

# DETROIT

# NATIVE SUN

## Real Talk

### Help Change the Story

By Janice M. Waters

DIRECTOR OF NATIONAL OBAMA WEEKEND



All nationalities, let's be optimistic during the Obama Weekend because it is all about our youth.

The three day weekend is about teaching and collaborating, unity and cultural awareness.

The exciting Obama Weekend will feature an all children's parade that

starts everyday at 11 a.m. The unique festival is for all nationalities and is always celebrated the first weekend in August.

The stage is set for optimism at the Barack Obama Leadership Academy

located at 10800 E. Canfield at Lemay, Detroit 48214. This is where the story will change.

Professionals of different trades, professions and occupations will present to our youth marketable life skills that they can use in their adult life. These skills will be taught inside the building.

On the festival grounds will be karaoke, name that tune, singing, dancing, open microphone, food and some local entertainment and vendors.

### OBAMA WEEKEND CHILDREN'S PARADE



Inside the building marketable life skills will be taught such as drywall, bumping & painting, carpentry, bricklaying, upholstery, culinary arts, beauty, barber, manicure, and sewing.

Please help us prepare the grounds, plan, or help at the festival.

For more information or to volunteer: Call 586 918- 3061 or 701-301-3118. Visit [ObamaDayAugust4.com](http://ObamaDayAugust4.com), Facebook, YouTube and Twitter. Email [Realgoodpresident44@gmail.com](mailto:Realgoodpresident44@gmail.com).

## "My Mama"

By Calvin T. Mann  
SUN COLUMNIST



Celebrating Mother's Day is bitter sweet since my Mama passed in 1997. My Mama was incredible. Olliebell Rosetha Mann (full govern-

ment name) was a mother of 7 and community mother of many. It's very rare that we get a chance to talk about the woman that raised you on a public platform like this but because my Mama helped so many in various communities I think it's appropriate.

"Ollie" was married for 20 years to my father the Rev. Columbus Mann Sr. To be clear, this is my story and I am sure my brothers and sisters have their own version because she was able to convince us all that we were her favorite. My Mama was incredible and here are just a few ways she impacted my life. Because Olliebell was not one "for play" and foolishness, the entire community knew my Mama and adored her. Olliebell came into motherhood with some experience as the second oldest sibling of 11. In fact, we were reminded of this point daily. She graduated from Lincoln High School in Ferndale, Michigan and was a resident of Royal Oak Township. My Mama was a giver and a helper. She managed R&B artists Derrick Brinkley, Victor Addams, and other girl groups. Before she took on that role, she helped my father (a gospel pioneer) with his music and albums during their marriage of 20 years. Because of her appreciation of people and their gifts and talents she was good friends with many, many people. My friends would beat me to my home after school and even after my team sport games, it's what made her so cool. She was there.

She is the proud mother of 7 kids; 5 boys and 2 girls. She was incredibly stern and yet very loving. My Mama did not stand for foolishness and idle time. As a little boy, we had to go to the library and write essays to improve our literacy skills because she knew if we could read, write and do math we could survive in life. I was a broken kid and yet she made me believe I was unstoppable and that I could do anything I set my mind to. My Mama was a Shero. She use to take in prostitutes off the

streets and brought them into our home for safety and a new start. My Mama raised many young girls including her youngest sister-in-law, my aunt, a cousin and his mom, and a friend of hers who just needed a place to stay until he got on his feet. These life lessons and acts of kindness taught us how to treat people. It's just so sad that I lost my Mama so young. She was only 62 the day we lost her.

I can say so much more so but I just wanted to honor her by sharing why I think Mother's Day was so important to her. I remember when I was 21 years old and it was Mother's Day. She was fighting through a battle with diabetes it was my time to care for her. Everyone knew that Mama's expectation was to be celebrated for her contributions to motherhood. This particular Mother's Day, I had one little problem; I had no money to buy her a gift. So I decided to take the change I had and go Dairy Queen to buy her a banana split. Well, as you can imagine.... My gesture didn't sit well with her AT ALL! After it sat in front of her awhile I then decided I would eat it. Clearly, I missed the importance of this holiday to her and she literally decided that she would not speak to me for a year; and she didn't. The following year my gift had her in tears. I gave her more meaningful gifts; pictures, food and a jacket. I said to her you will never have another Mother's Day

like last year and she didn't.

As the years passed, my Mama was losing the fight as a diabetic and it would eventually claim her life. Although she was rapidly losing her sight, a special eye surgery allowed her to see her children one last time before her passing. Olliebell was a major influence in Michigan I did not realize the degree of importance until the day of the funeral. The reception of mourners made us feel like the president had passed away! There were hundreds of people present and grieving her loss. I had no idea she had helped, cared for and inspired so many. I miss my Mama. But I can tell you that her legacy left our community with a family of "helping people" in each and every one of my brothers and sisters. Even until this day my little brother Calls us "Ollie Built!" I will always love you, Mama!

Calvin T. Mann, National Encourager is President and Founder of Good Fathers Only and EMY Inc. Calvin is available for speaking engagements and advancing the call for boys and fathers. Feel free to reach out at [calvintmann@gmail.com](mailto:calvintmann@gmail.com).

## Lessons from the Journey:

### Surviving divorce, a necessary toolbox

By Heather Hetheru,  
SUN COLUMNIST



I have survived two divorces and continued to both love and marry again (my third time and

final destination).

How do I know that this is my final destination? Why is this marriage different from the others? Honestly, it's because I have invested a great deal of self-work, self-love and self-care and shifted my lens from expectations to better communications! I bet you are thinking, if I am so smart, how did two marriages end in divorce? There were a few things that contributed to my failed marriages that I may not have learned otherwise. My lessons were a "necessary evil" to get me to a place in life where I had to really look at myself; my motivations and influences; my reasoning and expectations; my relationship skills and personal boundaries and the inspiration and conditioning behind my decisions. This series of articles is designed to provide readers some deeper insights that you may not have had previously in your relationship toolbox. Keep reading with an open mind because new information and appreciating it are the first two steps to change!

Growing up in the 70's marriage was never a question of if... just when. It was just the natural order of things and everyone agreed. Right? But where did I get these ideas? Everything around me spoke to the family as a natural progression of life, adulthood and marriage. As a little girl, I always knew I would marry and have a family. I knew that because I was prepared as a little girl to be a mom (starting at 3 years old). I was gifted baby dolls with the necessary tools for parenting (bottles, diapers, clothes, food, ribbons and bows). When my dolls and/or their supplies were lost or broken I was taught to improvise (fix it or figure it out). When I got older (about 10 years old), we played house. I was always selected to be the mom because I was good at it. I cooked (mud pies) for the children (the kids on my block), scolded them, fed them and put them to bed (the back porch); and yes these were also improvisation and imagination. I actually got the kids to eat my mud pies (my secret recipe was that I would fill them with Alexander the Grapes and Lemon Heads candies) no one ever minded a little dirt. Marriage and family was embedded everywhere for me and other 70's kids.

With marriage and family being so important our upbringing, how did so many of us as adults have marriages that ended in divorce? In our African American community, divorce is outnumbering marriages 31 to 17. More Black women and men are refusing to marry at all. Where did so many of us go astray? The fear of marriages ending in divorce is one of the major reasons why Black women are delaying and even refusing to marry. Many become mothers before becoming wives entering the institute of marriage with unspoken expectations and limited relationship skills and tools. Our modern girls and women have been taught 'girl power' at the expense of valuing healthy loving relationships over easy access to "relations." Exposure to relationships is not the same as experience. In addition, expectations is not the same as communications. These are two sets of much needed tools for maturing women who recognize her value in relationships, family and community. It is here where I lost touch with reality in both of my marriages.

There is a need for us to help equip girls and boys, women and men with relationship tools. The first set of tools for their tool box must include family values. Family values include working together and not living apart. Understanding family roles and those influences/influencers are working against the family. It includes taking care of each other and ourselves. Building healthy relationships is another important skill. It includes learning how to listen and respect (her tool to learn) and learn and love (his tool embrace). Taking into consideration and applying the work necessary to get to know ourselves then others. Working through our own trauma before taking on someone else's is also an essential life lesson. Also getting to know your potential mate's parents habits, behaviors and raising process of their children. Ensure your lifestyle expectations are communicated openly and honestly. Finally, make sure that your beliefs are rooted and grounded in the same understanding spiritually, mentally, emotionally, and physically. Fill your relationship tool box with the necessary tools for success then you can survive marriage instead of divorce!

Need more insights? Start the next steps and/or next chapter of your journey with Heather Hetheru, Personal Change Coach. Let her 25+ years' experience helping others navigate the journey of life through books, workshops, and 1-on-1 coaching work for you too. For more information visit [www.yourinspiredjourney.com](http://www.yourinspiredjourney.com) or reach out to [heather2hetheru@gmail.com](mailto:heather2hetheru@gmail.com). Let the Journey Continue.

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