

Obama's Grandmother Dies One Day Before Election



Barack Obama and his grandmother.

Sen. Barack Obama's grandmother, Madelyn Dunham, died following a bout with cancer. She was 86.

Barack and his sister released a statement saying, "She was the cornerstone of our family, and a woman of extraordinary accomplishment, strength, and humility." She was the person who encouraged and allowed us to take chances. She was

proud of her grandchildren and great-grandchildren and left this world with the knowledge that her impact on all of us was meaningful and enduring. Our debt to her is beyond measure."

Obama and Soetoro-Ng asked that donations be made for the search for a cure for cancer in lieu of flowers. A small private ceremony will be held "at a later date."

Well Seasoned: Claude Rhea Thomas Remembered

Claude Rhea, stage name of Claude Rhea Thomas, connoisseur of life and music, transitioned Friday, October 17, 2008 in Naples, Florida from a brain aneurysm at age 64. The renowned and beloved self-taught musician was an accomplished jazz pianist, composer, and arranger who began to hone his keyboarding genius at an early age.

Well Seasoned is the name of his most famous CD, where his compositions flowed from a well-nurtured spice of life, harmoniously blended with many musical and innovative experiences-a gift to himself and to his listeners.

Born in Jesup, Georgia to Will and Etta Mae Thomas, Claude Rhea, his parents, and his younger sister, Saralyn, moved to Savannah and melded into a flourishing community of devoted friends and neighbors. He attended local schools and graduated from Sol C. Johnson in 1962, where his versatility became legend. His lean, tall physique earned him the nickname, Pound, as well as a place on the football team as a wide receiver. He

scored the first touchdown ever made for the Atom Smashers.

When Claude Rhea was nine years old, his parents bought a piano for his sister. His mother realized his interest and taught him how to play Coon Shine Baby, and The Hucklebuck. Taking more than a passing interest, he taught himself how to play a few tunes that his mother hummed, the first of which was Yes, God is Real. He hung around the school's band room asking questions and learning skills from band director, Robert Spaulding Dilworth, himself, a multifaceted jazz musician. Dilworth and his protégé, Claude Rhea, formed the first jazz band at Johnson High.

He traveled with Willie "Mozzie" Williams, Jr.'s The Preacher and the Deacons, Matt Terrell's Combo, Teddy Adams, Willie Draper, Stubby Mitchell, Sonny Hawkins, Booby McMillan, Nubby Wright, and Leroy Ladson, to name a few. He studied chord changes with master instrumentalist, Thomas "Thurlow" Scott.

After having "gigged" with many local musicians, Claude Rhea decided to form his own quartet at age 19 with



Claude Rhea Thomas

some of Savannah's best area artists: Kenny Alexander on saxophone, Danny Boozer on drums, and CeCe Elijah on vocals. He has accompanied other Savannah vocalists including the incomparable Lafayette Chester, and the late, great Stella Hines. He was the opening artist for such notables as "Pig Meat" Markham of Open the Door Richard fame, Dee Dee Clark, the Drifters, and Jimmy Hendrix.

He was married to Risco "Polly" Thomas-Faulk, and subsequently to the late Lucille "Coota" Whitener-Thomas. He leaves to mourn his passing a loving mother, Mrs. Etta Mae Thomas-Murphy of Hazlehurst, GA;

two heartbroken sisters, Saralyn Thomas Ferguson of Conyers, GA, and Muriel Bedgood of Savannah; two brothers-in-law, Harry Lee Ferguson, and Pulley Bedgood, both of Savannah; one uncle, Rev. Johnny M. Blair of Hazlehurst, and a host of cousins, family, and loyal friends.

The joys of his life were his seven children: Bernard, Syrena, Kianga, Kia, Stephen, Nya, and Ferrard; his four adoptive and wonderful children, Angela, Marilyn, Barbara (deceased), and Carolyn; his two nephews, Harold Rhea Ferguson, and Ronald Lamar Ferguson; and his twenty-five grandchildren, and ten great-grand children

Memorial Services for Claude Rhea Thomas will take place Sunday, November 16, 2008, at Second Bryan Baptist Church in Savannah, 744 E. Waldburg Street at 12 noon. The Rev. Frank Ellis is Pastor.

Following the service, a Here's to Life - A Jammin' Concert Celebration in memory of Claude Rhea, will take place at The Hilton Garden Inn-Savannah Midtown, 5711 Abercorn Street, Savannah, GA from 2-5 pm, Sunday, November 16, The public is enthusiastically invited.

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Chief Justice Leah Sear... Continued from page 1

in favor of marriage as the most "pro-child" institution the nation has. She has developed a statewide reputation for her ability to uphold judicial independence while reaching out to the leaders of both political parties for the good of the state.

In announcing her departure from the Court, the Chief Justice emphasized that she intends to start a new chapter in her life and has no plans to "retire." "My service on the Court has been the most challenging and rewarding time of my life,"

she said. "But I believe that if we stop challenging ourselves, life can become a rut."

Justice Sears said that in recent years, "my husband, Haskell, and I have watched our children grow up, I suffered the loss of my older brother, who died at the same age I am now, and professionally I achieved one of my lifelong dreams. I have come to realize that life has different seasons, and it is limited. It is now time for me to face new challenges and set new goals."

Although she has not

yet decided what she will do next, she wants to explore a wide range of options, several of which have been presented to her, including positions in the law, business, academia, or non-profit organizations.

"I believe we all have a purpose in our lives, and mine is to serve," Chief Justice Sears said. "Achieving justice, equality and hope for our nation, our communities, our families - that's what I was put here to do. And whatever I do next, I will not waver from that course."

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at the half thanks to a pair of

14-yard TD passes by Flakes. The Rams went up 21-0 in the third and 24-0 early in the fourth after a 32-yard field goal. With about 10 minutes left, the Wildcats got on the scoreboard as Rodney Culler recovered a fumble in the end zone. Flakes threw a 43-yard TD pass with 5:47 left for the final points of the game. FVSU (5-5) only had 185 yards of offense while the Rams rolled up 467. Flakes passed for 269 yards and ran

for 71. Chad Bryant caught two touchdowns for ASU.

WSSU Holds Off Hampton

Winston-Salem State built a 25-point lead but had to hold on in a 35-30 win over Hampton (5-3). WSSU led 35-10 early in the third but the Pirates scored 20 unanswered points before falling short. The Rams (2-6) led 14-3 after one quarter and 28-10 at the half.

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