5-7-2003

2003-05-07; Pamphlets; Claude Darcy Clapp

Lincoln Memorial United Methodist Church

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ORDER OF SERVICE

Lincoln Memorial United Methodist Church
Buffalo, New York
May 7th, 2003
11:00 AM
Reverend G. Ewart Morris, Officiating
Reverend George F. Nicholas, Visiting Minister

Processional
Prelude
Invocation
Hymn (Congregation)  God Will Take Care of You  UMH 130
Prayer: The Lord be with you  UMH 871
The Lord’s Prayer (Unison)  UMH 895
Hymn (Congregation)  Sweet Hour of Prayer  UMH 496
Old Testament Scriptures
Ecclesiastes 3: 1-8  Ayana Holloway
Psalm 23 (Responsively)  Reverend Morris, UMH 137
Senior Choir  Special Music
New Testament Scriptures
James 3: 13, 17-18  Michael Ezie
Romans 12: 9-18
Reading of the Obituary  Karla F.C. Holloway
Eulogy  Reverend George F. Nicholas
Words of Comfort  Reverend G. Ewart Morris
Hymn (Congregation)  When Peace, Like a River  UMH 377
(It is Well With My Soul)
Commendation  UMH 874
Dismissal with Blessing

CLAUDE D. ARCY CLAPP
January 17, 1921- May 2, 2003

Claude D. Clapp, who retired from the Buffalo Public Schools as Deputy Superintendent, died Friday, May 2nd 2003 at his home. His daughters Karla and Leslie, and sister Johnetta Clapp Mosby were with him as he died.

Claude, the son of Marguerite Mason Clapp Shannon and Claude D. Clapp, was born in Buffalo, New York. He attended Buffalo Public Schools and, for one year, Central High School in Louisville, Kentucky where he lived with his uncle, Leroy Mason. He graduated from Fosdick-Masten High School in Buffalo (with yearbook notations of Star Roll, Honor Roll, Chronicle, Hill Topics, Football, and Track) in 1940. He left Buffalo after graduation to attend Talladega College in Talladega, Alabama, turning down an athletic scholarship from the University of Buffalo for the academic scholarship awarded to him by Talladega. There he met his wife of fifty-three years, Ouida Eleanor Harrison of Detroit, Michigan, the daughter of Celia Juliette Howard Harrison and William L. Harrison, Sr.

World War II intervened during his Talladega years, and like most of the undergraduate men, he was forced to leave college when he was drafted into the United States Army to join the World War II campaign. He became a 1st Lieutenant in the US Army Air Corps, serving from 1944 to 1946 as administrative staff officer at Tuskegee Air Base with the famed Tuskegee Airmen. Following his honorable discharge in 1947, Claude earned a degree in Mortuary Science from Worsham Mortuarial College in Illinois. He had intended on following the footsteps of his uncle, Leroy Mason, who had established Mason and Sons Funeral Home in Louisville, Kentucky. When he married Ouida Harrison on July 20th 1947, the marriage license listed his occupation as “mortician.” However, when the newlyweds returned from their Detroit wedding to Buffalo, he made the decision to continue his education earning a Bachelors degree and a Masters degree in education administration from the University of Buffalo.

Two daughters were born during those years before he began his long and distinguished career as an educator and administrator: Karen Andrea in 1948, and Karla Francesca in 1949. To support the family while he was in school, he worked at Don Allen Chevrolet, the Buffalo Transit Authority, and Cornell Labs. In 1952 both Claude and Ouida
earned eligibility for public school appointments, and he was appointed a teacher at School 6. Three years later, in 1955, Leslie Ellen, the couple’s third daughter was born.

Claude moved through the ranks to garner historic distinctions in the city. He and Ouida were the first black married couple employed as teachers and he was the first black assistant principal and then the first black principal of a Buffalo Public School. He held both positions at what was then School 28 on South Park Avenue. In 1965 he was appointed as the Director of Finance and Research for the school district. Again, he was the first African American to hold an administrative post within the school’s districts. In 1966 he was named Associate Superintendent of the Buffalo Public Schools. When he and Ouida retired in 1985, he was Deputy Superintendent of the Buffalo Public Schools.

During his tenure with the schools, he negotiated every contract with the Buffalo Teachers Federation. At the time of his retirement, the president of the association spoke of the loss of his leadership to the schools as having “incalculable proportions” noting that Claude was a “moderating force, a man of impeccable integrity.” The Buffalo News noted that he “earned a reputation for carefully thought out decisions and a quiet way of getting things done, as well as a toughness of conviction... tactfulness remains his trademark.”

He brought that distinction, integrity and leadership to a lifetime of public service in Buffalo. One critical legacy of his tenure with the schools was his institutional support of the United Negro College Fund. It was at his direction and initiative, and with the ultimate support of the BTF, that UNCF gained a specific designation for contribution on Buffalo teacher’s paychecks. His service to the city has been similarly path breaking and is noted partially in the awards and recognitions earned during the years. They include the Urban League’s Evans-Young Award, the Educator of the Year Award from the Black Educators Association, the National Council of Christians and Jews Brotherhood in Education Award, the William Wells Brown Award of the Afro-American Historical Association, the Langston Hughes Institute Commemorative Award, the Elks Education Award, and the National Columbus Day Committee Educational Award. Together Ouida and Claude received the Medgar Evers Award from the NAACP in 1985. Claude also was granted an honorary doctorate and served as a trustee to Medaille College.

Always together, and occasionally with their daughters or grandchildren, Ouida and Claude traveled widely across five continents. They valued especially their stay in Nigeria with Leslie and Michael’s family, and they enjoyed as well travels in Egypt, Ghana, Israel, Jordan, Europe, Brazil, Haiti, India, Russia, China and Japan.

Early in their marriage Claude and Ouida were members of Bethel A.M.E. Church, and later, the Unitarian Universalist Church of Buffalo. During the last three decades he regularly attended Lincoln Memorial United Methodist Church with Ouida.

Claude joined Omega Psi Phi Fraternity while at Talladega, and while in Buffalo joined Sigma Pi Phi fraternity, Alpha Kappa Boule, for which he served as Sire Archon. Perhaps most memorable to those select few gentlemen friends of his later years was membership in the S.O.B.s --the Society of Old Bulls --as Claude inaugurated the group. Their occasional monthly luncheon meetings held forth on matters of historic and contemporary significance to African America, the nation, and this city. This society formed a singularly unique gathering that contributed significantly to the enjoyment of his later years. A passion for reading--particularly history and biography--characterized his life and is evident in his extensive book collection. Additionally, the deep appreciation he had for music--especially classical, opera, and jazz--was clear to all who visited his home where this music was a constant accompaniment to his life.

His wife Ouida, daughter Karen Andrea Clapp Graves, grandson 3em K. Holloway and devoted friend Walter (Jack) Givens preceded him in death (in 2000, 1989,1999, 1998 respectively). He is survived by his sister Johnetta Clapp Mosby; his daughters Karla F.C. Holloway, Ph.D. who is the Kenan Professor of English and Dean of Humanities and Social Sciences at Duke University, and Leslie E. Clapp, M.D., pediatrician and founder of Main Pediatrics in Buffalo; sons-in-law Russell Holloway and Michael C. Ezie; grandchildren Aziza Ouida and Akili Graves and his wife Jacqueline Barrett Graves; Ayana Holloway; and Andrea Chinyere, Lisa Kelechi, Valerie Chisara and Claude-Michael Edmund Chiemeka Ezie; god-daughter and niece Marguerite Rainey, and many devoted nieces, nephews, cousins, colleagues and friends who deeply mourn his passing and honor the devoted example of his accomplished life.
Organist

Mr. Tim Kennedy

Pallbearers

Leonard Bass
David Edmunds
David Givens
Russell Mosby
Wayne Mosby
Kevin Patterson
Alonzo Thompson, Jr.

Interment

Forest Lawn Cemetery

....Lives of great men all remind us,
We can make our lives sublime,
And, departing, leave behind us
Footprints on the sands of time.

H.W. Longfellow

Acknowledgment

The family sincerely appreciates the prayers
and kind and thoughtful expressions of concern
extended to Mr. Clapp.