make it; it just means that where you are now is not where you want to be, and so, of course, the third step is what's it going to take to get you there?*

*It's one thing to dream and to think positive because that's necessary. I don't doubt that. But, positive thought without some kind of action is useless. You have to know where you are, and as often as you can, you should get some kind of professional evaluation about that because your family and friends may always tell you that you're good, especially if they don't know any better. However, you must know where you are so that you can know how to get where you want to go. That's the best way to get where you're going and to realize that it is going to take some work.*

**PAB** - How do you feel about Radio Stations not playing our music much anymore? **Al Johnson** - *You know what? I have an interesting theory about that because we all talk about it. All the veterans, when we get together, talk about it a lot. I talk about it with the Whispers, and I talk about it with so many of my other good friends in the business. My slant on it is the fact that we know what we want; we are selective. When you've lived a certain amount of years and you've developed certain tastes, you aren't going to just settle for any piece of garbage that they put out. You're not going to settle for just anything. People our age consider what we need first, then we talk about what we want. Young people haven't reached that point yet, so they are still vulnerable to pulling out whatever money they've got and to buy whatever it is. So the industry sees that, and says, well, let's go after these people. It tickles me anyway because it's the older folks that have the most money, but yet they think it is easier to go after the young money because*

*they don't have the discriminating taste, or whatever you call it. They will buy it if you sell it. It's the same reason that the spotlight is on the young artists because veterans who have been through the mill are not going to fall for just anything you offer them. They went through that in their young days. Matter of fact, one of the things I pride myself on is that I can look at a contract and basically know what I'm looking at without a lawyer being there, but I will consult one. I will have an attorney to look over whatever. But, when I see it, I know what's on it, and I can speak for a lot of other artists who have sharp business minds like that. How many young people do you know who have that? They are so anxious to get out there that you know they will overlook something. If they don't have some adult protection or supervision, they will overlook whatever you put down there. So that's another thing.*

**PAB** - Ok, so you are outside the District and the others [Unifics]? **Al Johnson** - *well one of the guys was an original Viking and he came back in 1970, and stayed in until we broke up, and really it was his idea to re-group. He dogged me until I finally said yes. We've been best friends since 1963, so I really couldn't really say no to my best friend. Now, the other two guys are Newport News natives, and yes, the three of them live there. **PAB** - And, the other two guys would be? **Al Johnson** – *Would be Gary Hall and Charlie Lockhart... those are the two newcomers. OK, now Tom Fauntleroy, he is one of the Vikings who started with me. And, Marvin Brown and Bob Hayes; yes, these are the original guys in that group. **PAB** - Now, today, is Michael Ward still with you? **Al Johnson** – *No; Michael is in the ministry now, and doing very well. We stay in touch. I stay in touch with all of them. Greg, now that's the one I've seen the least, but I've seen him and spoken to him. In fact, Michael's mother passed late last year and that's the last time I saw Greg; it was at that funeral. He looks great. Evidently, he's doing great. Yeah, he is doing great. When I was at the Carter Barron with Ashford and Simpson in '09, it was the day before his birthday, and I surprised him and called him. I think it floored him that I remembered. And, of course, we lost Harold Worthington. That was very tragic. **PAB** - The Unifics today are? **Al Johnson** - Tom Fauntleroy, who is still with me, Gary Hall, and Charlie Lockhart. Charlie is an incredible singer himself so I get a chance to sing background whenever I want to now because that boy can sing. That's happening. Even Marvin who is a Muslim now, who goes by the name of Khalil Bilal, even he is still involved with the choreography and everything, and all that because he and Tom were the definitive choreography team, and of course, Greg did more than his share to put it together, too. We always had in-house choreography unlike many folks.***

**PAB** - OK Al, how would you want people to remember you?

**Al Johnson** – *OK, I guess one of the Dramatics' biggest hit songs would probably apply to that, What You See is What You Get; just as a straight up person who gave what he could and helped when and where he could... who had a true passion for his work and family and friends.*

On May 21 at "Peter Bug Day," Al Johnson was presented with the DC Legends Award. Jeff Majors was giving a listening party up at Howard University in the Blackburn Center for his new CD. And, then of course they performed Psalms 23. **Thank You Al. Pab**

# 1962

## MASHED POTATO TIME WITH...

### MRS. DEE DEE SHARP

— Andra Henderson

On May 14, 2011, we sat down to have a conversation with Mrs. Dee Dee Sharp, born Dione LaRue, on September 9 in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania. In 1962, Dione LaRue became the well-known Dee Dee Sharp.

**Dee Dee, how are you?** I am very well; thank you. How about yourself?

**Dee Dee, when, where and how would you say you started your singing career?** Oh, Lord! Back in 1960, but I did not become Dee Dee Sharp until 1962. In 1960, I was (singing background on) a lot of songs along with Willa Ward Moultrie who is the sister of the late Clara Ward, and a woman by the name of Vivian Jackson, and my piano teacher who was Rosemary Wiley. We started doing background; the four of us would sing background for everybody and anybody. I was doing that while I was going to school. That's exactly what I was doing while I was going to school. I didn't say anything to anybody when I became Dee Dee Sharp because it was really a fluke. Initially, to background a record for Chubby Checker, and you know most producers don't know what they want, but they know it when they hear it.

That's a standing joke that producers really don't know what they want until they hear it. And, I can do that song, why don't you ask me? They said, "We need somebody to sing a duet with Chubby." I said, "I can do it, I think." So, that's how it started; I (sang background) for Chubby and the rest is history.

**Ok; tell us your nickname and how you got that nickname.** (Laughter)... now, that's funny. My nickname is Peanut, and how I got that nickname, I only weighed when I was born four pounds and five ounces, and that's why they started calling me "the little peanut," and that just stuck. People in my family know not to call me that. When my mother passed in 2000, my family still called me Peanut. I told my aunts and I told my uncles, "This has got to stop; I'm getting too old for this foolishness." So, they had to say Dee Dee I said, "Say, Dee or Dee Dee or Dione, I don't care, but please don't call me that." They started calling me Dee Dee, and when my last aunt (I only had one left) passed, that's been almost two years ago now, that's the last person to call me Peanut. **Sorry to hear about your mother and aunt.** That's right; they are all gone now, God rest their souls. I just don't hear that anymore.



**You are best known for the dance hits you made famous in the 1960s; and they were...** Potato Time and Gravy (for My Mashed Potatoes)... but, you know, for a person who doesn't dance, that's funny. I can't dance a lick. I faked it all those years. My brother taught me few little things. Praise God; God is good all the time; praise God my brother sort of taught me a little something and I faked it because I can't dance; I have two left feet. I mean, two left feet. I can play piano, I can sing, I can do harmony, I can write music, I can do all these things related to music, but I can't dance. My family teases me about that to this day. My great nieces and nephews (they're coming to the show because they live in Reisterstown) they said, "Poor Aunt Dee Dee sure can't dance." No, I can't. I just can't dance. I have two left feet.

**I understand the Philadelphia Music Foundation honored you with a life achievement award. When was that?** Oh! That was; I think it was... I can't remember; I think it was year before last I think. It may have been two years. I was shocked; I really didn't think they thought enough of me to grace me with that award and a star on the Walk of Fame in

Philadelphia. I thought that I would get it posthumously. I thought they wouldn't do it until I was dead. But, all jokes aside it was a really great honor, and it was wonderful.

**Could we talk a little about Hugo Management?** Huga, Huga, it was Huff and Gamble backwards. Gamble and Huff wanted to start a development company and a management company, and I headed that company for them for many years. I did it for the Blue Notes, the Ojays, Billy Paul, the Intruders, and it was fun. It was a business as far as I was concerned because I just took a side step back and I really didn't perform, but I guided those particular careers. And that was the beginning of that.

**I understand you do a lot for charity, at least for the United Negro College Fund.** I have done a lot for the United Negro College Fund. I haven't done it recently because they haven't asked. Most of the time when you are an artist if you don't have a viable hit per se, you're not really asked to do those things. They tend to look for high profile folks. It's unfair and I understand that.

**Tell the readers about the Campbell Soup Company and the role you played?** Campbell Soup Company asked for me to do a commercial set and wanted Hampton, like the kids say, 'what



happened was,' they wanted a campaign so that they could use the Campbell Soup Chicken Broth to make mashed potatoes, you know it's low fat; as a low fat diet. They kicked off this whole campaign, and they flew me to San Francisco, and we did it at this diner in San Francisco; a great diner, and the whole dance routine and the whole thing, it was really; it was really a lot of fun. I often do commercials. I've done many commercials for the Maybelline Company... and they were vignettes for the product as well as my personal beauty tips because everyone says I have great skin. I think it is heredity. I try to take care of my skin and it has escalated. I think it was 30-seconds, or I think it was like 60-seconds vignettes for the product. I liked it. I really enjoyed it.

***I was doing some research on the Internet and I was looking at peoples' comments about you, and there was one on there, I don't know who wrote it, but one person said, "Dee Dee is as good as she was in her younger years; she sounds even better now. Like fine wine; she only improves with age."*** Oh, God bless her. Thank you so much. Oooh! That's a blessing, isn't it? That is a blessing... I don't really understand why things work out the way they do. In other words, I have not had the success of a Patti LaBelle or the success of a Whitney Houston; however, I'm grateful for whatever God blesses me with, I am grateful. And, I do thank the fan who wrote that, and I do appreciate that. From the bottom of my heart, I really appreciate it.

***What are you doing now, and how would Dee Dee Sharp like to be remembered?*** That's a two-part question. OK. I think I can answer the first part for you. What am I doing now? I am working. I am working a lot; Praise God! Praise the Lord! Praise the Lord! Recently I have been in Europe and the fans there are amazing; I mean; they are amazing. They tend to listen to all of the old stuff; the stuff I recorded they love it; literally love it and that's how I've been able to keep working, but not so much in the States. Not to take anything away from our fans in the States, but the people in Europe seem to appreciate you more... Now, I'm down to earth; I'm rooted and grounded in Jesus. And, they really, really showed their appreciation.

I've done Belgium, I've done Liverpool,

I've done London, and recently I just went back to Liverpool with David Guest who does promoting over there. It was Peabo Bryson, Freyda Payne, Candi Staton, Dennis Edwards and the Temptations, Archie Bell, Percy Sledge, Eddie Floyd. We had a ball, and we did that for quite a few weeks. It was wonderful. We just recently went to Memphis for Peabo's 60th birthday party. Now, when you take Peabo Bryson, I cannot help but love that man. I mean there are few men in the industry that I am friendly with and that I care for, but Peabo Bryson... that's my buddy. And, Archie Bell is the sweetest person, I'm telling you; he is just so sweet. It's his heart. Actually, we stayed at the... I cannot remember the name of the hotel, but the performances were at the Peabody where the ducks come in and do the little thing, and that was just before the floods came to Memphis; we got out just before they came. Oh! And, Billy Paul, too; Billy Paul was right there, too. Billy Paul, Archie and I have been friends for God knows how long. Peabo was amazing. Peabo's voice was amazing. Everybody's voice was amazing. Those folks can sing. They're songs; not the technical stuff that folks are doing. When you say "singers," you say "sangers" meaning that they can "sang." It's important as far as I'm concerned to respect everybody with doing whatever they are doing, but I respect them even more if I know they can sing. Chrisette Michele can sing. That girl is bad. And, Jill Scott is amazing; Mary J. Blige is amazing, and Beyonce is amazing, too. I appreciate her because she can dance. But guess what, she can sing; she has a very light voice as opposed to mine which is a little deeper, but I think that basically comes with maturity. I tend to say maturity rather than age. At 65, I'm doing all right. I go to the gym three times a week; I cannot miss going to the gym three times a week. And, when I exercise, it is not a namby-pamby gym; it is a gym where you lift weights; I can do squats with the bar, with 55 pounds on my back. It keeps me energized. Exercise is half the battle; it keeps your weight down.

***How does Dee Dee Sharp wish to be remembered?***

Oh, yes; that's the second part of the question. God fearing. God loving. Loves her family to no end...loves her family...just loves her family. I love my brother; my brother and I were born 18 months apart, so it is a very close relationship there. My

husband. And my little baby, my dog. His name is Winston and we call him Winnie. He is a golden doodle... a golden doodle is half-standard poodle and half-golden retriever. This boy is funny; he's two now. He's amazing; he weighs 85 pounds, and he's tall, with long legs.

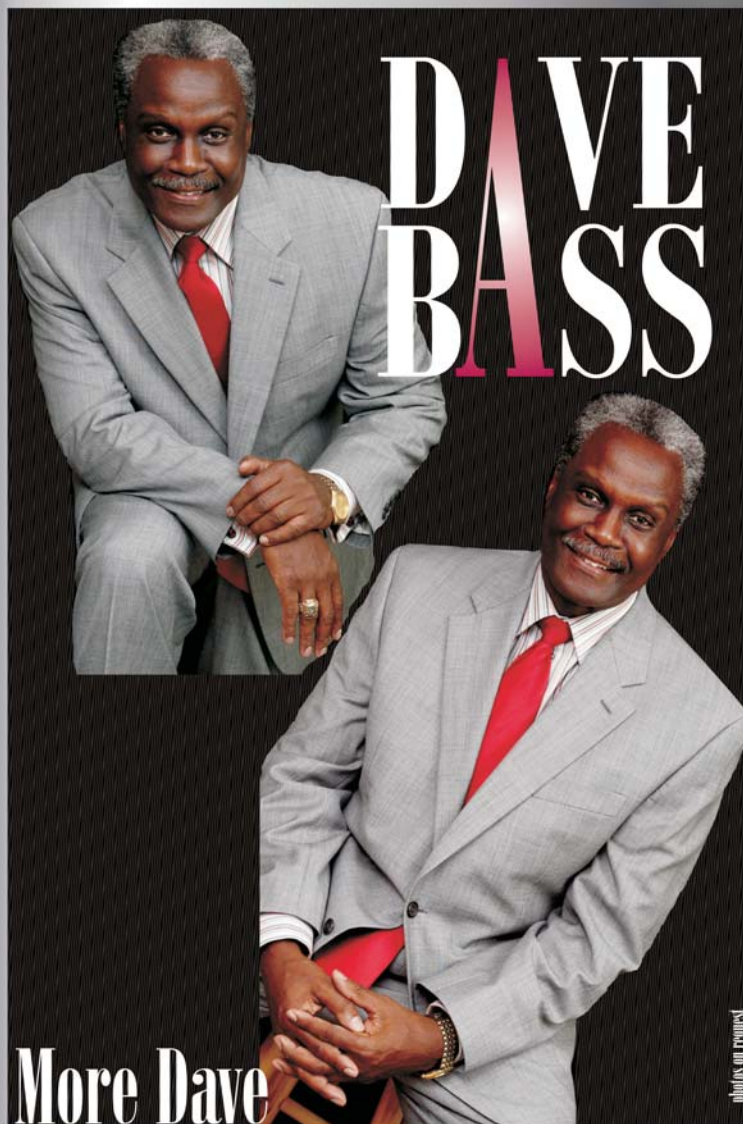
***Dee Dee, I want to go back a little. I know you have a podcast going on; do you still have it?***

Oh, yes. I forgot about that; I'm glad you reminded me. We do the podcast about every couple of weeks. I have about four of them now, and we are doing a book. I have finally decided now that my parents are gone that I don't want to embarrass them; I'm actually doing a book now. I have no title for it right this minute. I've had a lot of suggestions for titles, however I have not sat down and gotten one yet. The other thing is...of course, we just recorded; this is like the second song on my new CD. I just finished it the other night, and the guys are excited about it. Everybody is excited about it. There is no title for it just yet, but we did a funky version of "My Funny Valentine." I think I'm probably going to have it ready early September, Lord willing. Lord willing, it will be ready early September, around the time of my birthday.

***What is the URL for your website?*** It is [www.deedeesharp.com](http://www.deedeesharp.com) ... I realize there are a lot of sites that claim to be my official page, but if you do not see the rotors turning when my page opens up, then you've got the wrong site. A lot of people have websites that talk about names, but don't believe everything that you hear, neither believe everything you read, unless it's coming out of my mouth...There are a lot of people claiming a lot of stuff... but, unless you hear it from me, don't believe it.

***Dee Dee's podcast.***

When you go to my webpage, you will see "Dee Dee's New Podcast." And, if you don't see it there, if you google my name, and google podcast, it will come up. I really want them to listen to the podcasts and comment on them; you know what I mean? ***To my fans?*** I love them, God bless them, and keep me and my family in prayer. Keep praying for my strength in the Lord because I realize without God, I can't do anything; not without him. I can do a gig and not have a problem, but if I don't have the Lord and Saviour, Jesus Christ, "I ain't got nothing". That's the way I feel.



A native of Lakewood, New Jersey, Dave began honing his skills in the church choir at an early age and quickly realized his calling. Dave Bass doesn't do Gospel, he lives it, he breathes, he pays homage to his influences that include, Hank Williams, Dixie Hummingbirds, Frank Sinatra, Mahalia Jackson, Nat King Cole, Brook Benton, Jesse Belvin, The Ink Spots, The Mills Brothers, The Temptations, Patsy Cline, Clyde McPhatter, Johnny Cash, Nancy Wilson and the silky smooth sound of Sam Cooke. In fact, Dave Bass is most noted for his eerily similar song styling's in the Gospel tradition of Sam Cooke.

Whether listening to the uplifting, hand-clapping, foot-stomping lyrics of "The Welcome Table" (title Cut), "How Do You Feel" and "The Little Old Tree" or the spirit that encompasses you when you hear "Joy In My Soul" or "Be Thankful", it becomes evident that Dave Bass is a Gospel Performer that has indeed been anointed. His first full-length CD, "The Welcome Table", was recorded in 1997, delivers a progression of fervent gospel offerings that have proven to be timeless classics celebrating the Glory Of God. All songs were written by Dave Bass and Co-Produced by Dave and legendary Singer/Producer Al Johnson. Dave has written over 70 songs and is on schedule to release his next CD Fall of 2011.

- Mark Downs

# Are We Forgetting Classic R&B MUSIC

- Lincoln Sessoms

Is it me or are we really losing sight of the wonderful music we grew up with? Have we forgotten the greats who are still performing all over the country? Have we forgotten artists who have been wowing audiences around the country and all over the world? Are the advertising dollars only being spent to attract the younger generation forcing companies to invest in events only they would enjoy? Lastly are people over 50 the forgotten ones when it comes to concerts, events and how the advertising dollar is spent?

It certainly is starting to feel this way! It seems if it is not a Jazz festival, all the national type events are focusing on a generation between Hip Hop, and what was called New Jack Swing years ago. I looked at The Essence Music Festival Line-up. Needless to say I am stunned at the lack of respect for the Classic R&B Artists. Are they, the folks who produce these shows, sending us a message? Are they saying women over 40 or 45 do not read Essence? Should the older generation of women stop purchasing products from Essence? After all it is called the Essence Music Festival! It is almost as if Essence, is saying we, the 50 plus generation, are not a factor or important any longer? Have they actually given up on our generation purchasing products or even coming out to support events?

I am equally stunned at the lack of inclusion of classic R&B Artists on award shows, TV programs, in movies, and on late night TV talk shows. Add this to the lack of representation at The Essence Music Festival which this year featured Fantasia, Jennifer Hudson, Kanye West, Usher, and many others during a 3-day weekend, and it hurts that much more. Though I am a huge fan of all those mentioned, I will never understand the lack of including some of our older legends in A Music Festival. Without them I would be totally out of my element attending that event based on the line-up minus Charlie Wilson who is one of the few artists to be able to bridge the generation gap musically.

Interesting how many of the events and festivals I see have national sponsors who provide support. These same sponsors rarely get involved with events or activities for those over 50 years old. It is as if once you turn 50 you no longer purchase products and services. Or is it these sponsors just take the 50 plus generations dollars and spending power for granted?

Last time I looked, many people in their 50s, 60s, and even 70s and 80s used products such as Coca Cola, Pepsi Cola, McDonald's, The US Army, Verizon, Ford, Tide, Wal-Mart, State Farm, Budweiser, and Coors. With the exception of the US Army, people enjoy the products listed. And even the Army is attractive to them based on being able to share information with younger family members.

It is so unfortunate that we see not only age discrimination with record companies, but now also with national concerts and events. Classic R&B Artists cannot get a break and often turn to Gospel Music as a way to continue recording and performing. On the flip side Doo Wop Artists continue to be loved and adored world wide selling out arenas with national sponsor backing in many cases. Or did you not know that many major record labels rarely sign new artist over 40 or continue supporting past artists past 45 without hits in the prior few years? It is why a lot of major classic R&B acts work so hard to sell out single gig venues. It becomes a true income source after the record deals dry up. Classic R&B artists and groups also often create their own management and recording companies, often depending on various sources to push products including Internet radio shows which are becoming greater resources every year and gaining momentum in the communications industry based on new technology and know how.

Back to the Essence Music Festival: Though they do have Charlie Wilson on the main stage this year, where are the others who could bring so much to that event and weekend? Charlie Wilson is exceptional and one of the few folks to have bridged the generation in his music and stage performance. Even using the name "Uncle Charlie" was a brilliant move! But where is Stevie Wonder, Aretha, Earth Wind and Fire, Gladys Knight, Diana Ross? How about The Ojays, Whispers, Stephanie Mills, Patty, and Jeffrey Osborne. Lets not forget Russell Thompkins and The new Stylistics, The Delfonics, Enchantment, Blue Magic, Black Ivory, Milisa Morgan, Alyson Williams, GQ, The Intruders, Soul Generation, Harold Melvins Blue Notes, Ray Goodman and Brown, Heatwave, Tavares, Ted Mills, Evelyn Champaign King, Howard Hewett, Bobby Womack, and many others I have not mentioned? I am sure they would be well accepted and people would love to see them perform. Does the Essence people and other major concert promoters feel people would not wish to see these artists? I think it is a crime and a shame that this continues to happen across the country. We should be celebrating the great music these artists have provided us over the years as opposed to forgetting them on national stages. And if I see another younger artist sings a legends song on a national TV awards show and the artist who made the song is alive and still performing, I will throw a brick at the screen. So BET, CBS, MTV, ABC, TBS, Opera, Tyler Perry, NBC, and others who rarely promote classic R&B music lets change the way things are being done. Heck it now seems as if every BET Awards show is a spinoff of Hip Hop Honors. I am so please that Hip Hop is accepted after many said it would never last. But to kick classic R&B to the side is a terrible thing to do.

I really hope everyone will get out and support shows all over the country to strengthen the staying power of the artists we have loved and adored over the years. If we continue to stay home and only watch videos and explore YouTube Videos, these "Real Artists" will fall to the waist side and we will not have the pleasure of enjoying music we loved for many years. I have seen many classic R&B shows not do well in the last 6 years. We need to hear the music and the artists need to help keep it alive by being on shows all over the country. England and other parts of the world should not love the music more than we do and that seems to be the case at the present time. **Remember it is "Our Music."**



**Don L. Gardner**

## **THE TIES THAT BIND**

A Personal Story of Success Through

# “SHOE LACES”

**P**ersonal success for the 50+ generation is frequently a matter of returning to the journey’s starting point with renewed insight and commitment. That describes Don Gardner’s personal success story. It began with shoelaces, and thanks to other ties that bind, eventually returned there.

Don recalls the happy times as a child in his father’s barbershop. He was fascinated by the shoeshine man’s ability to work miracles with dull and worn looking leather. When he witnessed the reactions of delighted customers, the seeds of Don’s own career in the cobbler business were sown.

**W**hile trying his hand in various career fields after high school, Don started feeling restless. He dreamed of playing professional football, running track, and becoming a musician, as well as owning a successful business. Hard work and the entrepreneurial spirit come naturally in Don’s family. Cleaning up dad’s barbershop was one way Don and his brother Ricky learn the value of hard work. Mom ran her own beauty parlor, “Jean 1 and Jean 2”--a shining star that inspired the dream and name of Don’s current shoeshine and repair business. In starting his own business, Don was looking for peace of mind, a way to set his own hours, and the chance to earn an income where the only limit was his commitment and dedication. The starting price of this journey was faith in the dream and confronting the fear of failure. Don admits he could not have made it without the hand of God Almighty, faith, and the help of some special people.

**B**esides the disciplined example of his parents, another of these ties that bind was Clarence Nixon. Don served with Clarence on the church board that ran the ministry for ex-offenders, the Daniel L. Payne Reclamation Program, under the pastor ship of Dr. Ronald E and Marie Braxton. It provides an avenue for those returning to society. This program is one of the many ministries of Metropolitan AME Church. By meeting Clarence in this ministry, Don absorbed the value of second chances and starting over when the original dream did not work out as hoped. Clarence introduced Don to Darrin Hawkins.

**T**hrough Darrin, Don acquired a mentor who helped him build a cobbler franchise. Darrin’s dream--satisfying customers while enabling hard working trainees to cultivate a successful trade--tied back naturally to Don’s memories of his dad’s barbershop. Since launching his own shoeshine and repair business (Shining Star Footwear Service), Don has in turn mentored many young men and women in the cobbler business. For his legacy, he wants to see these young people grow into models for the shoe service industry. Besides this tie to the future, Don’s entrepreneurial journey has taught him several valuable lessons essential to continued success in business: passion, honesty, integrity, reliability, and consistently great customer service with lots of love. The best kind of success is the one that builds on the ties that bind, enabling all of us to shine as our own special stars. Don manages and operates the only footwear service in any sports arena nationwide, located in the Washington DC Metropolitan area.



## **Shinning Star Footwear Services**

# LFBALL ON HOOPS...

LFBALL

I am concerned with a few things I have noticed over the past few years concerning the sport of Basketball...

Let's start with the transition from college or High School to the NBA. Has the transition been a smooth one for most players? Does that NBA Rookie Program really work? Are they monitoring players and those around them carefully? Are players changing for the bad once they enter the NBA? These are interesting questions, but a better one might just be does anyone really care?

Does the NBA care about anything other than the product on the floor at the present time? Yea -Yea I know about all the good will, and special programs done by both the NBA and the NBA Players Association. But do they really make a difference? Are they putting efforts into making sure players in the league do not waste away or waste the money they earn?

My thoughts on this are based on talking to many people over a three-month period as well as from reading articles about ex NBA players who were rich and now are broke, in jail, or in some cases died way too early. Recently I read how Ray Williams, ex toast of NY and a guy who made a lot of money, went from living in Englewood Cliffs in a million dollar plus home to living in his car in Florida. Now he has to take some of the blame, but who were his mentors? Who guided him from his rookie time in the NBA? Oddly I remember Ray Williams as a hard working nice young man growing up in Mount Vernon NY in a loving family. What happened?

How about the five time NBA All Star who was an avid Church attendee throughout High School growing up in Connecticut. His family was very religious as was he. He even sang in the Church Choir and might have played an instrument or two. This guy was such a great and nice young man! His story? He got caught up in the NBA lifestyle! He went from home to playing at a low D1 college and grew into a first round draft choice. He made over 120 million in his career and now has almost nothing. He went from Church boy to hiring hookers, to blowing one million dollars gambling, to just being out of control. Remember this was a GREAT KID who went to church and more. Did he participate in a rookie development program when entering the NBA? I am sure he did! But evidently he and others like him needed more.

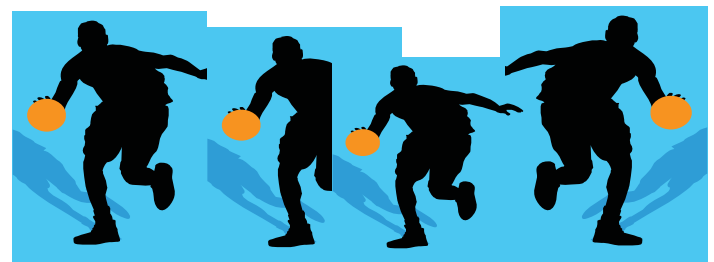
How about all the bankrupt ex NBA players back living at home with Mommy and Daddy? How about all the great kids who have been swept off their feet by slick agents and groupies? What is in place to stop this from happening? And agent wise, most are in it as a business and that is OK. What is not

OK is that players are treated like cattle or something to use only for a financial gain. Trust me, I know many, and the majority of the ones I know have done a lot of illegal stuff to gain introductions and eventually represent the potential first and second round draft choices as well as those destined for large European contracts.

What is really interesting is how they continue to trot out ex-players like Magic Johnson, Larry Byrd, and Michael Jordan as success stories. For every Magic Johnson there are 10 ex-players who made money and have very little or nothing to show for it. For every clean cut Larry Byrd there are many who suffer from depression, drug habits, and often turn to crime. For every successful Michael Jordan there are many unsuccessful ex-stars working for minimum wage.

Maybe it is time for the NBA to re-think the programs for players. Maybe there should be programs in place for every player with one mandatory session each year at the All Star Break in each NBA City? Maybe the NBA needs better security and a better agent policy? I know for certain the NCAA and NBA need to work better together to control agent activity on college campuses. Maybe there should be an open period for agents and those affiliated with agents to attend games on campuses. Have them sit in a certain section and require them to leave shortly after conclusion of the game. All should be screened by the college athletic department, etc. An agent should be approved by the Players Association and the NBA before being allowed to offer a contract to a player.

I am very concerned about this, based on what I have read as well as what I have seen. I continue to see ex-players walking the streets of America without jobs, careers, money, and often in poor health. I see them using past history to gain favors and even beg for loans. One former NY NBA darling is known for showing up at High School games that bring out college coaches to beg for money to be used for a special habit if you know what I mean. And this guy was a great guy who volunteered and coached kids even when he was a College 1st Team All American. We need to fix this system now and not later. It is almost like the Romans and the Gladiators in the arena. **Great entertainment but at what expense!**



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# FACING THE INEVITABLE: (THOUGHTS ON DEATH AND DYING)

- Larry Jordan

**“It takes sixty years of incredible suffering and effort to make a unique, self-conscious individual and then he is good only for dying.”**

**Andre Malraux, Poet**

For those of us who are fortunate enough to have lived to see the “second half” of life, there is one eventuality we all must surely face: Death. There is no escaping the fact that one day the “grim reaper” will tap us all on the shoulder, signaling to us that our time on earth is over. As my grandmother once said, “we can’t stay here.” The very idea of death is extremely frightening to most of us, inasmuch as the only concrete experience we have is that of living. Death is merely an abstract notion we can only imagine. And because we can only experience dying and not death itself, we can never really know what it is to die. Herein lies the mystery.

**“What does it mean to be a self-conscious animal? The idea is ludicrous if it is not monstrous. It means to know that one is food for worms. This is the terror: to have emerged from nothing, to have a name, consciousness of self, deep, inner feelings, and excruciating inner yearning for life and self-expression – and with all of this, yet to die.” – Ernest Becker, Philosopher**

Death is omnipresent in all our lives, however, like the eight hundred pound gorilla in the room, we try our best to ignore it. Even though we constantly see it on TV, read about it in the newspaper, lose friends and family members to it, we actively avoid discussing the subject of death at all cost. Why do we fear death so? We scarcely want to say the word. We call it “passing away”, “transitioning”, “crossing over”, “joining the ancestors”, etc. We humans tend to fear the unknown and the unknowable, which death certainly is. Many theories and explanations have been advanced in an attempt to understand what it means to die.

**“In all human societies, the awareness of death has played a large part in the construction of mythology and religion”. – Richard Leakey, Paleontologist**

The faith community has traditionally held a monopoly on explaining the meaning of death and what happens thereafter. Most religions teach that obedience to their tenets and commandments guarantees one life after death in a stupendous place called Heaven, where all is well and wonderful and most importantly of all there is no more sickness or death, humans greatest fears. Disobedience to these same tenets and commandments may result in unspeakable torture and punishment, namely, burning in hell for all eternity (no death). The scientific community postulates that based on their methods of discerning truth, there is no proof to the belief that anything happens after death, save physical decay and disintegration.

**“As for man his days are as grass: as a flower of the field, so he flourisheth. For the wind passeth over it and it is gone and the place thereof shall know it no more”. – Psalm 103:15**

In summary, a short discussion of how we come to terms with the fact that one-day we all will die seems in order. Regardless of what our core beliefs are, we all must concede the facts that human beings are born, live for a period-of-time, then, at some point dies. What happens after death other than physical decay is merely speculation, inasmuch as no one has ever returned to inform us to the contrary. We can reconcile our anxiety regarding death by living life in its entire splendor. By seizing each day (Carpe Diem), we can neutralize our morbid fear of death and accept it as the natural occurrence that all living organisms must one-day face.

**“A human being at his best. You are not so born: strive daily to develop your person, in your calling, until perfection is attained: the fullness of your every gift, of your every faculty, you will know it in the improvement of your taste, in the clarification of your thinking, in the maturity of your judgment, in the control of your will. Some never attain the perfect, something always being lacking, and others are late in coming to themselves. The human complete, wise in speech, wise in action is admitted, yea, is welcome into the rare fellowship of those who understand”. – Baltasar Gracian, Philosopher**

# *Ray Apollo Allen* *The World Today*

*A song of truth  
for today's listener.  
A song of hope  
for tomorrows to come.  
We must change our ways  
towards the future  
if there is to be a tomorrow.  
We must all come together as one!  
In times such as these  
I felt compelled to write  
and sing this song to  
and for the world.  
He that has ears, let him hear.  
He that has eyes, let him see.  
See what if ...*

**Ray Allen**  
**(a.k.a. Ray Apollo)**

**Thank you one, and all.**

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contact information:  
Ted Young 704.222.1600  
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design by Optimal Enterprise: [optimalent@gmail.com](mailto:optimalent@gmail.com)