

# CMC 50th Family Reunion eBook

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*July 3–6, 2025*

*Celebrating Legacy, Love & Lineage*

**Embassy Suites by Hilton Charlotte Uptown**

401 East Martin Luther King Jr. Blvd.

Charlotte, North Carolina, 28202



## Our Family Reunion Prayer

Almighty Father, as we gather here for our 50<sup>th</sup> Family Reunion, we are reminded of the love that you have shown each of us. We are here filled with love for you and for one another.

We thank thee for the privilege of this gathering and the tradition that has been a part of past reunions. Each time we come together, it allows each of us a time to laugh, to reflect, to establish new memories, to share, to fellowship, and to bond closer to one another.

Lord, make each of us an instrument of Thy peace; where there is hatred, let us sow love; where there is injury, pardon; where there is doubt, faith; where there is despair, hope; where there is darkness, light; and where there is sadness, joy.

Grant, that we may not so much seek to be consoled, as to console; to be understood, as to understand; to be loved, as to love; for it is in giving that we receive, it is in pardoning that we are pardoned; and it is in dying that we are born to eternal life.

We ask that you go with each of us in our journeys home. We ask for your protection by day and night. Keep us steadfast in your abiding faith and love.

*Amen*



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## **Weekend Programs of Events**

### **Thursday, July 3, 2025**

4 PM - 10 PM **Meet & Greet** – 10th Floor - Executive Suite (Registration)

6 PM - 10 PM **Remember the Time, and Games Night** – Ballrooms (B & C, D) 2<sup>nd</sup> Floor

8:45 PM – 9:30 PM **Roof-Top Fireworks\***

### **Friday, July 4, 2025**

10 AM - **Executive Committee Meeting** (Ballroom), INVITE ONLY

4 PM – 8 PM **Hospitality Room Open/Registration** - Ballrooms (B & C, D) 2<sup>nd</sup> Floor

7:30 PM – 8:30 PM **Line Dance Clinic** - Ballrooms (B & C, D) 2<sup>nd</sup> Floor

### **Saturday, July 5, 2025**

10:00 AM – 11 AM **Praise and Worship Practice** Ballrooms (B & C, D) 2<sup>nd</sup> Floor

11:00 AM – 1230 PM **CPR** - Ballrooms (B & C, D) 2<sup>nd</sup> Floor

-- Friends and Family CPR (No Certification)

6:00 PM – 10:00 PM **Family Reunion Banquet** (Ballroom B, C, & D)

### **Sunday, July 7, 2025**

9:30 AM – 11:00 AM **Sunday Jubilee** (Ballroom B, C, & D)



# CMC Family Reunion Banquet

**Saturday, July 5, 2025**

**Doors open at 5:30 pm**

**Come and Walk the Red Carpet**

**PLEASE BE SEATED BY 6:00**

**6:00 pm to 10:00 pm**

Mistress of Ceremonies	Deisha B. Eure
Welcome and Introduction	Mae Ruth Cooke
Response to Welcome	Mid-Atlantic Chapter
Blessing of Meal	Seth Cooke

## **Buffet Dinner**

Awards, Presentations, and Recognitions Mae Ruth Cooke/Laura James

Youngest Attendees	Oldest	Travel the Farthest	First Time
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Call to Memory	Frankie Draidfort	Angela Draidfort	Ann Wilson
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Save the Date	Philadelphia Chapter
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Family Photo	Kevin James
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## **Open the Dance Floor**

**Music by Uni-Que Entertainment**

**[Unique0484@gmail.com](mailto:Unique0484@gmail.com)**

**360 Machine**

**McKey S. Johnson Entertainment**

**Ballin' Broke! As the World Spin 360**

**[Mckeyshawnjohnson71@gmail.com](mailto:Mckeyshawnjohnson71@gmail.com)**



# Cook-Mickens-Cabbagestalk 50<sup>th</sup> Family Reunion

## Worship Service

July 6, 2025

9:30 AM

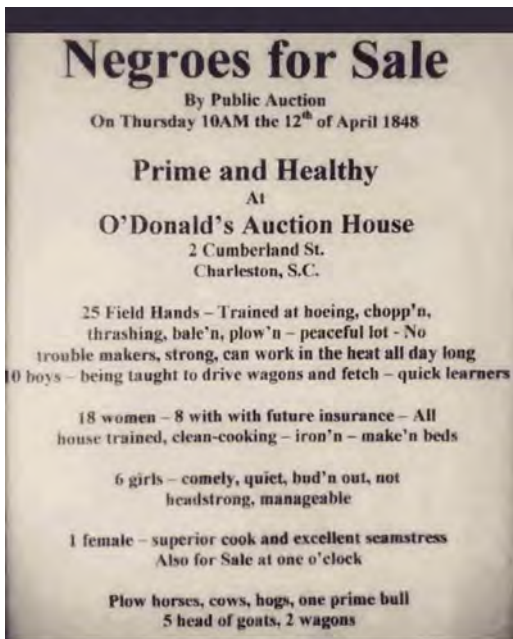
Presiding	Terrilyon C. James
Praise and Worship	CMC Family
Opening Prayer	Rev. Denise Kennedy
Old Testament	Delonte Corley
	Deuteronomy 6:4-9
New Testament	John Harris IV
	1 Corinthians 13:4-7
Introduction of Speaker	Arlington Cooke IV
Solo	Victoria Gentilini
Morning Message	Elder Nadine Cooke
Family Prayer Circle	Deacon Emory Young
Benediction	Elder Nadine Cooke



# From There to Here: A Southern Legacy of the Cook, Mickens, and Cabbagestalk Families

## Chapter I: The Cook Legacy — Rooted in Sumter Soil (1819–1932)

In the antebellum years of South Carolina, as the cotton fields of Sumter whispered stories of toil and endurance, **Prince Cook** was born in 1819. Though his earliest days were marked by bondage and hardship, his life



would become a cornerstone for generations to come. In 1860, on the brink of the Civil War, Prince married **Laura Slater**, a Sumter native born in 1816. She, too, had survived the rigors of enslavement, and together they built a quiet but enduring life.

Their union, forged in uncertain times, bore three children over nearly two decades. In the aftermath of war and emancipation, their family emerged as part of the first wave of freed Black Southerners working to rebuild lives on their own terms. Prince would eventually pass away in Bishopville, and

Laura in Mechanicsville, leaving behind a bloodline built on resilience and resolve.

Their son, **Gabrial Cook**, was born in 1866—a child of freedom, though still raised in the shadow of Reconstruction's broken promises. With Prince at age 47 and Laura at 50, Gabrial's birth was a testimony to faith and family. As a man, Gabrial married **Matilda Mickens**, and together they had ten children. He also fathered one additional child outside the marriage, further extending the Cook lineage. Gabrial passed away in Bishopville in 1932 at age 66, having witnessed the evolution of Black life from slavery to self-sufficiency.



## Chapter II: The Mickens Line — From Enslavement to Emancipation (1814–1917)

While Prince and Laura were raising their children in Sumter, another family was planting roots nearby. **Alston Mickens**, born in 1814, and **Nancy Mickens**, born in 1819, married in 1845. They brought eight children into the world across fifteen years—a remarkable feat considering the backdrop of enslavement that defined their early lives.

Their daughter, **Matilda Mickens**, was born in 1870, during a brief but hopeful period in Southern history. Her birth came after emancipation, but her upbringing remained shaped by racial divisions and economic hardship. Despite this, she



would go on to become a mother of strength and determination. Matilda had three children with **Joe Cook**, then later married **Gabrial Cook**, with whom she raised ten more. She passed away in 1917 at the age of 47 in Sumter, remembered as a matriarch whose legacy would echo through generations.

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## Chapter III: The Cabbagestalk Name — Born of Will and Identity (1830–1870s)

Long before the Cabbagestalk name appeared in public records, it existed in spirit. The first known record dates to 1858, in the will of John Ashby Colclough, where a woman named **Mary Lawson**, age 75, was listed as living with her son **William** and his wife **Rentha (Arenza Brooks)**.

By 1870, in the Swimming Pens district of Sumter County, Mary had claimed a new identity: **Mary Cabbagestalk**. No earlier mention of this name exists in any official record. The name “Cabbagestalk” is believed to have been chosen by Mary herself—an act of independence and identity following the end of slavery.



Hattie Capers  
Cabbagestalk





This surname became a banner under which her descendants could stand united and proud.



Enals Cabbagestalk

Mary's other children—**Phillip, Richard, and Stafford**—were discovered across various plantations, likely as a result of being rented or sold during enslavement. The lack of records for her daughters reflects the harsh truth of erased identities during that era. But one fact remains: **every Cabbagestalk alive today can trace their lineage back to Mary.**

Mary's son, **William Cabbagestalk**, was born in 1830 alongside his twin brother **Peter**. Their father, **Richard**, was just 20; Mary was 37. William would go on to marry **Arenza Mary Brooks**, daughter of **Morris and Delia Brooks**, and together they raised sixteen children—ten sons and six daughters—between 1859 and 1897. This formidable family helped spread the Cabbagestalk name across Sumter and beyond.



**Cassie Cabbagestalk, Emma Isaac Cabbagestalk, Dessie Cabbagestalk Jenkins**

Their daughter, **Annie Jackson (née Cabbagestalk)**, was born in 1864. She would go on to marry **Richard Jackson**, and, through them, another line of this proud family began to branch outward. Annie lived a full life, passing away at 90 in 1954—her story bridging slavery's memory and the hope of the civil rights era.



## Chapter IV: A New Century – Austin and Carrie Lou Cook (1894–1955)

As the 20th century opened its doors, the children of Gabriel and Matilda Cook stepped into a world still struggling with the legacy of slavery. Among them was **Austin Cook**, born in 1894. He inherited a family history rich with resilience and survival.

Austin married **Carrie Lou Jackson**, also born in December 1894 in Sumter. Carrie Lou was the daughter of **Richard Jackson** and **Annie Jackson (née Cabbagestalk)**, making her the product of two deeply rooted Black South Carolina bloodlines.



Austin Cook

Carrie Cook

Together, Austin and Carrie Lou built a vast and loving family. Between 1912 and 1938, they brought **fourteen children into the world—ten sons and four daughters**—during some of the most tumultuous years of the 20th century: the Great Depression, two World Wars, and the rise of the Jim Crow South. Their household became a foundation of faith and unity in a time when such strength was both radical and necessary.

Austin passed away in 1950 at age 56, followed by Carrie Lou in 1955 at age 60. Yet their legacy endures—not just in name, but in the values, lives, and memories passed down through generations.

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### Epilogue: A Legacy Continues

The story of the **Cooks, Mickens, and Cabbagestalks** is not a simple tale of birth and death. It is a mosaic of triumph against injustice, of choosing names when none were given, of love forged in times of hate, and of families rising from fields once meant to hold them down.

From Sumter to Bishopville, from Swimming Pens to Bradford Springs, this family journey charts a path from enslavement to empowerment, from



anonymity to identity. It reminds us that where we come from is not simply a place, but a people, a promise, and a purpose.

**From there... we are now here. And from here, the story continues.**

Your challenge is to document your branch to its roots. Look under [CMCFamilyReunion.com/Resources](http://CMCFamilyReunion.com/Resources) to get started.

Thank you, CANDICE BROCKETT— *Candice is a descendant of the Cabbagestalk Family and a Researcher* and Ancestry.com/DNA.



# **BLACK FAMILY PLEDGE**

*By Dr. Maya Angelou*

Because we have forgotten our ancestors  
our children no longer give us honor.

Because we have lost the path our ancestors cleared,  
kneeling in perilous undergrowth,  
our children cannot find their way.

Because we have banished the God of our ancestors,  
our children cannot pray.

Because the long wails of our ancestors  
have faded beyond our hearing,  
our children cannot hear us crying.

Because we have abandoned our  
wisdom of mothering and fathering,  
our befuddled children give birth to children  
they neither want nor understand.

Because we have forgotten how to love,  
the adversary is within our gates,  
and holds us up to the mirror of the world,  
shouting,

Regard the loveless.



# **A Family Reunion Is A Time...**

*By Myles Cabbagestalk*

A family reunion is a time  
For family members to reunite

A family reunion is a time  
For generations to come together  
For the family to remember the family tree

A family reunion is a time  
For the family to reminisce on memories

A family reunion is a time  
For the younger generation  
to learn about where they came from

A family reunion is something  
That we will always cherish in our hearts



# No Cream in Her Coffee

*A poem by Tim Fitzgerald  
To my Auntie Mae Ruth Cooke*

You spoke of absence—  
Of proof, of pure, of place,  
Of lines too blurred for heritage to trace.  
But I invite you to look again,  
And meet my Auntie.

No cream in her coffee.  
She is ebony bold, 94 years strong,  
Matriarch of memory, where our roots belong.  
On sacred land, one hundred acres wide,  
In South Carolina's arms, we still abide.

She is our living archive,  
Our gospel thread,  
Holding history in her hands,  
And futures in her head.  
When questions arise about who we are,  
She is the lighthouse—  
Seen from near and far.

She marked the church,  
Where prayers once built our bones,  
Where songs rose through rafters,  
And whispered through stones.  
She rallied the state to honor our past,  
With a plaque that says:  
“We are here. We will last.”



Her calendar is colored with Zoom and zeal,  
In women's circles, she's the real deal.  
Still speaking, still leading, still lifting our name,  
Still pouring truth with no need for fame.

Our family branches reach back to 1795,  
Thick with names,  
And stories alive.

From the red dirt roads to city street lanes,  
We gather each year to remember their names.  
Five chapters strong, across state and coast,  
Each reunion a vow to honor them most.

She is the last of eleven,  
Our greatest generation's final flame,  
A keeper of the stories that gave us our name.  
And when science peeked into her blood's own thread,  
It found Africa—whole, unmixed, widespread.  
Ninety-nine point five percent truth to see,  
The rest a whisper of Indigenous legacy.

So when you speak of absence,  
Of what cannot be found,  
Remember this queen,  
So regal, so sound.

No need for guesses, for myths or for scoffing—  
She is our legacy,  
No cream in her coffee.





HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES  
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20515

JAMES E. CLYBURN  
SIX CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT  
SOUTH CAROLINA

July 4, 2025

Dear Cook-Mickens-Cabbagestalk Family,

It is my pleasure to bring you greetings as you gather this weekend for your 50<sup>th</sup> Annual family reunion in Charlotte, North Carolina. I commend you for bringing your extended family together to celebrate this wonderful occasion.

As you gather for a weekend of thanks and celebration, take time to recall the history and traditions of the Cook-Mickens-Cabbagestalk family and reflect on the accomplishments and sacrifices of the past that serve as the foundation for the strong ties that connect you as a family.

Families are the foundation upon which we build our lives. There is nothing more important or satisfying than getting together with our loved ones. I often say that we are the sum total of our life experiences. Many of those experiences are shaped by our family and heritage. You should value this chance to get reacquainted with relatives and celebrate the wisdom and knowledge of those guardians of your family's rich culture and heritage. I regret that a previous commitment prevents me from joining you on this very important occasion.

With kindest regards, I am,

Sincerely,

James E. Clyburn  
U.S. House of Representatives

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<sup>1</sup> James Enos Clyburn, born July 21, 1940, in Sumter, South Carolina, is a Democratic U.S. Representative from South Carolina, first elected in 1993. He previously worked as a teacher, newspaper publisher, and held various public service roles in South Carolina. Clyburn has served as House Democratic Caucus Chair, Majority Whip, and Assistant Democratic Leader. In 2024, he received the Presidential Medal of Freedom from President Joe Biden.





# Thank You from Mid-Atlantic



**Save the Date: Philadelphia**

A dark brown rectangular background featuring a silhouette of the Philadelphia skyline at dusk or dawn. The skyline includes prominent buildings like the Comcast Center and the Philadelphia City Hall. The text is overlaid on this background.

**SAVE THE DATE**  
**CMC**  
**PHILADELPHIA**  
**CHAPTER**  
**2026 FAMILY REUNION**

**STAY TUNED FOR  
MORE DETAILS!**

**DOCUMENTING OUR HISTORY**

**July 10-12, 2026**



# Letters of Reflection

## Letter of Reflection From South Carolina Chapter

### South Carolina Family Reunion Reflections: A Journey Through 50 Years 1975–2025

It began as a dream — quietly nurtured in kitchens, on front porches, and through long-distance calls bridging North and South. A vision took root: *What if we gathered, not just as individuals, but as one united family — in one place — to honor who we are?* In the summer of 1975, Austin and Mae Ruth transformed that dream into reality. On July 4, 1975, the first official Family Reunion came to life.

That inaugural gathering took place at Mechanicsville United Methodist Church in Lee County, South Carolina. Beginning at 4:00 p.m. on Ashwood Lake Road, the air was filled with the spirit of kinship and unity. Nearly 350 family members traveled from across the country — from Pennsylvania, Virginia, Michigan, New York, North Carolina, Maryland, New Jersey, California, and of course, South Carolina. It was a beautiful sight: generations of relatives — many meeting for the first time — embracing and connecting. Though Heyward was not present, his spirit was deeply felt.



Austin, Elijah, and Heywood

After the service, we gathered under the trees to enjoy a feast reminiscent of home: rice, fried chicken, field peas, macaroni and cheese, ham, sweet potato pies — and stories flowed as freely as the laughter and sweet tea. Our history was not read but remembered — spoken from the hearts of elders whose voices honored the past and inspired the future.



That evening, the reunion came alive with music and dance. Joann, Elijah, and Genevieve (Janie) lit up the dance floor, joined by cousins, young and old. Time seemed to pause as generations celebrated together. This wasn't just a party — it was a powerful reclaiming of our shared legacy.



William, Mae Ruth, B.I., Tillman, Austin, J.L., and Heywood. Circa 1990.

The second reunion followed on July 3, 1976, once again at Mechanicsville United Methodist Church. Reverend E.H. McDowell, Sr., offered his blessings, renewing the spiritual foundation of our gathering. The fellowship continued at the home of Austin and Carrie, where their children stood as living tributes to the seeds they had planted.

In 1977, the third reunion traveled north to Detroit, Michigan. After two years in Sumter,



Our family's vision expanded. That year, a second chapter was born, led by Austin and Louvenia Cook, alongside Tilman, William, Heyward, and Herman Brunson. With limited hotel space, family members opened their homes — and their hearts. Air mattresses and sleeping bags filled the floors, but

no one complained. Hospitality was the spirit of the season, and laughter, barbecue, and stories filled every backyard and kitchen.

The 1978 reunion in Philadelphia marked another evolution. With leadership from B.I., Mike, Nora, Gloria, J.L., and Joann, the Philadelphia Chapter was established. We transitioned to hotel accommodations — a practical step, but also a symbol of our growth. That year, Nora introduced our first official Family Reunion Book — a sacred archive of names, stories, and family lines that rooted us in our shared history. And from these gatherings, another cherished tradition was born: the Family Reunion T-shirt — a visible symbol of unity and pride.



Over the past five decades, many have stepped forward to serve, organize, and host. To every chapter chairperson and committee member: thank you. Your leadership has been the glue that binds us and the bridge connecting generations.

Through it all, we've weathered social and cultural change — from the growing inclusivity of the church and society to enduring national trials. We lived through the COVID-19 pandemic, just as earlier generations endured the Spanish Flu. We witnessed the election of the first African American U.S. President and the first woman Vice President. History has marched forward — and so have we.

Today, we proudly celebrate five active reunion chapters. The torch is now in our hands. It is our charge to pass it forward — to inspire the next generation to carry on this tradition not just as a gathering, but as a homecoming, a legacy, and a joyful return to roots.

May the blessings continue to flow, and may we never forget the dream that became a living legacy.

With love and gratitude,  
**The Family**



## Reflections from the Philadelphia Chapter – A Family Story

When the torch of the family reunion was passed from the Detroit siblings, James “B.I.” Cook and his wife Lelia “Mike” Cook, didn’t hesitate. True to Philadelphia’s fighting spirit, they embraced the challenge with open arms and determined hearts. In July 1978, the City of Brotherly Love became the proud host of a family gathering that would leave a lasting mark on generations to come.



James and Lelia quickly rallied the troops. With the help of Carrie Mickens, Bootie Mickens, John Cook, and many others, the preparations began in earnest. The planning was a true family affair. James “Jimmy or Jr.”, Nora, Gloria, JoAnn, and Stephen “J.L.” Cook were each given tasks—no one was left on the sidelines. The heartbeat of all the activities was pulsed from one address: 2222 Gerritt Street. This was the epicenter of planning and love.



From Gerritt Street, the crew set off for the Italian Market, where they bought the food that would feed the reunion crowd. Once the groceries were in hand, they returned to prepare it all—cooking, packing, and hauling it to the VFW hall. Whatever needed to be done, the Philly crew had it covered, and the rest of the family followed their lead. The weekend was a whirlwind of sightseeing, celebration, and togetherness.

Out of this energy and momentum came a brilliant idea. Nora envisioned a way to capture the family’s growing legacy. She began compiling what would become the \*Family Reunion Book\*—a treasured volume filled with oral histories from elder relatives, detailed lineage



breakdowns, and contact information for attendees each year. It soon became our historical bible. Families across the country made sure to update their section each year with births, weddings, graduations, and the heartbreaking losses of loved ones. If you traveled, you took the book. In an emergency or when in need of a connection, the book was always there.

Not stopping there, Nora also spearheaded the \*Family Reunion Cookbook\*, gathering recipes from family, church members, and friends. Both books became essential tools of connection, culture, and heritage—preserving the soul of the family.



Over time, the Philadelphia chapter blossomed. The gatherings grew so large that they began traveling by chartered bus. Inspired by the South Carolina chapter, Philly also began hosting reunions in hotels—making space for an even greater family experience. As the older generation began to pass the torch, the younger generation stepped forward to carry the

mantle. John and Vera Harris, J. Christopher Cook, Cheryl Cook, Collen Cook, John Harris IV, William and JoAnn James, Orey and Valerie Ferrell—all took their place in the ongoing legacy of leadership.

Through it all, the Philadelphia chapter remained a pillar of strength and commitment. Though many have transitioned, their love for family and fearless willingness to accept any challenge lives on.

### **In Loving Memory Of:**

James and Lelia Cook

Stephen “J.L.” Cook

Hammie Carter

John Cook

Veronica Scott

Arthur and Katherine Smith

James “Jr.” and Joyce Cook



Nora C. Harris  
Gloria C. Henry  
Mary Henry  
William “Billy” James, Jr.  
Charlton Harris  
Cameron Harris  
William and Hattie James  
Bootie Mickens

\*Submitted with love by Terrilyon C. James\*





## REFLECTIONS

### The New Jersey Chapter - 50-Year Family Reunion Reflections

As we gather here today to celebrate 50 years of family reunions, we're not just marking time—we're honoring legacy. Half a century of shared meals, stories, laughter, and love. Fifty years of welcoming new members into the fold, remembering those we've lost, and passing on traditions that have stood the test of time.

As we look around, we see generations bound not just by blood, but by commitment to showing up, to staying connected, and to valuing where we come from. Each reunion has been a thread in the tapestry of our family's story, woven with joy, resilience, and countless memories.

We remember the first reunions—how simple they were. A potluck in someone's backyard, children running barefoot, and elders sitting in lawn chairs sharing wisdom and jokes. We remember the ones who helped build this tradition, those who made the phone calls, cooked the food, and made sure we had a reason to gather. Many of them are no longer with us in body, but their spirit is deeply present in all we do.



Paternal grandmother, Rosa Dargon  
Enoch of Denise Kennedy

Over 50 years, we've seen weddings, births, and milestones. We've comforted each other through loss, cheered each other through victories, and leaned on each other through life's storms. Our family has grown in size and strength across distances, cultures, and generations.

In the near future, we hope to pass the torch to the next generation—to keep the reunion going, to keep the stories alive, and to keep reminding each other of the strength we find in family.

To everyone here, and those who are with us in spirit—thank you. For 50 years of love, laughter, and loyalty. Here's to 50 more.

**The New Jersey Chapter**



## REFLECTIONS

### THE DETROIT CHAPTER

(Detroit, Michigan)

The first official family reunion was held in Sumter, South Carolina at the Mechanicsville United Methodist Church on Saturday, July 4, 1975. The idea was born in 1974, the result of a large gathering at the Cook Homestead with all immediate family (siblings) were in attendance.

On July 4<sup>th</sup>, 1975 (I was there). It was estimated that 350 family members gathered. They journeyed from California, Maryland, Michigan, New Jersey, New York, North Carolina, Pennsylvania, South Carolina, and Virginia.



Jr., Marcia, Charles & Hugh

After attending church service there was a dinner on a massive scale with a variety of delicious homemade Southern foods and desserts.

There were so many unfamiliar faces (cousins, 1<sup>st</sup>, 2<sup>nd</sup>, etc.) I had never seen. Attending that gathering infused our lives with our love of family. It brought us closer together and until today we stay in touch. I now represent the senior hierarchy of the Cook – Mickens – Cabbagestalk (CMC) Family Reunion – Detroit Chapter. So many names and faces have been added to our family tree. So many of our loved ones have gone. We have gone from many to a few but, the love did not diminish it is just stronger.

Over the years, we have had Reunions in various cities and states. We gathered on cruises. We have gathered at the Homestead and in hotels. Precious memories and such beautiful journeys. From the backyard barbeques and homemade fixings to hotel menu choices. We survived Covid (when we were unable to gather physically, we made it work). Thank you for ZOOM! And, a huge 'Thank You' Cousin Tim who gave birth to our *Zoom Happy Hour* every Friday. We recently celebrated 5+ years! **AMAZING!** Join when you can.

The Detroit Chapter hosted its first Reunion on July 2, 1977, in Detroit, Michigan. We also hosted Reunions on July 5, 1980. The official name: Cook – Mickens – Cabbagestalk Family Reunion was adopted at the time. This Chapter went on to host the 10<sup>th</sup> Reunion July 6-8, 1984, the 14<sup>th</sup> Reunion July 2<sup>nd</sup>, 1988, the 18<sup>th</sup> Reunion – July, 1992, the 23<sup>rd</sup> Reunion -



July 11-13, 1997, the 27<sup>th</sup> Reunion – July 5 7, 2002, the 31<sup>st</sup> Reunion, July 21-23, 2006, 37<sup>th</sup> Reunion, July 8 -10, 2011 etc. We last hosted the CMC Reunion in July 2021 due to COVID. So many things to *remember* sightseeing trips to Canada, Windsor, Ontario just across the Detroit River and touring the Jackson Flower Garden, visits to Motown, our prayer breakfasts. Family members

looked forward to the hospitality gatherings, card playing, the Saturday night banquets (the themes) and so much more.

I could go on and on but, I will just end here.

We must not forget those who were an integral part of the Detroit Chapter. They always made themselves available to do whatever needed to be done. They now rest in eternal peace.

- Austin Cook (Luvenia)*
- Tilmon Cook (Comilla)*
- William Cook \* (Ruby)*
- Heyward Cooke*
- Harmon Brunson (Ann)*
- Dorothea Bryant (Moses)*

\*As a Chapter and Family, we must tell you how honored and proud to tell you that William Cook received the Congressional Gold Medal in 2011<sup>2</sup> as one of the first Black *Montford Point Marines* under President Barack Obama. Although he was unable to attend the ceremony in Washington, DC because of health problems, he was able to attend the local ceremony in Detroit. If you knew him, you would know how immensely proud he was to be a *Montford Point Marine*. He took part in many local parades and in other events across this country. Uncle William attend 35 Cook – Mickens – Cabbagestalk Family Reunions. He served as its president for many years.



Montford Point Marine William Cook is presented with the congressional gold medal by Lieutenant Colonel Lindell Holm during a ceremony held at the Detroit Metropolitan Police Academy in Detroit on Sept. 22, 2012. KIMBERLY P. MITCHELL, Detroit Free Press

<sup>2</sup> <https://www.freep.com/story/news/2021/08/17/montford-point-marines-receive-medals-detroit/8168136002/>



Some of his Marine Corps' artifacts (personal effects) are on display in the Marine Corps Museum in Triangle, Virginia, next to the Marine Corps Base Quantico. Some family members have had an opportunity to visit the Museum in their travels and have viewed the display.



Herman Nathaniel, Uncle William's first cousin, received his Medal posthumously as he passed before he could make the trip to Washington, DC to attend the official ceremony. They shared stories of their Marine journey as Black men. They had a special bond not only as cousins but as Marines.

It is with *emotional overload* that I submit the CMC - Detroit Chapter's reflections. I am certain there are so many memories that cannot be encapsulated in this writing, but Congratulations on the celebration of our 50<sup>th</sup> CMC anniversary.

Respectfully submitted: Marcia Cook Sanders



## The Mid-Atlantic Chapter

Dear Family,

The 50<sup>th</sup> Cook, Mickens, and Cabbagestalk (CMC) Family Reunion is an extraordinary milestone. Fifty years of love, legacy, and togetherness is a great achievement. This tradition is more than just an annual gathering; it is a powerful testament to our shared history, our resilient spirit, and the unbreakable bond that connects us across generations and geography.

Each reunion has been a cherished chapter in the story of the CMC family, story by story, and memory by memory. From the early days when our ancestors laid the foundation, to today, as new generations rise to carry the torch, we honor the strength, sacrifice, and vision that brought us here. We celebrate the births, remembering loved ones who passed, and celebrating all the accomplishments and milestones. Through it all we continue to grow in love, in number, and in unity.

Among the five chapters of our family tree, the Mid-Atlantic Chapter proudly stands as the “baby of the bunch.” Though the youngest chapter, our roots run deep in connection and purpose. Officially established in 2004, our first reunion was held at the BWI Holiday Inn in Baltimore, Maryland in 2008, a moment filled with hope, excitement, and a renewed sense of belonging as we joined the greater CMC family legacy.

A special thanks to our original members Mabel Cabbagestalk, Belinda Cabbagestalk, Issac Stalks, Tim Fitzgerald, Wanda Ampy, Chonda Young, and Tammy Gentilini, whose vision, passion, and leadership ensured that the Mid-Atlantic voice would be heard, seen, and celebrated. Their efforts laid the groundwork for a thriving chapter that continues to contribute energy, joy, and renewal to our family’s journey.

As we reflect on this golden anniversary, let us remember that there is something sacred about knowing where you come from—and even more sacred about knowing who stands beside you. Our reunions remind us that no matter how far we travel or how long we are apart, we will always have a home in one another.

Let us honor our ancestors by continuing this tradition. Let us cherish each other in the present and inspire the future by nurturing the next generation. Our legacy lives on through them.



As the saying goes,  
“The love in our family flows strong and deep, leaving us memories to  
treasure and keep.”

Here’s to 50 years of CMC family reunions and to 50 more years of  
celebration, remembrance, and unconditional love.

With love and gratitude,  
The Mid-Atlantic Chapter  
*CMC Family Reunion – 2025*



## **CMC Website Committee Members**

### **CMC Family Reunion: A Reflection on Virtual Gatherings and Technology Integration**

Dear Family,

The CMC Family Reunion was officially suspended in 2021 due to the continued impact of the COVID-19 pandemic, which restricted travel and prohibited large in-person gatherings across the country. In response to these unprecedented circumstances, the CMC Family Reunion Zoom Happy Hour was launched in 2020—a virtual gathering held every Friday from 5:00 PM to 7:00 PM to preserve our family connection and fellowship during a time of uncertainty.

That same year, the Philadelphia Chapter was scheduled to host the family reunion. Confronted with the challenge of transitioning to a virtual format, the chapter took on the ambitious task of organizing a three-day online reunion via Zoom. The program featured commemorative T-shirts, a Friday evening happy hour, Saturday activities including Family History presentations and a spirited game of Black Jeopardy and concluded with a Sunday morning worship service. Despite the complexities of coordinating such an event virtually, the experience proved both valuable and enriching.

In 2022, as the country continued navigating the effects of the pandemic, the Detroit Chapter hosted a streamlined and focused virtual reunion. Building on the insights gained from the previous year, the chapter successfully delivered a meaningful and well-organized event that demonstrated the continued strength and adaptability of our family network.

At the June 2023 CMC Executive Committee Meeting, the focus shifted toward long-term technology integration to support communication and engagement throughout the year. The committee resolved to conduct a formal assessment of technological needs and associated costs. The primary objective was to establish a system for gathering, managing, and disseminating key categories of family information—guided by designated family members to ensure consistent oversight and maintenance.



The CMC Family Reunion has steadily evolved from traditional methods of communication, such as letters and telephone calls, to dynamic digital platforms. This transformation has empowered each chapter to share both local and national family news with greater efficiency and reach. Our technology infrastructure now includes:

1. CMC Family Reunion website [CMCFamilyReunion.com](http://CMCFamilyReunion.com)
2. Email distribution for announcements and updates - [info@CMCFamilyReunion.com](mailto:info@CMCFamilyReunion.com)
3. Dedicated landing pages for the Cook, Mickens, and Cabbagestalk family histories
4. A continuously updated family news blog
5. Active Facebook pages maintained by each chapter

This year marks the fifth anniversary of the CMC Family Reunion Zoom Happy Hour—a milestone that reflects our enduring commitment to connection, continuity, and community.

Zoom.com Meeting ID: 823 1128 7057 Password: 202214

We look forward to celebrating this achievement with all of you.

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### **CMC Website Committee Members 2025**

Tim Fitzgerald (Mid-Atlantic)	Deisha B. Eure (New Jersey)
Denise Kennedy (New Jersey)	Marcia Sanders (Detroit)
Winnifred Vaughn (Detroit)	Sybil Cook (South Carolina)
Tammy Gentilini (Mid-Atlantic)	Chonda Young (Mid-Atlantic)
Laura James (South Carolina)	Seth Cooke (Detroit)
John Harris (Philadelphia)	Mae Ruth Cooke (South Carolina)
Wanda Ampy (Mid-Atlantic)	Eloise Sims (South Carolina)
Terrilyon James (South Carolina)	William James (Philadelphia)
Kristen James (South Carolina)	Cheryl Cook (Philadelphia)

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## 2025 Announcements --

### Congratulations

#### Births



**Khaie Gayle  
and Briana  
Clarke  
Welcome  
Mikaria Carter  
March 2025**

**Granddaughter  
of Jervar Gayle  
and Great Great  
Granddaughter  
of Alonzo Sr**

**Qua'mir Thornton** - born May 19, 2024

Son of Diswaniqu (Nique Nique) Parker, grandson of Patrick Simms, great-grandson of Darryl Simms, great-great-grandson of Ardelia Butler Simms





*Aiyana celebrated her  
18<sup>th</sup> Birthday*

## Graduations



### **Emmanuel Cook**

Graduated from Michigan State University (MSU) in December 2024 with a degree in Criminal Justice. He will pursue his graduate studies at Wayne State University (WSU) this Fall.

Parents: Eric Austin Cook and Lora M. Cook

Grandparents: Marcia Cook Sanders and Isaac Sanders



## Robert Ethan Cook

Graduated from Detroit's Renaissance High School in June 2024.

Affectionately known to us as 'Ethan', received a scholarship to the University of Michigan (U of M) and is now attending there, pursuing a degree in Engineering.

Parents: Eric Austin Cook and Lora M. Cook

Grandparents: Marcia Cook Sanders and Isaac N. Sanders



**Elijah Corbett**, son of Alyse Corbett and grandson of Rosalyn P. Brown, is a proud graduate of Matawan Regional High School in New Jersey. A gifted



vocalist, Elijah was an active member of the MRHS Chorus, where he served as both a conductor and soloist. His exceptional musical talent earned him formal recognition from the Matawan Board of Education in May 2025.

Elijah is now continuing his artistic journey at **Rider University**, where he is pursuing a **degree in Music Production**, combining his passion for performance with the technical skills to shape the sound of tomorrow.

We are so proud of you!!! Love You



## Class of 2025



**Imani Corbett** is a proud daughter of Alyse Corbett and granddaughter of Rosalyn P. Brown. A recent graduate of Seton Hall University, she earned a Bachelor of Arts in Criminal Justice with a minor in Psychology. Passionate about justice and advocacy, Imani is pursuing a career in law enforcement with a strong focus on supporting victims of domestic violence and uplifting marginalized communities.

At Seton Hall, Imani made a lasting impact as the founder and President (2023–2025) of the university’s first NAACP chapter. Under her leadership, the chapter received the prestigious Cybil Briggs Award for advancing African American political activism. Imani herself was honored with the 2025 NAACP Trailblazer Freedom Award from the Oranges Maplewood Chapter.

Her leadership and service extended across campus:

- **2025 Mother Seton Presidential Leadership Award Recipient**
- **Resident Assistant (2023–2025), RA Mentor, and Desk Assistant**
- **Vice President of Committee Operations, Black Student Union (2023–2024)**
- **Member, National Council of Negro Women**
- **Fall 2022 Inductee, Educational Opportunity Program**

Imani also gained real-world experience as a **Fall 2023 intern** at the **Hudson County Prosecutor’s Office**, contributing to cases in both the Special Victims and Homicide Units.

In Spring 2024, she was initiated into **Zeta Phi Beta Sorority, Incorporated**, serving as Secretary, Social Action Chair, and Domestic Violence Chair. In 2025, she was also inducted into the **Nu Iota Chapter of the Order of Omega**, a national leadership honor society.



Imani Corbett is a trailblazer, mentor, and advocate—committed to justice, service, and creating lasting change.

Way to GO!!! We are so proud of you and all your accomplishments. Love You.

The image shows a social media post from the account 'chs2025commits'. The post features the text 'WHITNEY CABBAGESTALK' in large, bold, black letters. Below this text are two images: on the left, a young girl in a pink and white striped shirt holding a small white dog; on the right, the New York University logo (a purple square with a white torch) and the text 'NEW YORK UNIVERSITY' in purple. At the bottom of the post is a purple banner with the text 'MAJOR: FILM & TV' in white. The post also includes a 'Following' button and a three-dot menu icon.

**Whitney**

Announcement:  
Congratulations,  
*Whitney*, on your  
graduation from High  
School. See you at  
NYU in the Fall.

**Darryl Cabbagestalk**

Let's celebrate my stunning and clever #2 granddaughter, **Cheyenne**, on her graduating from Thomas Jefferson College, majoring in Psychology.

I'm incredibly proud of you, Cheyenne.  
Love you

**Stephanie R. Cook.**





Our first born is officially a college graduate 🎓🌸🌟. We are most proud of all of her achievements and the resilience that she has exemplified. She graduated from high school and began college during the pandemic, but that didn't stop her from being exceptional in all of her pursuits.

Bachelor of Science in Business Administration Concentration in Small Business and Entrepreneurship, President of Bowie Models Inc. (Tempo BMI), Inducted into NCNW Bulldog Pitch Competition Runner Up -Revenue Generating (Sponsored by

Verizon), Entrepreneurial Strategist - frequently selected to share her concepts and insights on entrepreneurship with future business owners. Co-owner of Cab Lane LLC We celebrate your success and support your dreams. Congratulations **Kyra Cab!** We love you ❤️

This young woman is going places. 🥰 Proud is an understatement; I am so happy we could come together just for you, **Larissa**. Your achievements are outstanding, just like you. You are beautifully made in every way, and I can't wait for your next adventure in college so the University of Tennessee can see this star 🌟 in action. love you, ❤️ **Auntie Dr. Annie** 🍷





**Dr. Verona A Cabbagestalk**

**Larissa J. Sinclair** - granddaughter graduated from HS, Clarksville, Tennessee, majoring in Biomedical Engineering, University of Tennessee.



- Daughter of Chief Andre F. Sinclair & wife Lisa Monrose Sinclair- Andre is the son of Matthew & Verona Shoy Cabbagestalk.

Grandparents- Matthew & Verona Shoy Cabbagestalk) North Carolina/ South Carolina

Grandparents- Luis & Rosa Monrose, Clarksville, Tennessee)





Great Grandparents- Eliza Ann Cabbagestalk Alston & Marion Alston

Off to high school. Congratulations **Rea!!**



**Bryson China** - graduated from elementary school on June 5th

Son Shae Simms, grandson of Rayburn Simms, great-grandson of Joslin Simms, great-great-grandson of Ardelia Butler Simms

**Quinn Simms** - graduated from preschool on June 5th

Daughter of Neita Simms, granddaughter of Billy Simms, great-granddaughter of Joslin Simms, great-great-granddaughter of Ardelia Butler Simms

**Daneya Simms** - graduated from high school - June 2024

Daughter of DJ Simms, granddaughter of Darryl Simms, great granddaughter of Ardelia Butler Simms

**Kensleigh McNeil** - graduated from preschool on June 10th

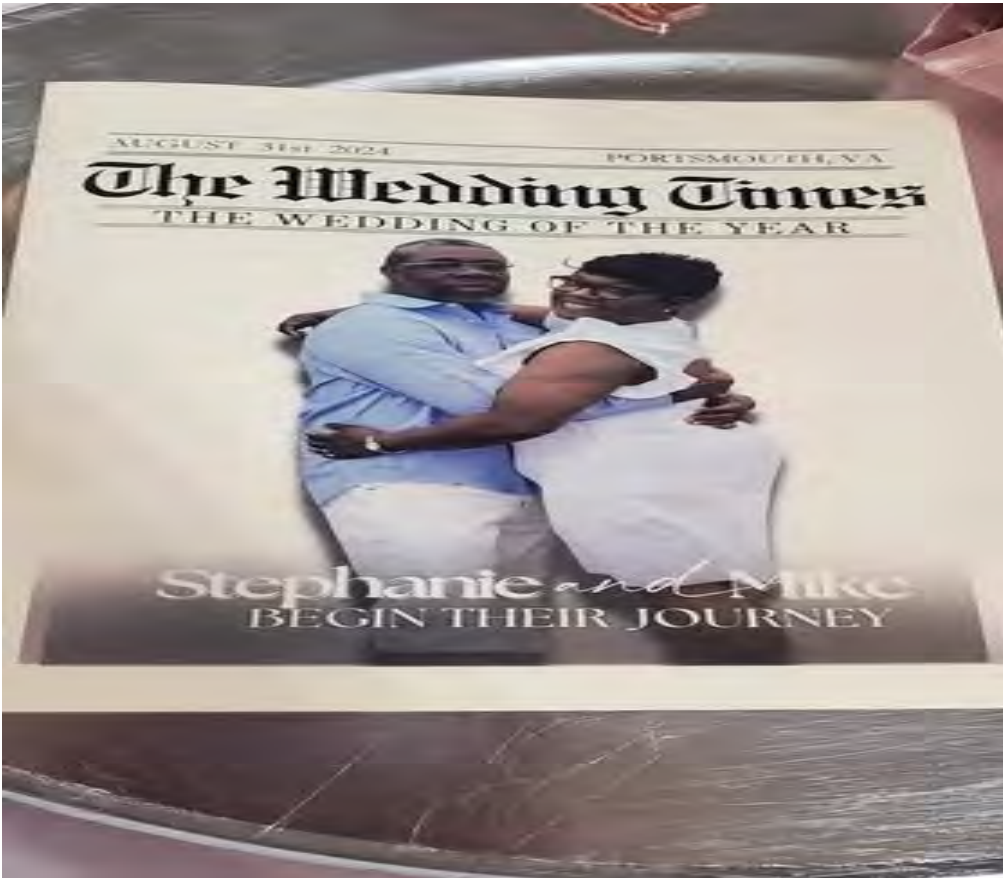
Daughter of Dyshia and Ke-Juan McNeil, granddaughter of Billy Simms, great-granddaughter of Joslin Simms, great-great-granddaughter of Ardelia Butler Simms



# New Job or Promotion



# Marriages



# Retirements

**HAPPY  
RETIREMENT  
LISA SMITH**



Lisa Smith is the daughter of the late Juanita Dargon, and the granddaughter of the late Rev. Alonzo Dargon Sr and Laurretta Dargon.



# HAPPY RETIREMENT



SHARON DURIO, MS ED.

Celebrating a wonderful  
retirement after working for the  
**Department of Veterans Affairs**  
for *37 years!*

(August 1987 - January 2025)



## Deaths

*Kevin Auston Cooke*

*Celebration of Life*



*Public Viewing*

**Friday November 8<sup>th</sup> 5:00pm-7:00pm**

**Hodges Family Funeral Home**

11441 US Highway 301

Dade City, FL 33525

*Celebration of Life Service*

**Saturday November 9<sup>th</sup> 12:00pm**

**Hodges Family Funeral Home**

11441 US Highway 301

Dade City, FL 33525

*Interment (Immediately following the service)*

**Chapel Hill Gardens**

11531 Highway 301

Dade City, FL 33525

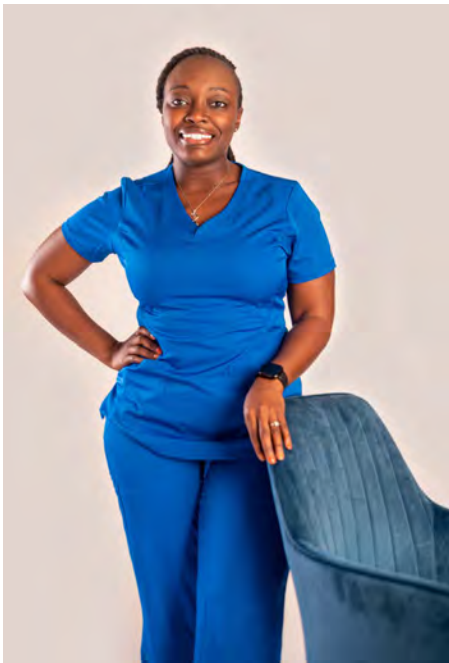


**Michael Simms** - deceased June 26, 2024

Son of Joslin Simms, grandson of Ardelia Butler Simms,



## **Kanisha Murray**



Kanisha is an 8-year U.S. Navy veteran who began her nursing journey in 2010 as a Certified Nursing Assistant. She advanced to become a Licensed Practical Nurse in 2011 and earned her Bachelor of Science in Nursing from South University in 2020, becoming a Registered Nurse. Currently, she is pursuing her Master's degree to become a Psychiatric Mental Health Nurse Practitioner.

Kanisha serves as a pediatric clinic nurse and also holds the role of Program Coordinator at Superior Healthcare Training Center. Since becoming a certified CPR instructor in September 2023, she has trained and certified over 50 individuals in life-saving techniques.

Outside of her professional life, Kanisha is a proud wife, mother to a daughter. She is passionate about sharing her knowledge and empowering others with the skills to save lives.

**Kanisha Murray BSN, RN, CMSRN**





## **Desiree's Son**

A dynamic comedian from Columbia, South Carolina, known for bringing laughter and joy wherever he goes. A proud father of three boys, he balances his passion for entertainment with roles as a skilled barber, dedicated actor, football coach, and community mentor. His performance credits include several stage plays and a featured role in the Tubi series *Secrets in Plain Sight*.



Glen Johnson is "Desiree's Son"



## **We Did It Team! WE DID IT!**

To God be the Glory for the great things HE has done. As we come to the close of this auspicious occasion, we must give special recognition and thanks to those who gave themselves tirelessly to make this 50<sup>th</sup> Family Reunion a success.

Ms. Mae Ruth Cooke	Chair
Tara Brown-Eure	Co-Chair/Communication
Tammy Brown-Gentilini	Contracts/Decorations
Timothy Fitzgerald	Communication/IT
Kevin James	Photography/Videography
Laura James	Communication
Marcia C. Sanders/Seth Cooke	Detroit Chapter
John Harris/William James, Jr	Philadelphia Chapter
Terrilyon James	Co-Chair/Finance



## Acknowledgements

A special thank you to **Mackenzie Hull, Casey Evans**, and the **staff of Embassy Suites** for all you have done to make this celebration happen.

Music by Carl Johnson,  
Charlotte, NC

[unique0484@gmail.com](mailto:unique0484@gmail.com)

360 Booth McKey S. Johnson  
Atlanta, GA

[Mkeyshawjohnson71@gmail.com](mailto:Mkeyshawjohnson71@gmail.com)

CPR Instructor Kanisha J. Myers BSN, RN, CMSRN  
Rock Hill, SC

[MyersK3@mailbox.winthrop.edu](mailto:MyersK3@mailbox.winthrop.edu)

April Spires, BSN RN  
Chapin, SC

[amspires1982@gmail.com](mailto:amspires1982@gmail.com)

Desiree's Son Glen Johnson  
Columbia, SC

[Desireesoncomedymgmt@gmail.com](mailto:Desireesoncomedymgmt@gmail.com)

Deidre Carter (Event Planner)  
Columbia, SC

[primesophistication@gmail.com](mailto:primesophistication@gmail.com)









A Circle Of Strength  
Founded On Faith. Joined By Love  
Kept By God. Together

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# Family Reunion

Our Family

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