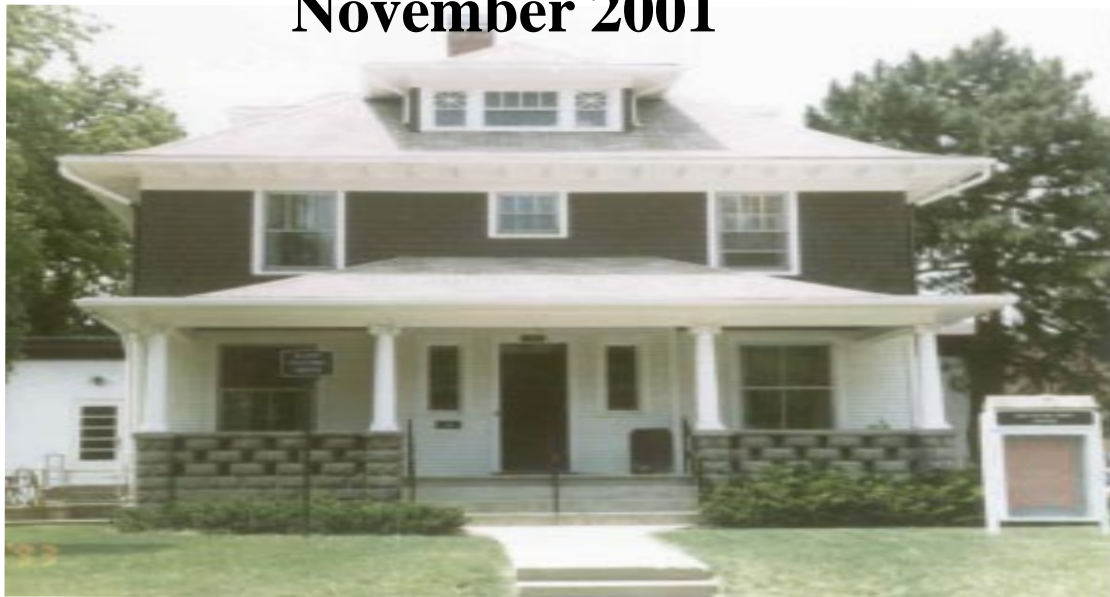




November 2001



Celebrating Our Past...

*“You don’t know where you are going unless you know where you came from”
- Unknown*

The dawn of the 21st century has brought about many new changes. The use of technology has caused everything from music to sports to evolve far beyond where it stood a few years ago. As we continue to grow through new innovations, it is important to remember the people, places, and events that paved the way.

In the spirit of remembering, there is no way that we can forget the little house on the corner of University Street that many call the “the Black House”. Though small in size the feeling of family and support from the house was truly tremendous. In a time where a very limited amount of resources were available for African American students, the BCC stepped up to the plate and provided the atmosphere needed to succeed. After 30 years of hard work and dedication, the little black house evolved into a two-story building. The structure may have been new yet the heart of the old BCC still lived on. In the third year of operation in the facility, the Black Cultural Center is still providing the “home away from home” feeling it always has. Even in years to come the little “black house” will always be remembered and held dearly. This applies not only to those who had the opportunity to experience it first hand, but also to those who are grateful for the road it paved to for the center that we all know and love today.

This month the Black Cultural Center Newsletter will celebrate the past by remembering some other people and places which although no longer with us have in many ways brought us to where we are now.

LaToya Wright



Remembering Our Heritage

As I write these remarks I am tremendously proud. I am proud that I share the rich history and heritage of a people who in spite of the odds, have risen to the task and are still moving forward. I am proud that even though people have sought to rewrite history, and even redefine a people, the truth has prevailed.

It has been said, “He who does not know history is doomed to repeat it”. We as African Americans must put forth a concerted effort to know and write our own history. When we allow others to define who we are and describe our experience, we invite distortion and half-truth. For people who have been systematically excluded from the mainstream of society, it is especially important to remember and celebrate those who have made significant contributions. As a result of knowing our history, we can reclaim and create a heightened awareness about individuals, contributions and struggles that have made African American survival and progress possible.

For too long our people have been left in the dark about who we are and our rich and noble history. It is our responsibility to stay informed. The BCC will assist you in learning more about the contributions of African Americans by attending some of our upcoming lectures. I also invite you to take advantages of the outstanding resources available in the BCC library to assist with your quest for knowledge. This month’s newsletter theme is “Celebrating Our Past” this edition pays tribute to some young and not so young individuals who have recently passed and become part of our collective history.

African Americans are great people and we must keep holding our heads high because in our veins flows the courage of Harriet Tubman, the perseverance of Mary McCloud Bethune, the inspiration of Booker T. Washington, the vision of W.E.B. DuBois, the military genius of Hannibal and the unconquerable beauty of Cleopatra and Queen Nefertiti. In our veins is the creativity of Paul Robeson, the bravery of Malcolm X, the hope of Whitney Young. In our veins is the compassion of Martin Luther King Jr., the intellectual astuteness of Dr. George Washington Carver, the business genius of Madame C.J. Walker, the political savvy of Jesse Jackson and the convictions of Nelson Mandela. With a blood this rich running in your veins, you are destined for success. I look forward to you creating a legacy by achieving your personal goals and aspirations so you too will become part of our African American heritage.

“Cultural Education and Resilience: African American Challenges and Triumphs in the New World Order.”

For the past eight hundred years, Western scholars have seldom framed African/African American cultural traditions in a positive light, and have for the most part denigrated them. Now the heights of knowledge across cultural groups from Western science to Eastern philosophies are supporting many of the assumptions of an African cultural tradition of wisdom and deep thought that can be traced from humanity’s earliest historical records to contemporary times among African Americans. Dr. Linda James Myers’ presentation will focus on the need for and value of the kind of cultural education that would help us understand African American resilience in the face of many generations of terrorism. How have the descendents of enslaved Africans endured the worst kind of surprise attacks, kidnap, murder of millions, torture and brutal attempts at dehumanization over three hundred years, creating economic foundation for this country’s wealth?

In light of the events of September 11, 2001, we could benefit greatly from noting that the African American reaction to terrorism en masse has centered around serving as the moral conscience of the United States of America, a beacon for civil rights and justice for all. This issue and several questions will be addressed. What psychobiosocial understandings can account for our historic cultural orientation to peace? Why has the acknowledgement and appreciation of such cultural traditions in African centered scholarship over the past two decades been perceived by many as such a threat to the Western academy, and become the target of the most uncivil and un scholarly attacks? Given the most current

Renee Thomas



2001-2002 Black Cultural Center Newsletter Staff
From Left: Earnest Wallace, LaToya Wright, Kendra Bracken, Kristen Bright, Eugene Johnson

[Continued on page 3](#)



Purdue Alumni Remembers Our Kindred Spirit

We must go back and reclaim our past so we can move forward; so we can understand why and how we came to be who we are today. –Sankofa

It has taken me some time to gather my thoughts for writing this brief article. Thinking long and hard on the subject of kindred spirits I had to ask myself first what that meant and then determine what it means to the black community, particularly supporters of the BCC. The answer I came up with was ‘experience’.

The Black experience in America is full of commonalities that make us kindred spirits. Though there exists no single ‘Black Experience’, we share an inherent understanding of one another through our relationship to this society and the world. We understand that in spite of certain ills and concerns that continuously plague the community there is a defining concept that ties us all together; our Blackness. That Blackness is not determined by socio-economic conditions, financial well-being, or educational attainment, but it is through the presence of melanin in our skin that we are provided a unique **experience** known only to us. Strong memories flow through us of hardships never seen only heard and felt bringing tears to our eyes, countered by joys of emancipatory celebrations bringing once again tears to our eyes. The call of Africa’s drum lives in our soul and the savor for her cuisine is indelibly grafted to our palate. An intrinsic creativity flows through our thought patterns that brings forth rhythmic speech and flows, moves and skills, cultures and climates developed *For Us By Us*. This is the experience of being Black in America. The experience has strengthened and sustained the African, the Colored, the Negro, the Black, the Afro and African American and provided a resiliency of spirit.

I believe that it’s important for us to realize the connection we each have to the community and of the community to our history. The hopes and dreams of our ancestry gave us the fuel to progress while mandating responsibility.

Sing a song full of the faith that the dark past has taught us, Sing a song full of the hope that the present has brought us...

Harambee!

*Joseph E. Jones, Sr. (Former BCC Operations Supervisor and Purdue Graduate)
Assistant Dean of Students, Minority Services and Programs
Director, African American Cultural Center*

Continued from page 2

biogenetic, archaeological and anthropological evidence, why has the need to explore such cultural traditions as foundational to our humanity been almost totally overlooked? In what ways has the miseducation Carter G. Woodson cautioned against over seventy years ago handicapped our ability to realize our rich cultural heritage and priceless cultural inheritance? Plan to hear Dr. Linda James Myers explore these issues on Thursday, November 8 at 7:00pm in Stewart Center room 206.

Cultural Arts Series

Thursday, November 8, 2001

African American Challenges and Triumphs in the New World Order

~Dr. Linda James Myers

7p.m.

206 Stewart Center

Dr. Meyers is considered a pioneer for her work in the development of Optimal Psychology – an Afrocentric approach toward fostering human development. Dr. Myers explores issues of culture, racism, sexism, & the developmental psychology of African-Americans. She is frequently sought for her expert analysis by *Essence*, *Ebony* and *Elle*.

Saturday, November 10, 2001

Floyd Cooper, Illustrator

2 p.m. BCC Multipurpose Room

Floyd Cooper is an award-winning artist who has illustrated over twenty-five children’s books including *Danitra Brown*, *One April Morning*, *African Beginnings* and *Grandpa’s Face*. Although most of his illustrations are that of African Americans, Cooper has also illustrated books that include the Japanese culture. Co-Sponsored with *Teachers Encouraging a Love for Literature (TELL)*.

Wednesday, November 14, 2001

Dr. Freeman Hrabowski, III

7 p.m. Purdue Memorial Union, West Faculty Lounge

Dr. Hrabowski, III has served as President of the University of Maryland Baltimore County since 1992. He is the co-author of *Beating the Odds*, focusing on parenting and high-achieving African American males in science. Dr. Hrabowski is currently co-authoring a second book, *Overcoming the Odds*, on successful African American females in science. Co-Sponsored with the Historically Black Institution Visitation Program.

Saturday, December 1, 2001

Loeb Playhouse

7 p.m. Fowler Hall

Featuring BCC Performing Arts Ensembles

Admission: \$5/Purdue Students, \$7/general public





Tribute to the Ensembles: Featuring New Directional Players and Jahari Dance Troupe

Congratulations to the New Directional Players on the successful completion of their first performance of the school year! “Soul in One: A Night of One Act Plays” was the theme of the coffeehouse held last month and it included two plays: “Hard to Serve” by Angela Wideman and “Moon Women Eat Pecan Pie” by Addae Moon.

Set in a classroom for at-risk kids, “Hard to Serve” dealt with a wide range of issues including alcoholism, rape and theft. Each character shared their experiences in coping with the issues they were faced with, but each also concluded by sharing a dream or longing despite all they had been through. Overall, the play dramatized the need for people to hold onto their dreams, no matter how difficult their circumstances may seem at times.

“Moon Women Eat Pecan Pie” took place in a diner at a bus station while a young college student, Rain, waits to board the bus to see her fiancée. Her best friend supports her decision to marry reminding her that her fiancée, which was her first and only boyfriend, is about to be a doctor, making their marriage a secure and safe decision. Later, Rain meets a young man, Grady, who shares with her the romantic story of a man who falls in love with a mysterious woman and spends his whole life waiting to be with her again. During their time at the bus station a small spark of romantic interest flickers between Rain and Grady though it is obvious that Rain is trying to ignore it because of its lack of practicality. Through the course of the play Rain is forced to rethink her decision—will she follow through on her plans because they are convenient and safe or will she follow her heart because it will make her happy?

Thank you to NDP members Michael Adams, Carl Barnett, Crystal Durril, Michael Courtney, Kelly Chavers and Stacia Murphy. You guys did a great job!



Leading the Way: Mark Vaughn, Artist-in- Residence

The Black Cultural Center would like to welcome Mark Vaughn, Jahari’s new artist-in-residence for the month of November. Vaughn, a native of Barbados, comes to us with 20 years of dance teaching experience. While in Barbados, Vaughn studied Afro-Caribbean, modern and jazz dance with the Barbados Dance Theatre Company. His love of dance translated into a life dedicated to learning and teaching the art.

In 1985, following a sponsorship to attend a dance, music and history workshop in Senegal, West Africa, Vaughn was made the Assistant Artistic Director of the Country Theater Workshop Dance Company in Barbados. A few years later Vaughn taught in Miami, Florida for the “Inner City Children’s Touring Dance Company,” and following that, Vaughn had to opportunity to perform and study with the Najwa Dance Corps in Chicago, Illinois. Throughout the years, Vaughn has had the opportunity to teach at many institutions including Northern Illinois University, the University of the Arts in Philadelphia, Morgan State University and Columbia College in Chicago. Vaughn’s other honors include appearing on Oprah Winfrey’s television series, “The Women of Brewster Place,” and touring with the internationally acclaimed musical from London, “Black Heroes in the Hall of Fame,” throughout the United States.

Vaughn’s leadership led him to be a founding member for the Kopano Performing Arts Company, where he served as the Artistic Director for five years. With his personal philosophy being “to whom much is given much is required,” Vaughn dedicates himself to “passing on as much as he can to those who are willing to accept.”

Kristen Bright



A Menu of African-American Music

On November 1 the Black Cultural Center’s Black Voices of Inspiration will perform in the Union North Ballroom at 7 p.m. The theme, “A Menu of African-American Music” will feature a variety of genres including spiritual, gospel, Motown and R&B. Geoffrey Kelsaw, the new director for BVOI, has 20 years of experience in the music field. He directed the Taylor University choir for ten years, worked with several choral ensembles in the Fort Wayne Community Schools, was the Minister of Music at the Pilgrim Baptist Church in Fort Wayne and is currently Minister of Music at Mt. Zion Baptist Church in Indianapolis and the director of the gospel choir for the Christian Theological Seminary in Indianapolis. Come support Mr. Kelsaw and the rest of BVOI while enjoying a full “Menu of African-American Music.”



FOCUS ON THE LIBRARY



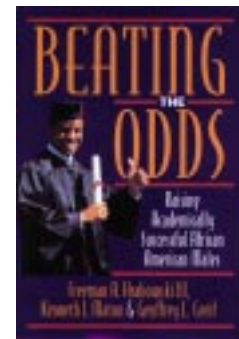
**Gwendolyn Brooks
(1917-2000)**

At the age of 83, renowned poet Gwendolyn Brooks passed away following a short-term illness. Many knew Brooks for her poetry, which promoted an understanding of black culture.

Gwendolyn Brooks was born in Topeka, Kansas in 1917. Soon after, she and her family moved to Chicago, Illinois where she spent the vast majority of her life. Early in her childhood, Brooks became aware of her interest in writing and by the age of thirteen, she won the attention of the *American Child* magazine, which published her first poem. Brooks continued her writing career throughout high school and college.

Through her poetry Brooks provided insight into the black community, she achieved this by using her own personal experiences of herself and her loved ones to as inspiration. After years of writing and collecting her first published book of poems was released entitled, "A Street in Bronzeville," in 1945.

Recommended Reading



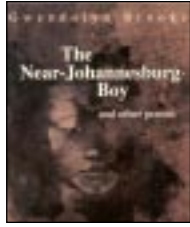
Beating the Odds
By: Freeman A. Hrabowski III, Kenneth I. Maton & Geoffrey L. Greif

To say that Gwendolyn Brooks has achieved many things in her lifetime would be an understatement. In 1950, she won the Pulitzer Prize in literature for her second book of poetry "Annie Allen." Brooks other achievements include: the Lifetime Achievement Award for the Arts, the National Endowment for the Arts awarded her Jefferson Lecturer for the Humanities, which is the highest honor bestowed by the federal government. In addition, Gwendolyn Brooks encouraged many young writers through her position as Illinois Poet Laureate and also by professor at the University of Chicago. She held this position until her death in the year of 2000 at the age of 83.

Years ago Purdue University and the Black Cultural Center had the pleasure of experiencing this great literary figure first-hand. Mrs. Brooks drew a huge crowd of students, staff, and community when she came to speak at the university. Members of the Haraka writers will have the opportunity to gain some of that insight at the Gwendolyn Brooks writer's conference that they will be attending in Chicago this month.

Although Mrs. Brooks is no longer with us physically her spirit lives on through all those that she has inspired in her lifetime.

LaToya Wright



The Near-Johannesburg Boy and other poems
By: Gwendolyn Brooks

BCC READS



L. Victoria Johnson

to lead discussion on
WOUNDS OF PASSION: A WRITING LIFE
by: bell books

Thursday & Friday, November 15 & 16, 2001, 6:30pm
Black Cultural Center Library
Purdue University

1100 3rd Street, West Lafayette, IN
For more information contact:
BCC Librarian Dorothy Washington,
(765) 494-3093

The BCC library is pleased to announce its forthcoming publication *Africana Reviews: An Occasional Online Publication* edited by BCC Librarian Dorothy Washington.



Grandpa's Face
Illustrated By: Floyd Cooper



to disembark
By: Gwendolyn Brooks



Did you know?

Omega Psi Phi Fraternity, Inc. is recognized as the first black student organization on Purdue's campus. The organization came to Purdue in April 1942, enriching the Purdue experience by exemplifying the motto: "Friendship is essential to the soul." Currently the organization participates in Omega Christmas, Clean-up day on campus and the Charles R. Dru Blood drive. The Black Cultural Center and Purdue honors and salutes you.

BCC Talk Series Explores African-American Issues

In response to the plethora of issues concerning African-American life and culture, the Black Cultural Center will host the BCC Talk Series each month, slated to begin in November. A series of discussion places important emphasis on pertinent topics directly related to the African-American experience. In addition, topics will also cover issues pertaining to the African diaspora. In order to accommodate the voices that are frequently unheard, the BCC Talk series will allow students a forum to express their concerns and opinions regarding significant matters plaguing our extended community.



Purdue Students Remember Aaliyah (1979-2001)

Sometimes in our daily comings and goings we get lost in the trivial details of life and lose right of what is important to us. Many of us were affected by the tragic death of singer Aaliyah because she made us realized each moment is precious and that nothing is guaranteed.

R&B vocalist Aaliyah (Swahili for "exalted one") was born Aaliyah Haughton in New York in 1979 but grew up in Detroit. By the time she was 11, Aaliyah was backing Gladys Knight in Las Vegas. From there, she would emerge from a non-stop vocal training regimen with a sound and vision completely her own. Before finishing high school she released her solo debut, 1994's *Age Ain't Nothing But a Number*, which went platinum.

In 2000, she contributed four tunes to the *Romeo Must Die* soundtrack. The following year, she came out with her latest album, simply titled *Aaliyah*. On August 25, 2001, tragedy struck when Aaliyah was killed in a plane crash in the Bahamas. The R&B world mourned the death of the gifted singer, who was only twenty-two years old.

Purdue Seniors Shy-Quon Ely and Angela Lott share their thoughts on this much-loved and talented artist:

"I thought her death was really tragic because she was at the pinnacle of her career. So many doors were beginning to open up for her with her music and acting.

Shy-Quon Ely

Senior, School of Health Sciences

"Her death makes you realize how important it is to live life to the fullest, appreciating each moment and not stressing about the small stuff. Faith in God works things out for the good."

Angela Lott

Senior, School of Engineering



Former Purdue Football Standout Continues Legacy

Leroy Keyes was named an assistant director of the John Purdue Club in July 2000. Previously, Keyes served as administrative assistant for the football team (1997-99) and as running backs coach in 1995 and 1996.

Keyes was voted Purdue's All-Time Greatest Football Player in 1987 in connection with the Boilermakers' football centennial anniversary. He was inducted into the College Football Hall of Fame in 1990 and was an inaugural inductee into the Purdue Intercollegiate Athletics Hall of Fame in 1994. Keyes was a halfback and defensive back from 1966 to 1968. He was a two-time consensus All-American, the 1967 Big Ten Conference Most Valuable Player and runner-up in the 1968 Heisman Trophy balloting. Keyes 2,090 career rushing yards rank seventh in school history.

A native of Newport News, Va., Keyes was a first round NFL draft choice in 1969 and played five years with the Philadelphia Eagles and Kansas City Chiefs. He subsequently was a desegregation specialist for the Philadelphia school district for 16 years.

Keyes earned his bachelor's degree from Purdue in 1969. His wife's name is Monica, and he is the father of four children: Jackie, Raymond, Courtland and Colin.

Contributed by John Purdue Club

In Memoriam...
Remembering Barbara
(A tribute to Barbara Christian)

She sang a sweet song
reverberating
black...
feminine...
black...
feminine...
Chanting echoes with an invisible
voice
funneled thru the jive of literary
discourse.
The formal manipulation of sound
bound by words
stricken to deaf ears....listen.
Do you feel the cacophony of sound
banging
like a book...a black book.
She eluded blank stares and
muted jeers when they told her
black wasn't enough,
the feminine voice must be heard .
The absurdity of our predicament
must be shared thru
the funnel of our own literary jive.
Christian chords of music will
prevail over pages
proudly remembering Toni and
Alice and Audre and Zora and
Nella.
Fine black and feminine fostering
female love...black female love.
Hands clenching tighter and tighter
forming fearlessness.
No need to teeter with last names
the black female voice stands
alone,
and aloft in the distance where the
forceful silence of literary jive
continues to whisper reverberations
of ...
Black...
Feminine...
Black...
Feminine...

Earnest Wallace

Barbara Christian, professor of African American studies, and a pioneer of contemporary American literary feminism, died Sunday, June 25, 2001 at her home in Berkeley, from cancer. She was 56.

Christian received a doctorate from Columbia University in 1970. A year later, she was appointed to Berkeley as an assistant professor. Previously, she had spent six years as an activist and teacher at New York's City College. At Berkeley, Christian soon became central in establishing the African American Studies department, where she taught from 1972 until her death. She served as chairwoman of that department from 1978 until 1983 and went on to chair the campus's new Ethnic Studies doctoral program from 1986 to 1989.

"She was a path-breaking scholar," said Percy Hintzen, chairman of the department of African American studies. "Nobody did more to bring black women writers into academic and popular recognition."

Christian was the first black woman at Berkeley to be granted tenure (1978), the first to receive the campus's Distinguished Teaching Award (1991), and the first to be promoted to full professor (1986). This year, she was awarded Berkeley's highest honor, the Berkeley Citation.

Condensed Bibliography:

Fixing Methodologies:*Beloved Female Subjects in Black and White: Race,Psychoanalysis,Feminism eds.* Barbara Christian, Elizabeth Abel,and Helene Moglen
Berkeley: University of California Press, 1997

I Shall Not Be Removed: The Life of Marlon Riggs.
San Francisco,CA: California Newsreel,1996
(videocassette) written by Barbara Christian



The face of AIDS in the United States is changing. Minorities, primarily African Americans and Hispanics, now constitute 54 percent of the more than 500,000 cases of AIDS reported since the epidemic began in 1981. A large number of new HIV infections are among people in the age group of 18-25. Since we as a student body represent this group, The Purdue Black Student Union will be hosting a forum to discuss the ways to combat this disease. The forum will be held during the week prior to World AIDS Day, which is December 1st. The objective of the forum is not just to stress "SAFE SEX", but to formulate plans of how each one of use can help reduce or stagnate this growing number, by reaching out into our own communities.The event will take place on Wednesday Nov. 28, 2001 at the BCC. (Together we will conquer this battle.) For more information, please contact Angela J. Lott at lott@purdue.edu.

References:

<http://www.thebody.comniaid/minor.html>



Best Kept Secret!

Did you know that the pilot of the plane that crashed in Pennsylvania on September 11 was an African-American! 1st Captain Leroy Homer was a true hero. As a pilot, he refused to let his plane be used as a terrorist weapon! This act saved the U.S. Capitol where both the U.S. Senate and House of Representatives were in session. Not only did Captain Leroy Homer foil the assault on Capitol Hill, no one on Pennsylvania ground was injured! Now that is a heroic and outstanding act. The Commercial Bank of New Jersey has set up a fund for Captain Leroy Homer's family. So, as we mourn the results of this tragic event, remember we also have an African-American Hero: 1st Captain Leroy Homer.



Life is supposed to be simple. We wake up everyday, go about our normal routines, and return home to the ones we love. This is what we expect to happen, and nine times out of ten, it does. But everyday in America and throughout the world, people wake up, kiss their loved ones goodbye and head off to a destination, never to return. Or they climb into bed, pull a pillow tight, and close their eyes, and their spirit leaves this earth to travel to a destination unknown. Sometimes they're in a hurry and neglect that goodbye or goodnight hug or kiss or even a simple, "I love you."

I use such a somber example simply to encourage you to take time to tell those who are close to you how you feel about them. In this hustle and bustle world, acquaintances, friends, and families go days and sometimes weeks without telling each other their feelings and love for one another. Seeing how we truly do not know "the day or the hour," wouldn't you like to at least start every day or end every night letting the ones you care for and love know that you do so? The worst feeling in the world is not letting someone know how you feel and then losing them. I say this from experience. I've been there several times, over several years, and still regret the little things that I didn't say till this day.

So when you're on your way to work, remember to acknowledge your loved ones. If you're on your way to class, let you roommate and friends know that you care about them and value their friendship and companionship. Randomly call family members and friends just to say hi and tell them they are special in your eyes. Don't let things like masculinity, petty arguments, or pride get in the way. We are here today, but tomorrow is not promised to any of us.

Eugene Johnson



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