



# O'KELLEY FAMILY NEWSLETTER



Volume No. 3

Issue No. 1

December 2003

## Reunion 2004 Chairpersons

*"Mr. & Mrs. Gerry "Doc" Huston"*



**Thursday, June 10, 2004 - Sunday, June 13, 2004  
Phoenix, Arizona**

Dear Family & Friends:

It's that time for all our guests to have a fair amount of notice. We would like to give everyone a chance to put the date on their calendars, juggle their schedules, and plan their vacation time. We will be using our computer to keep in touch with family too – if you weren't aware of that already. The family newsletters, e-mail and online chats will help us keep in touch with everyone out there in this stretching sweep of planetary mass until the family reunion.

We look forward to welcoming All to our First O'Kelley Family Reunion to be held in Phoenix, AZ !!!!! ☐

The reunion will be held at  
**The Embassy Suites Hotel Phoenix-Airport  
15 North 44th Street, Phoenix, AZ 85008**

We currently have a block of 40 spacious, two-room suites (**\$79.00 per night** rate for O'Kelley Family Reunion participants only - normally \$105.00). Suites will accommodate 4-6 people.

You must book your room directly with the hotel by calling:  
**Toll Free 1-800-447-8483**

The direct number to the hotel is:  
**(602) 244-8800; Fax: (602) 306-1636**

Please advise the reservations department that the name of the event is the *O'Kelley Family Reunion* in order to **secure the \$79.00 rate.**

Each suite is beautifully decorated with a private bedroom, including one king sized bed or two-double beds; spacious living room with a sofa bed, dining room area and galley kitchen. All suites are equipped with high speed wireless capabilities, two televisions, a refrigerator, microwave oven, coffee maker, two telephones with data ports, full size iron and ironing board, hairdryer and a well lighted dining/work table.



Representative Property

**The Embassy Suites Hotel Phoenix-Airport**

### **Family Reunion Activity Fees:**

**Activity Fees received by Feb. 1, 2004 will be:**

\$75.00 for Adults  
\$50.00 for Seniors 60+  
\$35.00 for Children 12 and under

**Activity Fees received after Feb. 2, 2004 will be:**

\$100.00 for Adults  
\$70.00 for seniors 60+  
\$50.00 for children 12 and under

All payments are due by **April 1, 2004** to allow for final room counts and final planning requirements.

### **Please Do Not wait until the last minute**

If we do not have a *minimum of 50* paid respondents required to host a successful reunion *by April 1, 2004*, we will regretfully have to cancel All Plans for the Phoenix 2004 reunion. To-date we have received 4 registrations.

# O'KELLEY FAMILY NEWSLETTER

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The activity fee for the 2004 reunion should be mailed in with the completed registration form that is included in this newsletter or it can be printed out from the family website at: <http://www.blackokelleys.net>.

**Fees cover (no substitutions please):**

- Complimentary Cooked-to-order Breakfast **each day** for adults and kids (Savings on eating and travel out).
- Complimentary evening cocktails each day.
- Access to hospitality room to include a variety of snacks, beverages, and games for the adults and kids. Kids bring your favorite Nintendo games.
- Served, catered, plated dinner Saturday evening.
- Deluxe, continental, post-breakfast brunch on Sunday.
- Commemorative **O'Kelley Family Reunion T-Shirt** for each family member and other souvenir items.
- Name tags for each family member.
- Own **Personal Family Photo**.
- Audio Visual Services and Equipment.

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Mail registration fees and forms to:

**O'Kelley Family Reunion  
c/o Huston Family  
10102 E. Olla Ave.  
Mesa, AZ 85212**

Make checks payable to: O'Kelley Family Reunion

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Please do not hesitate to contact Diane and Gerry "Doc" Huston with any questions.

E-mail: [Ghuston@peoplepc.com](mailto:Ghuston@peoplepc.com)

Home Phone: 480-380-0433

Cell Phone: 480-415-0433

**Getting to/from the Airport:**

**- 24 hour free Hotel Courtesy Bus shuttle**

- Rental Car, typical minimum charge is \$20.00

- Taxi, typical minimum charge is \$8.00.

The Hotel is conveniently located just 1.5 miles north of Sky Harbor Intl. Airport and has direct access. Our hotel is one block north of the access road to Loop 202 / I-10 and I-17. Only three to five miles and easily accessible to downtown Phoenix, Scottsdale, Tempe, and the prestigious Biltmore area.

This is the closest Embassy Suites to the airport. Immediate area attractions include: Chinese Cultural Center, Phoenix Zoo, Desert Botanical Gardens, Celebrity Theater, Red River Music Hall, Papago Park, Hall of Flame Fire Museum, Phoenix Municipal Stadium and Papago Golf Course.

America West Sports Arena,  
6 mi. NE

- Driving Range
- Paddle Tennis Table
- Hiking Trail
- Hunting
- Jogging Track
- Playground
- Basketball
- Skeet / Trapshooting
- Walking Track

Arizona Center, 6 mi. NE

- Golf Course
- Putting Green
- Bowling
- Horseback Riding
- Jet Skiing
- Fishing
- Pool Table
- Sight Seeing Tours
- Video Arcade
- Water Skiing ☐

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Nelson Minter has done some preliminary research into the travel options from St. Louis as of June 16, 2003. He states the following.

- Southwest Air round trip is \$388.50
- Amtrak takes (2) days and is \$200.00
- Greyhound Bus takes (1) day and (11) hours and is \$180.00
- Greyhound Bus Charter takes (29) hours and costs \$220.00
- Driving 1500 miles takes (23) hours using your own car. Costs unknown

Please start planning now. Rates are likely to change after January 2004. If you find out something good, please let the family know. Unless someone can find a cheap charter bus line, my best travel option is to drive. ☐

More help is needed in identifying all of the O'Kelley family reunions ever held. Please send in any corrections or missing entries to Joyce Ann Huston. ☐

Greenville, MS - 1930	Gary, IN - 1979
St. Louis, MO - 1930s	Memphis, TN - 1981
Memphis, TN - 1930s	Chicago, IL - 1983
Greenville, MS - 1938	St. Louis, MO - 1985
Greenville, MS - 1943	Beloit, WS - 1987
St. Louis, MO - 1945	Memphis, TN - 1989
Chicago, IL - 1947	Las Vegas, NV - 1991
*** Gaps *** (help needed)	St. Louis, MO Picnic - 1995
St. Louis, MO - 1968	St. Louis, MO - 1996
Chicago, IL - 1970	Memphis, TN - 1998
Beloit, WS - 1975	St. Louis, MO - 2000
St. Louis, MO - 1977	Atlanta, GA - 2002
<i>Coming soon: Phoenix, AZ - 2004</i>	

**O'Kelley Family Reunion 2004**  
**Embassy Suites Hotel Phoenix-Airport**  
**June 10<sup>th</sup> – 13<sup>th</sup> (Thursday - Sunday)**

**Complete this registration form and submit fees by April 1, 2004**

Name:													
Address:													
Phone:	City: _____ State: _____												
Email Address:	<b>Will you require motor coach transportation to Atlanta?</b> Y N If so, from what city?:												
Names/Birthdays of all attending in your party.	Will you fly into Atlanta? (circle one option) Y N												
	Will you drive to Atlanta? (circle one option) Y N												
	<b>Please Note: Parking at the hotel is FREE</b>												
	<b>Scheduled Activities:</b>												
	Thursday: Hospitality Meet and Greet / Evening Refreshments Served.												
	Friday: Cooked to order Breakfast / Evening Refreshments Served / Hen & Rooster Parties.												
	Saturday: Cooked to order Breakfast / Evening Refreshments Served / Banquet / Talent Show / Memorial Service / Family Photo.												
	Sunday: Cooked to order Breakfast / Farewell Continental Breakfast / 2006 Reunion Discussion.												
Any special needs such as crib, dietary restrictions etc. Please specify:													
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> <b>Activity Fees:</b> Enter quantity in parenthesis ( )													
<table border="1" style="width:100%; border-collapse: collapse;"> <tr> <td><b>Adults:</b></td> <td><b>\$ 75 x ( ) = \$</b></td> </tr> <tr> <td>- after Feb. 1, 2004</td> <td>\$100 x ( ) = \$</td> </tr> <tr> <td><b>Seniors (60+):</b></td> <td><b>\$ 50 x ( ) = \$</b></td> </tr> <tr> <td>- after Feb. 1, 2004</td> <td>\$ 70 x ( ) = \$</td> </tr> <tr> <td><b>Children 12 &amp; under:</b></td> <td><b>\$ 35 x ( ) = \$</b></td> </tr> <tr> <td>- after Feb. 1, 2004</td> <td>\$ 50 x ( ) = \$</td> </tr> </table>	<b>Adults:</b>	<b>\$ 75 x ( ) = \$</b>	- after Feb. 1, 2004	\$100 x ( ) = \$	<b>Seniors (60+):</b>	<b>\$ 50 x ( ) = \$</b>	- after Feb. 1, 2004	\$ 70 x ( ) = \$	<b>Children 12 &amp; under:</b>	<b>\$ 35 x ( ) = \$</b>	- after Feb. 1, 2004	\$ 50 x ( ) = \$	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> <b>T-Shirts:</b> The cost is included in your activity fee. Please indicate the quantity for each size needed for each registered individual in your family. Orders received after 4/1/2004 are subject to availability and additional costs may be required.
<b>Adults:</b>	<b>\$ 75 x ( ) = \$</b>												
- after Feb. 1, 2004	\$100 x ( ) = \$												
<b>Seniors (60+):</b>	<b>\$ 50 x ( ) = \$</b>												
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	<table border="1" style="width:100%; border-collapse: collapse;"> <tr> <th align="center" colspan="2">Quantity/Size:</th> </tr> <tr> <td>( ) Small</td> <td>( ) Medium</td> </tr> <tr> <td>( ) Large</td> <td>( ) X-Large</td> </tr> <tr> <td>( ) XX-Large</td> <td>( ) XXX-Large</td> </tr> <tr> <td colspan="2">( ) Specify larger size _____</td> </tr> </table>	Quantity/Size:		( ) Small	( ) Medium	( ) Large	( ) X-Large	( ) XX-Large	( ) XXX-Large	( ) Specify larger size _____			
Quantity/Size:													
( ) Small	( ) Medium												
( ) Large	( ) X-Large												
( ) XX-Large	( ) XXX-Large												
( ) Specify larger size _____													
<b>TOTAL AMOUNT ENCLOSED: \$</b>													
<i>Mail completed registration forms &amp; activity fees to:</i>													
<b>O'Kelley Family Reunion</b> <b>c/o Huston Family</b> <b>10102 E. Olla Ave.</b> <b>Mesa, AZ 85212</b>	<b>Entertainment/Volunteer Signup:</b> <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> ( ) Performer; ( ) Volunteer												
Make checks payable to: O'Kelley Family Reunion  Email: <a href="mailto:Ghuston@peoplepc.com">Ghuston@peoplepc.com</a>	Name(s): _____  Provide details on your act. Volunteers indicate if you can help with the registration table or other needs												

**You must book your room directly with the hotel by calling 1-800-447-8483.**  
**Ask for the O'Kelley block of rooms to receive the \$79.00 discounted rate.**

## From the Editor's Desk ✓

by Joyce Ann Huston



Happy Holidays to everyone. As we're gearing up for another new year lets remember that our family legacy must be continued. The legacy starts with Ellen who was born into slavery in 1843. By 1860 she was a servant to James Edward O'Kelley. She became - what was known in those times as - a Negress to J. E. O'Kelley. Ellen's legacy

is amassed by her perseverance to survive through tumultuous times and providing shelter, nurturing and care for her family before and after the Civil War in Mississippi.

*Your past is a blueprint for your future.*

Ellen bore seven children. Daniel and Will O'Kelley were fathered by J.E. O'Kelley. J.E. served in the Civil War and died in 1867 at the young age of 43. He did not leave a will and his estate went into probate. The legendary story that he willed land to the O'Kelley children he had with Ellen is not substantiated. His land and estate went to his wife and their children. In 1871, Ellen gave birth to Charles O'Kelley. Oral history stated that Ellen was involved with two O'Kelley brothers. After interviewing Charles "Chuck" O'Kelley in Beloit, Wisconsin, we were able to pull together some additional facts. During a research effort in Chicago, I went to the vital records office and ordered the death certificate for the original Charles O'Kelley -- voila there it was. The father to Charles O'Kelley was listed as John O'Kelley. John is the older brother to J.E.

Ellen's other children are John Archie Hilliard, Amos Mathews, Theresa Fisher-O'Neal (also shown in records with a first name of Saresta), and Cordelia Fisher (per oral history; to-date no records have been found. She is said to have died as a young girl).

In researching Ellen's trail, I found her family listed in school records. Ellen made sure that her children



received an education. We know that her children owned land, was profitable in farming and totally self-sufficient. They married, raised families and had deep religious ties. Dan sent several of his children to college in the 1920s who in turned became educators. Educators also run strong in Charles' line. Will eventually left Mississippi and owned a barber shop in Memphis, TN. His legacy fostered entrepreneurs throughout his family line. As you can see, we have plenty to be proud of despite the harsh beginnings.

I continue to research the O'Kelley family roots as time and health permits. Your help is essential in the process of compiling documents such as newspaper clippings, funeral programs, bible records, vital records and photos. Contribute to our family archive by sending in copies of memorabilia especially from those who have passed on.

Everyone who has not done so, please take a few moments and complete the **Family History Group Sheet**, which is available on the website under the <Family History> section. All records submitted (to the return address

shown on this newsletter or e-mailed to: [info@blackokelleys.net](mailto:info@blackokelleys.net)) will be added to the genealogical databases and presented at the reunion. It is important that you send in your data (or an expired family member) prior to the reunion so that we can present the most up-to-date and accurate information to the family. The chart which shows our pedigree on the O'Kelley line is now over seven feet long! ☐

## WWW.BLACKOKELLEYS.NET

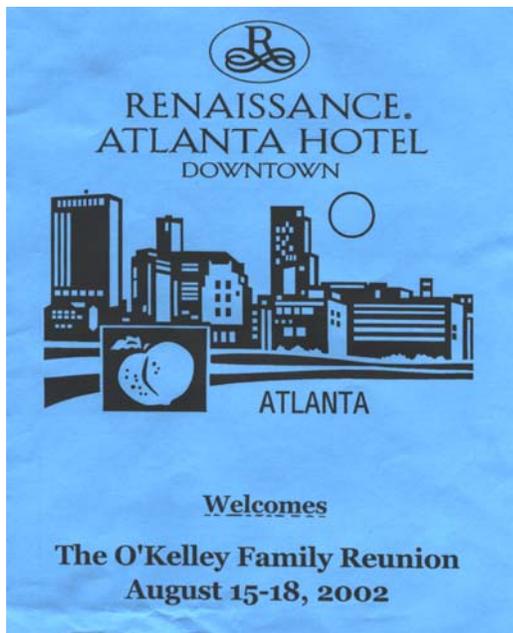
Nikki Williams and I maintain the family website "The Black O'Kelleys" at: <http://www.blackokelleys.net>. We pay the monthly fees which allows our family to own a domain and presence on the World Wide Web. When photos are submitted to us, either from a color copy made cheaply from stores such as Wal-Mart or Kinko's or emailed to us at [info@blackokelleys.net](mailto:info@blackokelleys.net), we post them on the website. A new feature to the website is the **"What's New"** page. This page provides an outlet for you to share your successes or family events, losses, etc. with the family. If you have not yet visited, please come by and sign our guest book. If you don't have a computer, go to your local library and they will show you how to **connect to the Internet at no cost to you!!** ☐



## Other News & Events



Let's give a huge round of applause and show of appreciation to Nikki Williams for hosting the Atlanta, GA reunion in August of 2002. We really had a great time! We had plenty helpings of the state fruit which are peaches. They really tasted sweet and juicy. The hotel was first rate and all of the meals were served without complaint. Several of us went on a bus tour of the city that included the Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Center and Birth Home which was especially moving. We entertained each other and was showered by love and camaraderie. Thanks Nikki for a job well done and for the lasting memories! ☐



We are still searching for a photo copy of Ellen Fisher's son, **Daniel Smith O'Kelley (b. 1862)** If you have or know of anyone with his picture and/or his wife **Rosa**, please contact us. ☐

Another legacy we must continue with is holding reunions and getting the attendance to be as great now as it was in the past. We have more sophisticated means of communication but looking at earlier reunion photos, we lack the same level of commitment that ensured large turnouts. Don't let our ancestors down! There are many families in this country who do not have such rich traditions. Do all that you can to ensure your attendance at the Phoenix, AZ reunion. These family members will appreciate knowing that what they started was not in vain.



Ellen Fisher's grandchildren c. 1945

Their O'Kelley father's name are included in parenthesis ( ).

**Standing (Left to Right):** Robert O'Kelley (Dan), Rachel O'Kelley (Dan), Ida O'Kelley (Will), Virginia O'Kelley-Gladney (Dan), Elvee O'Kelley-Huffine (Will), Willie D. "Tiny" O'Kelley-Cleaves (Will), James O'Kelley (Dan), Mary "Sweets" O'Kelley (Charles).

**Sitting (Left to Right):** John O'Kelley (Dan), Evelyn O'Kelley-Carter-Bush (Dan), Sarah O'Kelley-Darris (Dan), Helen O'Kelley-Smith-Pickens (Dan).

**Not pictured:** Dan's - Charles Thomas O'Kelley, Allyne O'Kelley-Darris.

Will's - Charles Herman O'Kelley, Margaret O'Kelley, Mamie O'Kelley-Gammon, Eugene O'Kelley.

Charles' - Maymie O'Kelley-Dunlap.

*A bit of trivia: Three of the women are wearing gold teeth which was quite fashionable at the time. ☐*

 Memorial & Prayers 

During the upcoming Atlanta reunion banquet, we will pay homage to family who have expired since 2002. Please submit their full names, birth and death dates for the **Memorial Service** with your registration form, or mail to the return address shown on the Newsletter.

**Prayer list:**

Any and all in the need of healing and prayer. Sending love, admiration and special prayers of safety to those serving in the military. ☐

- **Nancy Carter Reeves** passed away on April 10, 2003 at the age of 94 in Crestwood (Chicago), IL. Nancy was born February 14, 1909 in Hollandale, MS. She was the second eldest O'Kelley family member and the younger sister to Beatrice Thomas who resides in Chicago. Nancy had 17 children. She loved her family and regularly attended the family reunions. She received a plaque from the City of Chicago for fostering over 100 children. Nancy, may God be with you until we meet again. ☐



**Recognize and Honor Our Living Legends**  
**80+ Years of Life**

Beatrice Carter-Thomas	Jan 14, 1907
Elvee O'Kelley-Huffine	Jun 20, 1912
Mamie Ruth O'Kelley-Gammon	Jul 1, 1918
India Lee Darris-Palmer	Oct 1918
Charles E. O'Kelley	Nov 4, 1918
Odell Stone Darris-Wood	Apr 15, 1920



It's a mystery. Do you know when this reunion was held? Please send in any and all details regarding this picture.

**News from the Current Front**

The following announcements were submitted by family members. This is not a composite of all of the wonderful news items that are worthy of mentioning here. They were provided for posting on the website or as news items that are shared via family email distributions on the Internet. If you would like a shout out on the O'Kelley family website and/or announcement included in future newsletters, they must be submitted in writing via email to [info@blackokelleys.net](mailto:info@blackokelleys.net), regular mail (see return address on newsletter), or faxed to 702.262.3938. Get involved! Send in your updated mailing address, e-mail address and websites.

> **Erica and Bailey's New Baby!**

Here is the link to see a picture of our new baby, Brandon Donovan Williams!

[http://www.growingfamily.com/webnursery/babypage\\_view.asp?URLID=2X9I0S5G7F](http://www.growingfamily.com/webnursery/babypage_view.asp?URLID=2X9I0S5G7F)

> **Kenneth J. West** marries Cindy Current. The wedding was very beautiful. Held Sat. September 27, 2003 at Bethesda Temple, St. Louis, MO. The reception was held at the Heman Park Recreation Center. Guests were entertained with a full live band, plenty of food, with over 100 people in attendance. The wedding party had about 20 people who arrived in four white stretch limousines. Maids wore red dresses. Groomsmen wore black tuxedos with red and black vests.

> **James and Yvette (Archetta) Loveless** auditioned with Michael O'Hara for a world wide gospel tour. The audition was held in September in Memphis and THANK GOD -- they were accepted. As a matter of fact, the entire cast to the "Isle of Dreams" was accepted. They auditioned in front of the record company, director and many other prominent theater buffs.

Michael O'Hara (son of Rev. Leon O'Hara) has been nominated for four Grammy Awards and has won two. He is best known for writing "Just Because" for Anita Baker. Many family members attended Rev. O'Hara's "Holy Metropolitan" church. Unfortunately he passed away and we miss him dearly.

The show will perform at Carnegie Hall, and will present a special performance for the Queen of England. Hopefully the tour will be coming to your city soon. Everyone is so excited!

There are over 34 songs in the play and Janet Jackson is to conduct the choreography.

## 2004 BIRTHDAY BLOW OUT

The Twins (Loyce P. Huston & Joyce P. Coffey) cordially invite you to hear the phenomenal sounds of choirs, soloists, musicians, and other fine entertainment.

### February 2004

Cornerstone Institutional  
Baptist Church (CIBC)  
4700 Washington Blvd.  
St. Louis, MO 63108



born Feb. 2, 1939

Don't miss out on this spectacular event!  
If you'd like to participate, please let us know.

For more info contact: Loyce at (314) 389-0025  
or e-mail at: [HLuvnLoyce@aol.com](mailto:HLuvnLoyce@aol.com).  
All proceeds will go to the church (CIBC).



**On Saturday, August 16, 2003**  
our very own **Loyce Huston** was featured in a musical extravaganza and fundraising event. From the mid-1930's to the early 1950's, the "Y" Circus featured a weeklong extravaganza of national and local acts at the St. Louis Kiel Opera House, downtown. Funds

generated from the event were used to send underprivileged children to summer camp. Entertainers included: Loyce Huston, \*[Johnnie Johnson](#)\* of Chuck Berry fame, Zella Jackson Price, The Oliver Sain Revue and many more.

> **Jonette O'Kelley Miller** announces that this past April 22, her parents (*Joseph and Annette O'Kelley*) celebrated their 50th wedding anniversary. Actually, their 50th was last year, August 8, 2002, but the nursing home in New York, Park Manor, gave them and two other couples a party to **celebrate being married 50 years or more!** Joe and Annette were the 'honeymooners'. Of the two other couples, one had been married 71 years and the other, 67 years. Their pictures appeared in the May 2nd issue of the Times Herald Record.

> **Nelson Minter** organized the annual St. Louis Family "Fun Day" Picnic which was held on Saturday, June 14, 2003 at the Bellafountain Park. It was a lot of fun for those who were able to attend. The family had a great day and the Darris family also participated. We played cards, dominoes, bingo, volleyball, horse-shoes and more. If someone took pictures at the event, please send them to us for posting on the website at [info@blackokelleys.net](mailto:info@blackokelleys.net).

> **Elcardo Moore** has a new web site for his photography business at: <http://www.elcardosphoto.com>.

> **Lauren Williams** was spotted on Channel 4 in St. Louis, MO. She is a reporter, and her story was about an Indian excavation find in Illinois. She looked great! Lets give a big shout out to Lauren. We love you, and we are soooooo proud.

### > Congratulations to these graduates of 2003!

- May 2003 - **Jamil Thomas Franklin** (the son of Buena Franklin-Williams) is pleased to announce that he has completed the requirements for a Bachelor of Arts degree in Biology from Talladega College, Talladega Alabama.
- **Je'Loni Aisha Hall** (the daughter of Karen Minter-Hall) is pleased to announce that she has completed the requirements for a Master of Arts degree in Human Resources Management from Webster University, St. Louis, MO.

### > **Charles Edward "Chuck" O'Kelley**

has been extremely generous in providing me with pictures and valuable historical information to aid in the research on the family. Amongst the papers he and his wife Evelyn (who married December 13, 1969) shared with me, was a beautiful program in which Charles was honored for a lifetime of achievement.

The Rebecca Chapter #4 OES PHA held a banquet to recognize Charles on November 12, 1989 at the Holiday Inn, South Beloit, IL.



Charles E. O'Kelley was born November 4, 1918, in Greenville, Mississippi. The O'Kelley family moved from Mississippi to Chicago, Illinois, where he graduated from Dusable High School and, after graduation, he attended Wilson Jr. College.

January 6, 1941, he entered into the U.S. Army; promoted to the rank of Sergeant on January 11, 1941; received a commission as a 2<sup>nd</sup> Lieutenant October 2, 1941; June 1942 he received the rank of Lieutenant; August 1943 he was promoted to the rank of Captain; March 29, 1945, he was honorably discharged from Fort Sheridan, IL.

Charles and his family hosted many a reunion and was sometimes called to that task at the last minute. He was known for showing slides of past family events and acted as the Griot, passing down the oral history on the O'Kelley family. We thank you for the contributions you've made and will continue to strive to carry on the tradition. □

**Family Portrait #3**

**Things a bit quiet in the O'Kelley home**

For Chuck and Evelyn O'Kelley, part of the fun of finally having their home to themselves is having their children, grandchildren, and great-grandchildren over to visit.

The O'Kelleys, who are both in their 70s, have 10 living children between them — the result of a blended family. They also have 22 grandchildren and 13 great-grandchildren.

Chuck's children (Charlotte, 50; Desiree, 37; Charles, 29; and stepson Armand, 51) and Evelyn's children (October, 51; Addiyaat, 46; Stan, 44; Diallo, 42; Brandi, 38, and Carmen, 36) live scattered across the country. Although only Brandi and Carmen were still living at home when the O'Kelleys married in 1969, both Chuck and Evelyn believe they had some impact on the lives of their grown children.

Both Chuck and Evelyn are well-known Stateline Area volunteers. Evelyn retired from Colt Industries, and O'Kelley, from Warner Electric Brake and Clutch Co. Both believe strongly in teaching young people responsibility for helping to solve problems in their own community. "I think it had a positive impact on the kids," says Chuck.

Now and then, one of the couple's children moves home for a short time. "This has been a home away from home," says Chuck. But other times, the house is empty except for Chuck and Evelyn. Still, "somebody's always running in and out of here," he says.

"It was nice when all the kids were around," says Evelyn. "Now, it's nice that they're gone." When they're gone, she said, "You miss them. The sounds are not there ... You like to see them coming, and you like to see them going."

For big holidays like Thanksgiving and Christmas, the extended family tends to

gather at the O'Kelleys'. "We have regular talent shows," she said.

But each of their children live their own lives. "We like the children to develop a sense of independence," says Chuck. "We prefer that as adults, they establish their own lifestyle."

Over the years, Chuck said, "We have seen a turnaround in many of them. Some were not self-sustaining or self-sufficient (for a period of time). But they have developed values of respecting people in the world in which they live. There has been a change for the better. They have learned from things we have talked about and demonstrated."

While Chuck says he never tried to replace Evelyn's children's natural father who died, the children grew fond of him and many consider him a father. "In the beginning, when there is a second marriage, there is some sort of inbred hostility," he says. "But we got past that, and it worked out very well. I really feel like a father to these kids."

In order to keep such a large and varied family close, the O'Kelleys have had some techniques. Most of all, say Chuck, "You need to recognize differences. Sometimes you need to say things you don't want to say, but you have to, for the sake of stability.

"And don't baby your children," he says. "You have to let them make mistakes."

"We've had some problems," says Evelyn. "Not to say other families don't have problems, too. But the family has matured and strengthened. We think optimistically although we've had our ups and downs.

"Nobody in our family ever goes around not talking," she says.

—Story and photo by Teresa Penegy



Chuck and Evelyn O'Kelley and some of their family.

BELOIT DAILY NEWS, Thursday, October 14, 1993 Page 7B

**Beloit NAACP elects officers**

New Zion Baptist Church was the site of the election of new officers for the recently reorganized Beloit NAACP.

Charles O'Kelley was elected president; Rev. Booker Askew, vice-president; Lula B. Johnson, treasurer; and Nancy Banks, secretary.

NAACP State President, Thomas White, of Racine was present. Kenneth Ware served as chairman of the nominating committee.

Sadie Bell was awarded a medallion for her contribution in this restructuring effort.

Joyce Ann Huston  
2375 E. Tropicana Ave., #353  
Las Vegas, NV 89119

ADDRESS CORRECTION REQUESTED