

FAMILY REUNION INSTITUTE'S

STICKY REUNION SITUATION

MISSING FAMILY ELDER

January 2018

The Situation:

As our family members are getting older, we are finding that many of our elders no longer attend the reunion or the reunion events. As they are vitally important to our family, what can be done to secure their continued participation in upcoming reunions?

The Fix:



Doug Harris

This one is quite simple. Honor the elders, ask them to share their stories and their wisdom. Set up a time during the reunion entitled "Our Elders Speak" or something to that effect. Let them know in advance that the family wishes to honor them, and forward a list of questions or topics you'd like them to speak about, such as:

- Where were you when the 1963 March on Washington took place? What did you think about it?
- What struggles did you go through that the present generation does not have a clue about?
- What differences do you see in life today and life 50, 60, 70 years ago?
- What wisdom would you like to pass on to the current generation?

Let the elders know you want to honor them with gifts, flowers and/or plaques. Build a meaningful event just for them—*and they will come.*

The Fix:



Sylvia
Ford-George

Doug's response is a great one, unless the elders are no longer attending because of physical and/or health reasons. If this is the case, speak with them to see if there is anything the family can do to help them attend. If they're no longer able to drive, arrange for someone to pick them up, get them back home, and chauffeur them around if needed. If it's health related and they physically cannot attend, look into videotaping the reunion "live" and showing it on Facebook or some other medium so they can feel they're part of the event as it's happening—and arrange for them to greet the family during the reunion. Before the reunion be sure to visit with them to make sure they have a device that allows them to view and videotape, and that they know how to use them for reunion day.

Additionally, during the reunion you can get a "We Missed You" card for each non-attending elder, have all family members sign it, and mail it to them.
