

AUGUST 2026

ELLA SPEAKS



AUGUST 16, 2025

85

85 Years Ago...

Eighty-five years ago, our beloved grandmother, Ella Brown, planted a seed that would grow for decades. She had a vision; to keep her family connected, no matter the distance or the challenges life may bring.

What began as a simple gathering in her home, filled with love, laughter, and the smell of good home cooking, has grown into a tradition that now spans more than five generations. We are the descendants of this great woman.

In that 1941 black and white photo from the first gathering, could Ella Brown have imagined that little Ann Nanton, standing behind her, would grow into the matriarch and continue to thrive at 94 as the last remaining member of the photo? Or that 85 years later, many of her 462 descendants would continue to gather each year? Ella may not have imagined these things, but she sure would have been proud of them.

For us, the reunion is more than just a date on the calendar; it's living proof of her vision. As we gather for our 85th family reunion, let us remember that we are a part of something much larger than ourselves. We are the sprouts of that planted seed by our beloved grandmother. We carry her spirit and show up year after year to be a part of this family story she started.

Through this newsletter, we celebrate one another, honoring the sacrifices of past generations, recognizing that our actions shape the future of the next generations.

We invite you to celebrate with us in these pages, the achievements of our family. You are the reason why Ella continues to speak.

Will we see you here next year?



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You Can Always Count on Family

My first memories of the Bell-Brown family reunion were of a petting zoo. I believe we were at Johnson Park at the time, and there was a petting zoo near our pavilion. I was both excited and terrified of the animals. I remember my mom and older cousins organizing games for the younger children to play. I remember being blindfolded and spun around to hit a piñata, only to be quickly turned around again because I was facing the wrong direction and started swinging at the other kids. I remember my grandpa, Roy, and my Great-Aunt, Mary, telling me how important family was. “Family is one of the things you can always count on,” they told me throughout my childhood.

In my teenage years, I remember being frustrated whenever an event with friends got scheduled for the third weekend in August. (Didn’t they know that weekend was spoken for since before I was born?) I felt left out whenever I’d see friends off to some cool adventure, and I had to take the 3.5-hour drive back and forth to New Jersey. But when I actually did miss my first family reunion, I was tremendously sad. I didn’t have Cousin Alice greet me with her big smile, saying, “Well hello, my October birthday buddy!” And I didn’t get a bear hug from Cousin Arthur. But even though I couldn’t make it that year, I still knew that I could always count on family.

Over the years, I’ve moved across the country, and sometimes it is hard to make it back for the family reunion. But I know that the relationships here are ones I can always count on, no matter the time or distance. While I may sometimes forget how exactly I’m related to someone, I know our bond goes deep. Wherever this road takes you, I’ll be there for you, and you’ll be there for me. We can always count on each other.

-Naomi Leyh



Achievements

Niáni Bryanna Randall

Niáni graduated from Lincoln University of PA with her Bachelor of Science (BS) degree in Psychology on May 3, 2026. She is the daughter of Nicole Randall and the granddaughter of Sylvia Potts.



Amya M. White

Amya graduated from the University of Massachusetts Boston with a B. A. in Psychology on May 28, 2026. She is the daughter of Sean White and the granddaughter of Norma White.



Londyn Shaun Dismuke-Jackson

Londyn graduated Kindergarten from Belleville School 4 and will be attending 1st grade at Kipp Upper Roseville in the fall. She is the daughter of Tashauna Jackson and the granddaughter of Rose Reeves-Wrencher.



Autumn Rose Reeves

Autumn graduated from Success Academy High School and will be attending Hofstra University in the fall. She is the daughter of Matthew Reeves and the granddaughter of Rose Reeves-Wrencher.



Cory J. Williams Jr.

Cory graduated from Harlem Village Academies and is attending Hobart and Williams Smith College. He is the son of Nakeema Reeves and the grandson of Rose Reeves-Wrencher.



Ashante C. Martin

Ashante received her Bachelor's degree in Youth Studies on May 28, 2026. She is the daughter of Patrice Brown and the granddaughter of William Walter (Saca) Brown Jr.



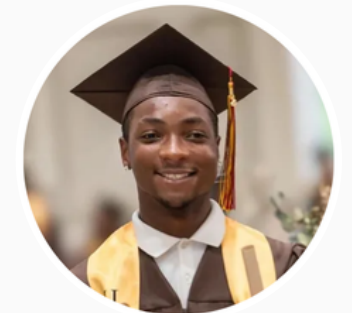
Justin A. Guerrier

Justin graduated Junior high school on June 5, 2026, and is going to Capital Prep Bronx High School. He is the son of Justin and Salian Guerrier and the grandson of Hannah Brown.



Tyron Brown

Tyron graduated from high school on June 29, 2026. He is the son of Tyrone and Diane Brown and the grandson of Hannah Brown.

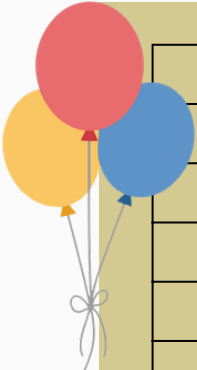


Camara Epps

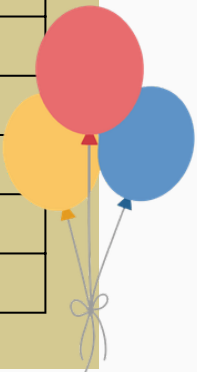
Camara Epps earned her Licensed Professional Counselor (LPC) license in New Jersey on July 6, 2026. She is the daughter of Roy Epps and the granddaughter of Alice Brown.



Milestone Birthdays



Name	Milestone Age	Birthdate
Sophia Balbina Ford	5	May 1
O'lani Marie Pearson	5	July 1
Naiema Gardner	35	January 20
Seidah Sabir	35	April 14
Larry Smart Jr.	35	May 4
Ki'Auna Wilson	35	October 4
Andre White	40	January 24
Marquis Reeves	40	August 9
Kevin Wilson	40	October 12
Shatoya Wade	45	February 10
Johnnie Willard	45	May 15
Sean White	45	July 2
Keith Gaines	45	July 4
Tashauna "Shaun" Jackson	50	January 19
Diane Wellington	50	October 24
Dwayne Wright	55	March 3
Patrice Brown	55	August 20
Reggie Hunt	55	November 12
Rose Reeves	65	April 26
Gregory Nanton	70	August 25
Arthur Spencer	75	September 1
Karen McGregor	75	September 23
Robert L. Brown	80	September 14
William Walter "SACA" Brown	80	October 23



New Leaves



Kairo Aiden Dukes

Born August 18, 2025
Son of Camara Epps &
Atif Dukes. Kairo is the
grandson of Roy Epps Jr,
and the great-grandson of
Alice Brown.



Sofia Renée Lopez

Born December 24, 2025
Daughter of Jose (Tony)
Lopez & Alysia Heidel.
Sofia is the granddaughter
of Leslye Lopez, and the
great-granddaughter of Roy
Epps Jr.



Noelle Jean Gardner

Born March 14, 2026
Daughter of Najee & Nathalie
Gardner. Noelle is the
granddaughter of Lenny &
Diane Gardner, and the great-
granddaughter of Joyce Reid.



Johnathan Carter

Welcome to the BellBrown Family. Johnathan is the
son of Wilfred Brown and discovered this year
through Ancestry.com that Wilfred is his father. He
is also the grandson of Claude and Mary Brown.
Johnathan has three daughters, Samantha, Deja, and
Jasmine.

Anniversaries



**Sharon and Darrell
McMillon**

40th Anniversary
August 23



**Malcolm Williams Jr. and
Gina Boykin**

10th Anniversary
July 23



Naomi and Christopher Leyh

5th Anniversary
May 23

Fallen Leaves



Elaina Brown Schlesinger

passed away on December 21, 2025. She was the daughter of Edward and Rose Dickerson, and the granddaughter of Morris Brown.



Bernard Epps

passed away on December 16, 2025. He was the last surviving child of Alice Brown and Clarence Roy Epps Sr.



Joseph Clarence Brown, Jr.

passed away in 2025. He was the only son of Joseph Clarence Brown Sr. and Marie Powell.



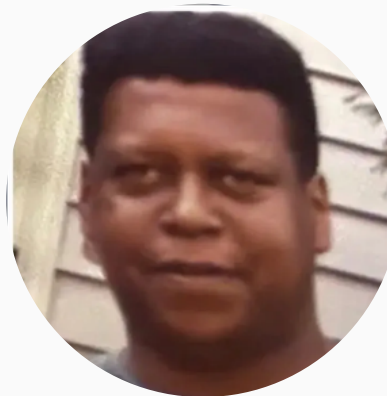
Elouise McMillon Ponder

passed away on December 31, 2025. She was the mother of Darrell McMillon and mother-in-law to Sharon McMillon, who is the granddaughter of Alice Brown.



Debra Nanton

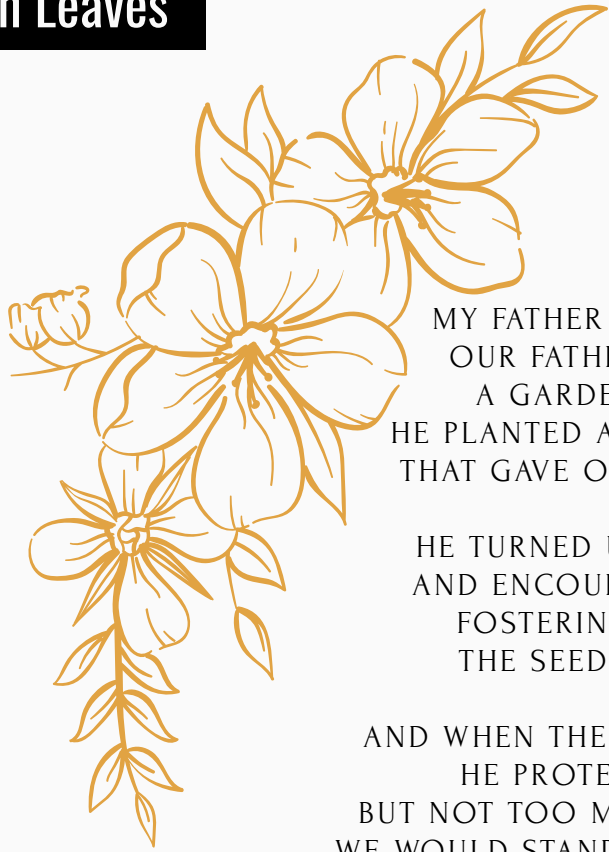
passed away on May 27, 2026. She was the daughter of Ann and Henry Nanton, and the granddaughter of Lilly Bell Brown.



James Spencer III

passed away on May 1, 2026. He was the son of James Spencer Jr. and Martha Escalera, and the grandson of Alice and James Spencer Sr.

Fallen Leaves



MY FATHER PLANTED A GARDEN
OUR FATHER KEPT A GARDEN.
A GARDEN OF THE HEART;
HE PLANTED ALL THE GOOD THINGS,
THAT GAVE OUR LIVES THEIR START.

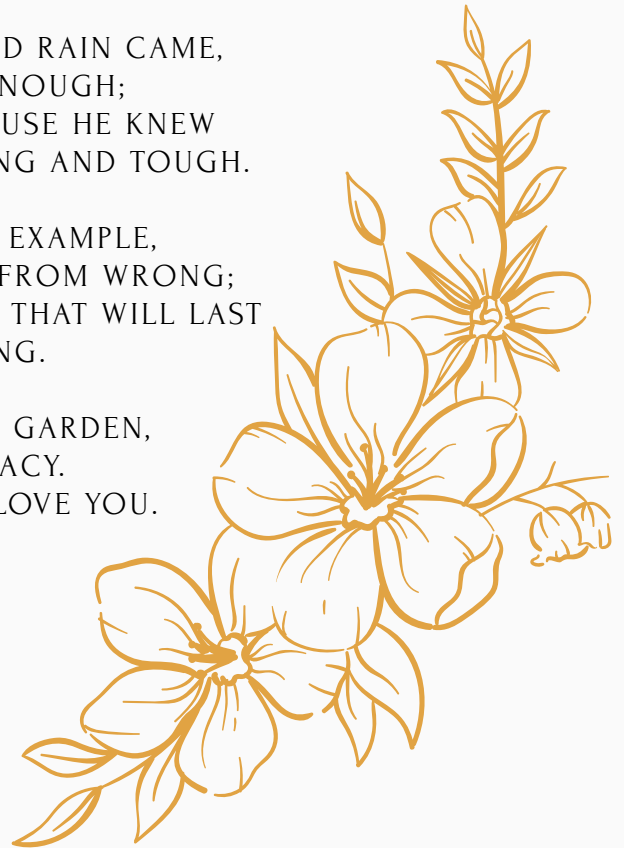
HE TURNED US TO THE SUNSHINE,
AND ENCOURAGED US TO DREAM:
FOSTERING AND NURTURING
THE SEEDS OF SELF-ESTEEM.

AND WHEN THE WINDS AND RAIN CAME,
HE PROTECTED US ENOUGH;
BUT NOT TOO MUCH BECAUSE HE KNEW
WE WOULD STAND UP STRONG AND TOUGH.

HIS CONSTANT GOOD EXAMPLE,
ALWAYS TAUGHT US RIGHT FROM WRONG;
MARKERS FOR OUR PATHWAY THAT WILL LAST
A LIFETIME LONG.

WE ARE OUR FATHERS GARDEN,
WE ARE HIS LEGACY.
THANK YOU DAD, WE LOVE YOU.

- UNKNOWN



Businesses

JNicole Events

Jenell is an event planner and is available to plan your next special moment.

Owner: Jenell McMillon Prince

Website: www.jnicoleevents.com

Social Media: @jnicoleevents

Jasnell Creations

Sharon has been creating one of kind unique jewelry for over 15 years. She has created a Men's line named after her father Edward A. Spencer. It's called E.A.S. Collection...For Sir.

Owner: Sharon Spencer McMillon

Website: jasnellcreations.com

Social Media: @jasnellcreations

Next Day Acces

Next Day Access offers a wide variety of mobility solutions and accessibility products, including wheelchair ramps, stair lifts, grab bars, vehicle lifts, and chair lifts.

Owner: Jason Williamson

Website: nextdayaccess.com

Deshon Anthony Brown Foundation

Non-profit established in Deshon's Honor (late grandson of William Walter (Saca) Brown 12/16/22)

Owner: Patrice Brown

Website: dab-foundation.org

Sheba's Reign

Handcrafted soy candles and aromatherapy products

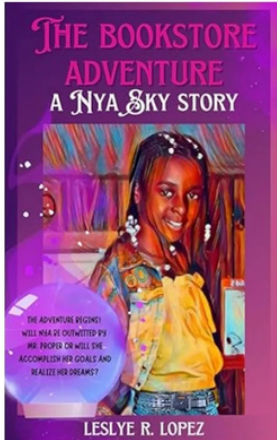
Owner: Lorraine Spencer Sabir

Website: shebasreign.com

Email: shebas.reign@gmail.com



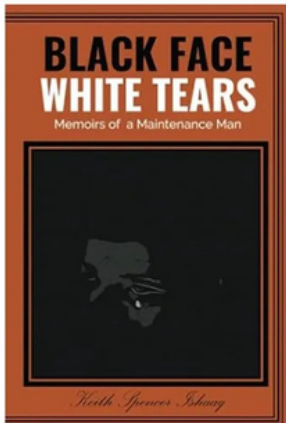
Book Releases



The Bookstore Adventure: A Nya Sky Story

A children's book written by Leslye R Lopez

Leslye's debut children's book will soon be set for rerelease, along with the Nya Sky Series. Available wherever books are sold, including Amazon. For more information, visit www.leslyelopez.com.



Black Face White Tears: Memoir of a Maintenance Man

A book written by Keith Ishaq Spencer

Released on October 19, 2021
Keith Ishaq Spencer
[Available on Amazon](#)

Trivia

Guess the Cost of the Item	1941	2025
Bacon (Pound)		
White Bread (Pound)		
Coffee (per Pound)		
Eggs (Dozen)		
Milk (half-gallon)		
Round Steak (Pound)		
Sugar (Pound)		
New Car		
Gasoline (gallon)		
Gold (per ounce)		
Single Family House		
Movie Tickets		
First Class Postage Stamps		
Rent (Single Family Home)		
Average Annual Salary		
Minimum Wage (Federal rate, per hour)		

Trivia

A Look at 1941	Date
What day of the week was August 16, 1941?	
Name someone from the original family reunion photo who was born in 1941.	
What day did Germany invade the Soviet Union?	
What day was Pearl Harbor?	
On what day did Franklin D. Roosevelt sign Executive Order 8802, which forbade racial discrimination in the defense industry?	
On what day did the US and Britain declare war on Japan/US enters World War II?	
On what day did Duke Ellington and his Orchestra first record "Take the 'A' Train" written by Billy Strayhorn, at RCA Studio in Hollywood, California? It goes on to become his signature tune.	
When was Walt Disney's animated film "Dumbo" released?	
When was the tradition of playing an organ at a baseball stadium started?	
When did Tom and Jerry first appear under their own names in the cartoon "The Midnight Snack" by William Hanna and Joseph Barbera?	

Trivia Answers

- Answer: Saturday
- Answer: Clarence Roy Epps Jr. or Elaine Jackson
- Answer: Jun 22 Germany invades the Soviet Union
- Answer: Dec 7
- Answer: Jun 25
- Answer: Dec 8
- Answer: Feb 15
- Answer: Oct 23
- Answer: Apr 26
- Answer: July 19

A Look at 1941

- Car - \$925, \$49,740
- Sugar - 6 cents, \$1.54
- Round Steak - 39 cents, \$5.81
- Milk - 27 cents, \$4.03
- Eggs - 40 cents, \$3.78
- Coffee - 24 cents, 8.13
- Bread - 8 cents, \$1.86
- Bacon - 34 cents, \$7.10
- Gasoline - 19 cents, \$3.31
- Gold - \$33.85, \$3,370.89
- House - \$6,900, \$369,147 - \$446,766
- Movie Tickets - 25 cents, \$10.53
- Postage Stamps - 3 cents, 78 cents
- Rent - \$32, \$2100
- Average Annual Salary - \$2,050, \$62,192
- Minimum wage - 30 cents, \$7.25

Guess the Cost

Go to
BellBrownFamily.com
to submit your updates!