

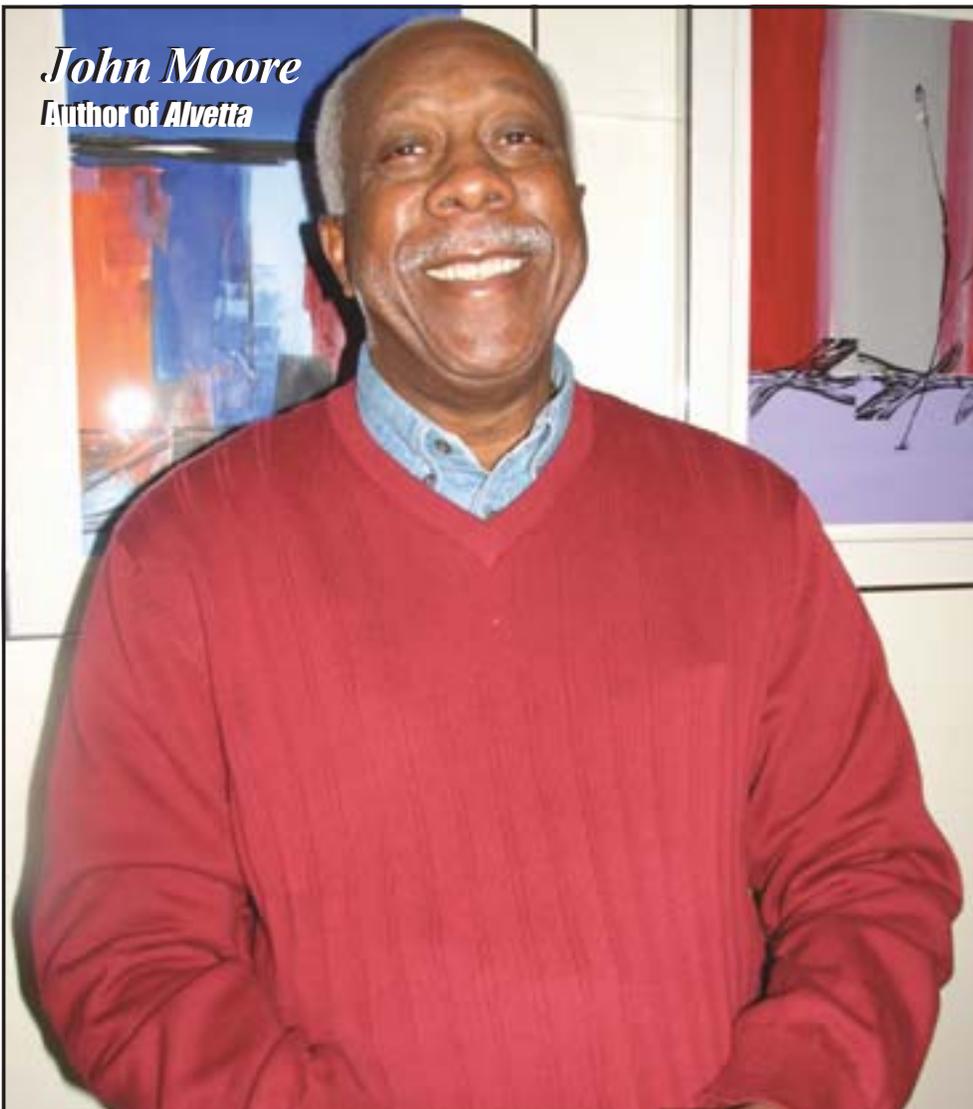
Local and National News

[www.thetruthtoledo.com](http://www.thetruthtoledo.com)

Volume 15, No.10

*"And Ye Shall Know The Truth..."*

December 24, 2008



*John Moore*  
Author of *Alvetta*

### In This Issue

Truth Editorial  
Page 2

Holt Answers  
Tolliver  
Page 3

Cover Story:  
Alvetta  
Page 5

Owens' Graduation  
Page 6

Theresa M  
Page 7

Mistle Toe Jam  
Page 8-9

BlackMarketPlace  
Page 10

Classifieds  
Page 11

ASSETS  
Page 12

*"My way of success could never be successful for you. The secret of long marriage? ... There is no secret. You have to make up your own stories for success. We were different, but we accepted each other's differences."*

## This Strikes Us ...

*A Sojourner's Truth Editorial*

Rev. Rick Warren, pastor of a southern California (Orange County) mega-church and best-selling author of *The Purpose Driven Life*, will be leading the prayers at the presidential inauguration next month, much to the consternation of the gay and lesbian activist community and the far left in general.

Warren has not only spoken out against the gay lifestyle, he is a committed social conservative whose views on any number of other issues are diametrically opposed to those of President-elect Barack Obama ... and to those at this newspaper.

Nevertheless, we applaud the future president for the selection of Warren, even as we hope the good reverend will keep in check his own anti-gay, anti-choice views during the invocation. But whether he does or not, the choice still makes sense and gives credence to the fact, as Obama said so often before and during his campaign, that it is time to stop looking at those in this country who hold different opinions on social issues as if they were the enemy.

Warren has drawn the ire of gay and lesbian activist groups because he has not only opposed gay marriage and supported California's infamous Proposition 8, he has also compared the gay lifestyle to incest and pedophilia.

Obama and Warren are not strangers. Warren invited Obama to his church to speak back in 2006 and was roundly chastised for letting someone of such liberal views appear there. Warren invited both Obama and his Republican opponent, Senator John McCain, to the ranch during the campaign to answer a series of questions – they were on stage separately and it was televised. It was one of the Obama campaign's low points due to the candidate's propensity to answer social questions in a professorial manner unlike his opponent who tended to deliver his answers in a punchier, one-line format.

As in his choices for top-ranking administration officials, the selection of Warren for such a high-profile appearance has provided an example of just what Obama has been speaking about from the outset. He intends to listen to all opinions, he intends to do what he can to avoid and prevent the sort of partisan bickering that keeps this nation from moving forward.

We have heard this line before, of course. George W. Bush and Bill Clinton gave lip-service to such intentions. Then they got into office and managed – in short order – to greatly increase the enmity of the opposition and widen the breach.

There could be no greater symbol of Obama's dedication to his stated purpose of working with those of differing views than the inclusion of Warren on such a momentous occasion.

As we have seen with Clinton and Bush 43, it is easy for a president – in spite of the best intentions – to get into a bunker mentality and sense that his political enemies and the press are ganging up against him. It doesn't help when allies are reinforcing those opinions for their own benefit.

Let's hope that Obama can withstand the pressure over the long haul. If he does, he is likely to get a lot more accomplished than did his predecessors in a number of areas.

\* \* \* \* \*

And speaking of the inauguration, it's only about four weeks away as millions of people from around the nation prepare to head to Washington, D.C. to be part of this very historic event.

District of Columbia officials are anticipating – fearing really – that more than 10,000 buses are about to make their way to the less than cozy confines of the Beltway. They feel that they are capable of handling about 1,000 buses at most.

Four million people, say some observers, may descend on the capital in hopes of catching at least a glimpse of history.

Typically, Inauguration Day is cold and blustery. There is heavy traffic in the Nation's Capital on every ordinary day of the year, so special events have a way of helping those caught in it to gain a new-found respect for the word "gridlock."

The buses that are going to try to drop off passengers on Inauguration Day will be lucky to get within miles of their intended destination. Those bus drivers will be even luckier to be able to stay in place until the event is over and passengers try to find their way back.

We would not want to discourage anyone from trying to participate in a truly historic event.

That said – be careful out there, folks!  
Happy Holidays!!

## The Sojourner's Truth

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## Community Calendar

### December 25

Merry Christmas!!  
4<sup>th</sup> Annual Free Christmas Dinner: Thomas Temple COGIC; 1 to 3 pm; Dine in only

### December 26-31

Toledo Kwanzaa Celebration: Wayman Palmer YMCA; 5 pm nightly the doors open – vendors, story telling; 6:55 pm – celebration begins, speaker and performances: 419-471-1912

### December 31

New Year's Eve Service: Bethesda at the City of Mercy – new location 705 Lodge; 10 pm; Guest Elder Bonnie Larkin pastor of Greater Faith Gospel Center

### January 1

Happy New Year!!

### January 4

Healing Service: Hope Lutheran Church; 4 pm; Speaker Jim Oedy of New Hope Christian Community Foundation: 419-536-8383

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Ramon Tiggs, Curator

#### For event information contact:

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Director of Events  
419.346.5275  
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# Wilkowski Makes It Official with "Kitchen Table" Announcement;

## Democrat Says He Aims to Create Jobs Rebuilding and Repowering Toledo

Special to The Truth



Speaking to the kitchen table concerns of Toledoans struggling in the current recession, Democrat Keith Wilkowski announced last week that he will be a candidate for mayor in 2009 in a one-minute video statement released on the campaign's website.

Keith Wilkowski.com. Addressing fellow Toledoans from his own kitchen table, Wilkowski made the follow-

ing statement:

"I'm Keith Wilkowski and I'm running for mayor. Times are tough. Jobs are scarce. And at kitchen tables across Toledo, families aren't talking about next year's election. They're talking about last month's mortgage payment and this month's heating bill, about putting food on the table and presents under the tree. But I'm making this announcement now be-

cause the change Toledo so desperately needs demands bold leadership.

"I'm running to bring jobs back to Toledo - not with empty promises but with real plans and the best team to implement them. We can rebuild Toledo, creating good-paying construction jobs as we re-power our homes and our businesses with clean energy. We can put people to work making solar panels, wind turbines, and next generation cars. We can train our workforce for the jobs of the future and put college within reach of every student. I'm Keith Wilkowski and together we can turn Toledo around."

"The kitchen table is ground zero for families trying to make ends meet in tough times," said Toledo City Councilman Joe McNamara.

"Keith Wilkowski understands that and has a bold vision for turning Toledo around."

Wilkowski's campaign announced that he will focus on the emerging federal eco-

nomie recovery program in the days and weeks ahead, working with business, labor, and civic leaders to advance Toledo interests. Wilkowski has proposed establishing a \$5 million solar energy field on a capped city landfill. The Northwestern Ohio Building and Construction Trades

Council is seeking to advance the solar field project through the stimulus plan being developed by President-elect Barack Obama's economic team.

Wilkowski's emphasis on economic development and job creation has won him high marks from both the busi-

ness community and organized labor.

"Keith Wilkowski is a pro-business pragmatist who will work to attract jobs and investment to our community," says Mary Gregory, executive vice president of the Mechanical Contractors Association of Northwestern Ohio.

# One Thought That Provokes Me ...

## To Lafe Tolliver, Esq. Re: Four Thoughts That Keep Me Up At Night ...

By Marjorie Holt

Mr. Tolliver, I anxiously read your column in the December 18, 2008 issue of The Truth and felt very much provoked to respond.

While some read it and probably thought "oh, well," I read it and thought "oh no, truth will prevail."

While I am sorry Mr. Tolliver that these four things keep you up at night, I felt compelled to write to you and ask that at least you become aware of one church that should not add to your frustration about the real role of the church.

While I am certainly not one to toot my own horn, I will do so in this case. I am sure, Mr. Tolliver, that you have heard of Bethesda Christian Center, that was located at 2138 Ashland for 10 years and maintained as well an outreach center at 2902 Elm St. for 12 years to date.

Well, here is the scoop on a group of people that you alluded to in your commentary. Mr. Tolliver, Bethesda has, since its inception, provided clothing, food, shelter, education, awareness, linkage to other resources, money, paid house notes, electric bills, water bills, car notes, cell phone bills and much, much more, and by the way, we are a church.

These services were not just to people who lived where the church was located but for some of our own members

and others who were and are still members of other people's churches.

In fact, Mr. Tolliver, I was conducting *coats for kids drives* long before it became politically correct for some to do for the sake of notoriety and a photo op. Feed your neighbor was not a one time thing for us, it was common place for us.

We didn't just feed our neighbors, we fed everybody's and anybody's neighbor who was hungry and we still do. Maybe your experiences and exposure regarding the church's role in feeding the hungry, clothing the naked, visiting the sick and other unfortunate experiences have been very negative and I apologize for the church(es) that may have exposed you to that level of embrace.

However, please do not put all of us in the same category. I have a vibrant youth department that is exposed to the perils that all of our youth face today. I would hope that what we expose our youth to at Bethesda will make a big difference in their lives and the lives of others whom they come in contact with.

We may not be raising a ruckus anywhere else but we are certainly raising the roof on Lodge St. about HIV/AIDS. We are blessed to have an AIDS educator right

in our midst who has no shame in her game talking about this rampant disease in our community, in our homes, and in the church house.

I will be the first to admit that churches do not come together as we should to work on issues collectively, but please do not assume that it is not happening anywhere. We are not notorious for advertising much of what we do, we just do what we do and pray for results.

We are not known worldwide for the biggest or the best of everything, but you know what, we do our best at everything that we attempt to do. You said it, Mr. Tolliver, regrettably, too many are concerned with their own little groups of folks and they do make sure that their offering plate overflows on Sundays and Wednesdays and whatever other days that are unique to them.

However, you should know that this is not what we major in. Do we take tithes and offerings? Yes we do. Do we rake and, yes, sometimes rape people in their finances, no, we don't.

And you do need to know that not all pastors are driven by the need to have a "big" church. Some of you reading this might say that is probably because Holt you don't have one; but you know what, my responsibility is BIG. I live by this motto: "To invest in people more and buildings less".

Mr. Tolliver, membership may be a big thing to some but let me tell you what happens at Bethesda. Most Sundays if I am not reminded, I forget to open the doors of the church for new members.

And, by the way, you spoke about putting away the bucks. Mr. Tolliver, first of all

(Continued on Page 4)

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## United Way Announces \$13.5 Million Campaign Total

*Special to The Truth*

United Way of Greater Toledo announced a grand total of \$13,502,684 for the 2008 Campaign in the midst of a challenging economy.

"I am so appreciative of the people and companies in our community who have supported the good work of United Way in the face of very difficult economic times," said Steve Krull, 2008 campaign chairman and Owens Corning senior vice president, secretary and general counsel.

"We set an aggressive goal of \$15 million this year," Krull continued, "because we knew that many people in our community would be facing some significant challenges. Although we didn't preach that mark, we are very proud of what our community was able to raise, and that money will be invested in fantastic programs that are advancing the

common good in our community."

Several workplace campaigns stepped up in a big way this year including:

•BP, a company that didn't run a campaign last year because they were retrofitting their plant, raised more than \$175,000 in 2008;

•Libbey, Inc. and HCR Manor Care set new highs for their workplace campaigns, raising \$337,000 and \$231,211, respectively.

•O-I, who increased their employee campaign by 11 percent, including a dollar-for-dollar corporate match and in some cases, a \$1.25 match for leadership gifts;

•Smucker's, whose campaign increased by \$23,787 (\$5 percent);

•Toledo Regional Chamber of Commerce, who surpassed their goal by 10 percent; and

•Glass City Federal Credit Union, whose employee campaign saw an increase of 23 percent.

Also adding campaign dollars was the \$50,000 *New Donor Challenge*, sponsored by Owens Corning,



Bill Kitson

which raised \$680,000 and the \$25,000 *Small Business Challenge*, sponsored by The Blade, which raised nearly \$133,000.

"The amount of money people raised is tremen-

dously moving," said Kim Sidwell, senior vice president of United Way Resource Development. "While we are \$1 million down this year—or 7 percent—almost five percent of that loss was understandably a result of decreased giving from the struggling auto industry and the financial services industry. We did receive a number of considerably generous gifts within these industries, but a significant loss was unavoidable given the economy."

Bill Kitson, United Way of Greater Toledo president and CEO, cautions that some difficult decisions are ahead of us.

"We're thrilled our community was able to give as much as they did," Kitson said, "but the reality is we raised less than we did last year. Like any business facing these difficult times, we will have to make challenging budget decisions."

"It's also only fair to caution the community about the collection rate," Kitson continued. "Historically, we only face a five to six percent pledge loss annually. With lay-offs and tough times ahead, that number will likely increase this year."

Money raised in the 2008 Campaign will be invested in United Way's recently launched *Agenda for Change*, which focuses on education, income and health. For more information, visit [www.unitedwaytoledo.org/agenda](http://www.unitedwaytoledo.org/agenda) and read the full plan.

As always, United Way continues to accept contributions throughout the year. It is never too late to reach out a hand. Pledge securely online at [www.unitedwaytoledo.org](http://www.unitedwaytoledo.org).

## The Full Ride Scholarship

The Tom Joyner Foundation Full Ride Scholarship is this organization's most prestigious scholarship award to date. One scholarship will be awarded to a freshman entering a Historically Black College or University (HBCU) in the United States in the fall of 2009. The scholarship recognizes academic distinction as well as strong character and personal qualities.

The recipient of the Full Ride Scholarship will receive full tuition waivers and stipends to cover room and board (on campus only) and books. The scholarship recipient will have to maintain a required 3.0 GPA (on a 4.00 scale) and 15 credit hours per semester—the scholarship award will be renewed each semester up to ten (10) semesters.

### Eligibility

- 1.) United States Citizen
- 2.) Current high school seniors attending school in the United States (applicant must be anticipating completion of high school in the Spring of 2009).
- 3.) Minimum high school grade point average of 3.50 (on a 4.00 grade scale, excluding home school studies) and Minimum SAT score of 1300 (math and verbal only) or ACT score of 28.
- 4.) Applicants must have applied and been accepted into an HBCU by July 1, 2009.
- 5.) Applicants must have demonstrated leadership abilities through participation in community service, extracurricular, or other activities.

### Selection Criteria

Students will be selected as finalists based on their academic accomplishments, intellectual and creative distinctions, extracurricular activities, letters of reference, and original essays. Finalists will be invited for a required interview with members of the Full Scholarship Selection Committee. Interviews will occur on or around March 21, 2009.

### Application Deadline

The application must be typed and may be accessed at [www.blackamericaweb.com](http://www.blackamericaweb.com). The application, together with ALL related documentation must be postmarked no later than January 17, 2009. Please place your name on all materials. Do not staple items together. Send the original and one copy of everything to:

**The Tom Joyner Foundation, Inc.; Attn: Full Ride Scholarship Committee; PO Box 630495; Irving, Texas 75063. Address questions to the TJF Full Ride Program.**

**Phone: 972-789-1058 or Fax: 972-789-1428.**

## Thought

*(Continued from Page 3)*

I don't get paid at Bethesda to be the pastor. I have pastored this church for 13 years and have never received a salary. Some of my fellow constituents do call me crazy for that. But I have never missed a meal, been set out doors, without clothes, shoes and nor have I been void of a few nice vacations that I wanted to take.

I know the Bible is right when it says that: a laborer is worthy of his hire. People do need to bless their leader. But a lot of us have gotten hire mixed up with sire. I do agree with you that some of us, Mr. Tolliver, have gotten caught up on the title but we have no testimony.

We are bigger than life itself and don't mind showing it, but the question remains whose life did you touch, what real difference did you make, who will you leave better off than you found them. I do believe that the church is in a very critical spot. The face of the church has changed.

The marketplace is different. But the focus must still be on how we make the difference, not how well we market our differences. Some of you will contend that 'here she goes again.'

But I would rather lend my gifts, that are God given, to a world that God created, for a world that God will come back for and righteously judge, not having to respond to this question: Who hindered you, you did run well?

Mr. Tolliver, I pray that this response to your commentary will reach deep into the walls of your mind and ensure you that not all churches have greedy pastors, some of us are concerned about our neighborhoods and the people who live in them.

Just a little side bar, Bethesda Christian Center had Christmas on Lodge St. We blessed every household on the street this year with a gift from the church, in excess of 88 families. No big gift giving was conducted or big show down for this pastor. And, oh, some of you would say that if they don't pay you, don't give you gifts, don't do this or that, then why are you there?

Oh yes, I work very hard as a pastor, and even as bishop. But one thing that I do know and that is that the people on Lodge St. at BCC love me, show it and together we make things happen.

This is the testimony that I have to share, Mr. Tolliver. I know that my labor is not in vain. I pray that you will get some sleep at night and that at least one of the things will not continue to contribute to you losing sleep.

But it looks as if, Mr. Tolliver, you are going to lose a lot more sleep if the church maintains its present level of dissatisfaction in your mind. What do you suggest that we do that has not already been suggested?

Maybe it is our egos that need an overhaul and not the actual church beating that you just gave us. Maybe it is going back to basics and understanding that when God is at the head, we get ahead. Maybe it is just letting God be God and every man a lie, if he/she believes that you are an island and you don't need anyone else.

Maybe it is just plain ole common sense in some of the things that seems to have been lost a long time ago! Relax, Mr. Tolliver. I still believe that the church will rise. Because when the God in us stands up, everything and everybody around us must take note of who's really in control. You are always welcome to join us at Bethesda!

*Be Blessed in the Lord always,  
Bishop Marjorie Holt, Pastor  
Bethesda at The City of Mercy*



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## Alvetta: John Moore's Tribute to His Life's Partner

By Fletcher Word  
Sojourner's Truth Editor

John C. Moore is a man of no mean accomplishments.

Moore has had a successful career as a banker and as a university administrator. He has served on as many boards and has been a member of as many professional groups as can be imagined.

Moore has also had a personal life that was, for the most part, extremely successful – particularly his marriage. He wed at 19. His bride, Alvetta, was 16.

*Alvetta was very quiet but outgoing. She was always well groomed and had a nice, refined quality about her. She loved the arts, movies, good books and great food. I was a kid who, for the last four years, had spent my spare time raising hogs, farming, hunting, fishing and camping. For the first couple of months I thought we were*

*two people that should not be together.*

Not many gave the young couple a chance. He had not yet entered college, she had not finished high school, she was pregnant – not a recipe for success even in the mid-1950's.

It wasn't always sunshine and flowers but the couple stayed married for more than 50 years.

*Early on, we made a promise to each other that I know was stronger than our vows. We promised each other that we would only be parted by death. We promised that we would forgive each other for our human weaknesses. God knows I had many then and now.*

Alvetta also achieved a great deal professionally over the years. She entered college in her 20's and be-

came a teacher – quite a well-respected teacher, resisting

attempts by the Toledo Public Schools' leaders to move



success and achievements, when Alvetta was diagnosed with terminal brain cancer and given only six months to live in their 51st year of marriage and at the relatively young age of 66, he had no way of preventing the impending tragedy.

Alvetta, in fact, did not die in the predicted six-month time table her doctors gave the couple. She survived for another 14 months – the last six of those in Hospice. Her husband could only sit, hold her hand, share their life's experiences with her... and pray. Oh, and he could write about the trip home for his beloved Alvetta. That trip was chronicled in a journal he started just after the diagnosis and has been published in a book titled, appropriately enough, Alvetta.

No stranger to writing, Moore's first book, A Positive Attitude Is a Muscle: A

partner.

*I didn't sleep last night. My thoughts were on Alvetta's condition yesterday. Each time I think I am prepared for the worse, something lets me know that I am not. The weight of the last 12 months is starting to show.*

Alvetta Moore was diagnosed during a trip that the couple had taken to Florida. The malignancy was a Glioblastoma Multiforme (GMB) and she was operated on in Orlando. After that operation, which could not have been expected to cure Alvetta of the malignancy, the couple drove back to Toledo and John told Alvetta of his plans to write about this episode in their lives. "To preserve your name" he explained.

"Who's going to buy it and who's going to read it?" asked Alvetta.

"Family will buy and read it," responded John, "that's enough."

In fact, more than just family have bought and read the book. It has been stocked in various Barnes and Noble (not in the Toledo store, however) and Books a Million operations. It's also on the shelves of the Toledo Lucas County Public Library branches.

Alvetta is a rather straightforward account of the 15 months of Alvetta Moore's life and John Moore's reflections on that process. While he hints, at times, about the past – their children, their marital difficulties – the past is not explored in any great depth. That's for another time and another book, he explains.

He also avoids using the couple's experiences as a template for a long, successful marriage.

"My way of success could never be successful  
(Continued on Page 7)

her into administration. She opted to remain in the classroom until retirement.

"The only thing that [bothered me] was she did not want to become an administrator," says Moore. "She enjoyed teaching up until the point that parents didn't discipline their children."

So life was full for the Moores – professional success, a growing family and a deep enjoyment of the companionship each provided the other.

*Alvetta loved planning trips; she loved the Caribbean, Hawaii and Mexico. She loved shopping with a passion and the two went hand in hand. Alvetta also enjoyed Broadway, so we tried to visit New York at least once a year. We'd shop, take in at least three plays and find a new place to eat or a nightclub with great music. It's hard to believe what we accomplished in our years together.*

Yet in spite of Moore's



Managed Stress Survivor's Manual, has had sales success and is used as a basis for his many workshops and seminars.

In Alvetta, along with Moore's almost daily musings during that 15-month period in the couple's lives, there are also contributions from a number of family members and friends who shared the Moore's lives. There is also a word or two from Alvetta – in the early stages of her disease. For the most part, however, the book is all Moore and his reflections on losing his life's

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## Theresa M. Gabriel's Family, Friends and Colleagues Celebrate Birthday

Sojourner's Truth Staff

They came from far and wide to help Theresa M. Gabriel, assistant chief of staff for the City of Toledo, once more celebrate her birthday on Friday evening, December 12, at the Peacock Café on Monroe Street.

Dozens of friends, family members and co-workers joined Gabriel at the lounge she owned for so many years and that is now owned by her son, Bobby Gabriel.



The invited guests munched on items from a generously supplied buffet line. The party was catered by Muhammad Israel of Pita Sub

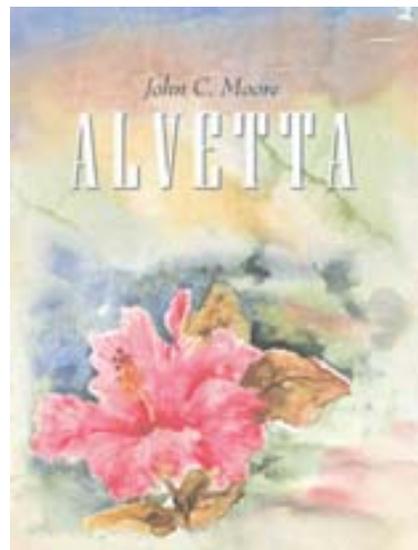
Gabriel, who has worked for the City of Toledo for many years in a variety of functions, has been head of the local NAACP office, served as chairman of the board for EOPA and is on the board of the J. Frank Troy Senior Center, clearly has friends, colleagues and acquaintances in virtually every corner of the city.



Robert Gabriel, Marla Banks, Muhammad Ishmael, Theresa M. Gabriel

## Alvetta

(Continued from Page 5)



viduals and how they live their lives.

"I am more careful than ever before to say 'I know how you feel' or 'I know what you went through,'" he says.

*Fifteen months of knowing what the outcome would be did not, could not, prepare me for this moment. Even the professionals or the religious leaders could not prepare me for this moment. Even my faith in God couldn't have prepared me for this moment.*

Alvetta Moore passed away on June 11, 2007, just a day shy of her 68th birthday. Moore's tribute to his wife was published in September of this year with the help of his daughter, Audrey Madyun. A touching tribute indeed.

*I know that we all must die. My day will come. I hope and pray that I have Alvetta's faith, courage and strength when it's my time.*

*Each day, for the rest of my life, I will thank God for the seconds, minutes, hours, day and years, he allowed me to be with Alvetta.*

for you," he says now. "The secret of long marriage?" he asks rhetorically. "There is no secret. You have to make up your own stories for success - be it good fortune, hard work, determination or patience. We were different, but we accepted each other's

differences." Obviously the experience of watching his beloved partner fade away and finally succumb to the cancer has changed Moore's life in numerous ways. For one, he certainly has a strong sense of the uniqueness of indi-

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# An Interview with Charles Johnson: Winner of Mistle Toe Jam Idol

By Michael Hayes  
Minister of Culture

WIMX/WJZE - Mix 95.7 and Hot97 brought Avant and Fantasia to the Glass City this past week as part of their latest Mistle Toe Jam.

Toledoans should feel lucky to have major talent come and see us, but it's an even bigger treat for those local artists aspiring to break into the music industry to get a shot at sharing a stage with top acts in the biz.

Of all the R&B singers you may know or have heard of around the city,

some guy named Charles Johnson stepped in as the last performer in the finals held at Fat Fish Blue Wednesday December 17 and won the whole thing.

Naw, I'm joking.

I can't call Charles some guy, he actually shares strong ties to my label U.G.E.

Charles was in a singing group with a few guys back in his days at Scott High School during the late 90's. Also in that singing group were a few locally known artists such as Tracy, U.G.E. singer/songwriter Darron Scott and a couple others.

I met Charles about a year ago through a number of mutual acquaintances.

As we talked about computers (Charles is an IT guy), and about all aspects of music (recording, vocals, production, etc.) and just vibing - we gained a mutual respect for each other. Not many people outside of U.G.E. get to hear music that's unfinished or song ideas or plans and such but as Charles and our crew grew closer, I've shared a lot with him.

He's one of the extra sets of eyes, ears and helping hands that me and my co-CEO consider the extended family of our label.

When you get to know Charles and see him clown around, you can also tell that his personality is infectious and he's funny as hell too!

When U.G.E. started our weekly open mic night... we invited Charles to host it.

And along with members of U.G.E.'s core crew, he shares host duties each and every Saturday as we welcome singers, rappers and poets to come through and get open at the art gallery.

Charles is a modest dude. When he decided to enter the auditions to see who would win the top prize of opening for Avant and Fantasia, he was there with U.G.E. and saw how seriously we took it as we had three of our R&B solo acts get the approval nod from the judges.

But then he went off and created material, practiced

and perfected his approach and came in and stole the show.

The night he won... I'm telling y'all, it was an astounding sight.

Eleven finalists all at Fat Fish Blue.

U.G.E.'s Leigh Ashley and Charles both had exams that night and they made it just in time before the judges and facilitators called it a wrap.

The entire night was... interesting to say the least.

Always trying to be off in the cut, I sat in the corner.

Lavale Stewart a/k/a Adonis who is our co-producer sat with me.

We also had Darron Scott, U.G.E. rap artist T. Diamond and U.G.E. rap artist B.M.G. in attendance.

All of us posted up in the corner in the back.

U.G.E. singer/songwriter Aye Dee was there with his girl T.T. and sitting with them was Hustle hand artist Tracy.

Once the show started, the 11 finalists had five minutes each to rock and the winner would be crowned by the panel of judges consisting of radio personnel from Hot97 and Mix 95.7.

I never know how music I have produced is going to be received by the audience so I was a little nervous. Having Aye Dee and Leigh in it means that The Under Godz music would be heard twice that night.

One thing that helped balance my nerves was knowing that Toledo audiences are just across the board... kind of unresponsive to people and music they don't know.

Doesn't matter if they like you or not, if they don't know you or don't know anyone that knows you... you've got an uphill battle on your hands fasho.

The entire night... there were about six finalists who performed original material, including my two.

I saw some singers put on a hell of a show, and I watched as others just gave a so-so

performance.

Either way... the audience was never... and I mean never fully attentive the whole way through.

That is... until Charles Johnson got up.

He told the crowd he just graduated college that day, then he told the ladies he had a song for them and the audience was ripe for the picking after that.

His demeanor, his swag, his confidence, his vocals and everything else about his performance exemplified the perfect way to win a crowd and a competition.

U.G.E. was quick to offer our congratulations... fair and square, the boy came and stole the show!

I mean girls were hootin' and hollerin' the entire time he was up there.

He won in a most overwhelming way, it was outstanding.

I caught up with him after the show.

**Michael:**  
So Charles, why did you want to enter the Mistle Toe Jam Idol auditions in the first place?

**Charles:**  
Friend of mine just told me to do it right quick, I wasn't going to do it... that's the real reason. They said 'just do it man, quit bein a punk.'

**Michael:**  
Can you explain to our readers, what the experience of auditioning was like?

**Charles:**  
Nerve racking. You don't know what the judges are expecting, you just kind of hope that you have the right formula. It's like a game of chess, you have to figure out who's singing what and try to find the right song to match your voice and what the judges are gonna like and what the people like because they are gonna judge off of the people's reaction as well.

Also, the venue... that makes the song more appropriate. Also there's a little bit of luck involved. Because

there could be someone that sings better than you, but just didn't pick the right song. That's also what the judges are looking for too... who can pick the right song.

**Michael:**  
What song did you choose to audition with and why?

**Charles:**  
Seal's "Kiss From A Rose." Seal is one of my favorite male vocalists and I know that what he sings I can sing pretty well.

**Michael:**  
I was there, I even expressed caution in choosing that selection for the Peacock and its crowd... boy was I wrong. That was a bold move.

**Charles:**  
It got the reaction I was looking for. It was guaranteed to showcase my technical ability. It's a hit. Any and everybody knows that song, regardless of the venue.

I just wanted to show more technical skill level as opposed to showmanship seeing that the first audition was a cappella.

**Michael:**

There sure were a ton of singers that night you auditioned... I counted nearly 50 and only 40 were signed up. Did you notice all of the competition in the building that night?

**Charles:**

At first glance I saw all of them, but at the same time I had to ignore them and focus on what I needed to do. I'm confident in my own ability. Once I made the selection I had to stick to my guns because I didn't practice anything else. I saw people that I knew were beasts on the mic. I even noticed people who I taught how to sing and they did a great job. Everybody did a great job. I just had to stick to the game plan and hope for the best and I got lucky.

**Michael:**

Charles... being around you and we've talked a lot about music and artistry... what is your background in music and singing?

**Charles:**

Well, most of my background has been in my mother, Lesli Lane Rodgers, who is a jazz vocalist. When I was young my mother didn't have the time or money to send me to a babysitter when she had rehearsal, studio time, or a gig. So, I had to tag along and sit quietly. However, one time I remember my mother letting me sing with her, when I was 10 or so, while she was recording. It was a disaster!! They didn't use any of the takes. It was fun though. Another part of my development was the church. It was a huge help in my vocal development. I developed relative pitch as a result of singing in choirs and other vocal groups.

**Michael:**

So from the experiences in choir and being developed all the way until now winning city-wide contests and being on stage with platinum artists, explain some of the work you've done to get to this

(Continued on Page 9)

## Interview

(Continued from Page 8)

point.

**Charles:**  
Sang in Europe with Voices of Tomorrow Youth Choir directed by Quinsey Hammond Through the Sister Cities program we went to Spain, Hungary, Germany.

Some crowds as big as 14,000 people some small as 700.

From there I had some audio recording experience working in the midi labs in high school and that was my start in recording music.

From that point on I became kind of a bug.

I also sang in Japan while I was in the armed services.

In recent times I've been around U.G.E. helping them with their venue on Saturdays, helping with hosting duties.

I met up with Dem Guys production and we started recording music for the show.

**Michael:**  
Okay, you made it past the initial rounds and into the finals with ten other local acts.

Can you explain your experience winning at Fat Fish Blue?

**Charles:**  
It was very shocking. I was surprised I was even

allowed to compete.

Earlier that day I had graduated college and I had my commencement ceremony and that ran into the time that the show started.

Once I got done with graduation I scrambled down to the comedy club.

Twist was, the person who was driving missed the exit.

My phone started blowing up, people telling me if I

I finally get there and I'm all revved up and I didn't even know how to get in the club.

By the time I get ready the last singer is finishing, and I just had time to catch my breath.

I got up there on stage, broke the ice and sang the song the best way I knew how.

**Michael:**

length about production and whatnot... tell me about making the song you performed.

**Charles:**  
The song is called "Tonight." It's about a fun and classy way of being with your lady.

I don't believe in the nasty nasty 'girl let me hump you up and down.'

So when I decided to begin writing again, I wanted to show that every love song doesn't have to be sexually vivid. I believe in the old school theory of the imagination which is very important even in songwriting and that's how "Tonight" came about.

I tried to use an old school formula with a new school way of production.

**Michael:**  
So at the big event... you're at The Stranahan to open for Avant and Fantasia... what was that night like for you?

**Charles:**  
I will say it was a life changing experience as far as performance was concerned because I got to see the level that the professionals are on. I got to see it first hand, backstage, the type of equipment used, the producers.

One of the best parts of the whole experience was the cooks downstairs and the food.

I've never had my own personalized dressing room

with food and drink.

They treated me like a real star, even the people from the radio station.

It's very motivating to possibly continue recording music.

**Michael:**  
Can you talk about what it was like stepping onstage and the reaction you got performing for a few thousand people.

**Charles:**  
God bless Toledo, those guys are tough but I was surprised at the reaction I did get seeing as how I wasn't the main event. They really got into the song and participated when I enticed them to do so.

The light was all in my face, I didn't even see how many people were really there. Shout out to the spotlight guy. By the time I got adjusted to the light, the song was over.

**Michael:**  
What's next for Charles?

**Charles:**  
The next thing for Charles is to first continue my education and possibly start a project.

I look forward to working with talented producers to create the best possible musical equation that will bring dignity and respect to music as a whole.

**Michael:**  
Okay, fam, it's been good seeing you shine and I'm looking forward to the project.

**Charles:**

Thank you for your time and considering me for this interview and hopefully in the future we'll be talking about my possible upcoming project.

So there it is folks.

Shouts out to Tymara Spears (runner up at Fat Fish Blue finals) U.G.E. artists Aye Dee (the third person to sing at Fat Fish Blue) And Leigh Ashley (the second to last person to sing at Fat Fish Blue) And all the other contestants.

And as always... U.G.E. and The Truth invites all serious artists to come to THE LISTENING each and every Saturday @ 9pm.

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didn't get there all my hard work to prepare would've been lost.

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Page 11

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### Hiring Process:

Qualified candidates must submit a resume and cover letter stating salary requirements in MS Office Word format to [hr.toledo@jmsmucker.com](mailto:hr.toledo@jmsmucker.com) by December 31, 2008.

### Benefits / General:

The Company offers a competitive benefits program that includes: medical, dental, vision, 401k, and vacation.

**No phone calls please. We will contact individuals that we are interested in pursuing. We are an equal opportunity employer.**

# ASSETS Toledo and NANBPWC's Business Expo

Special to The Truth



More than 30 vendors set up shop on Saturday, December 13 at the Toledo Business Networking/Expo held at the Garden Lake Hall and sponsored by ASSETS Toledo and the Toledo Chapter of the National Association of Negro Business and Professional Women's Clubs, Inc. The Expo featured a variety of entrepreneurs, many of whom are ASSETS Toledo graduates.



The Peacock Cafe & Lady K, Ms Karen Harris Presents...

## The <sup>Hottest</sup> New Years Eve Party

Live Entertainment provided by:  
**Mr. Gerald Foster**  
**K.G.B.**  
**Lady K (Ms Karen Harris)**  
**K.G.B.**

Tickets  
 \$35/person (before Christmas)  
 \$40/person (after 12/23)

Tickets Available At:  
 Peacock Cafe : 419.241.8004  
 Lady K, Ms Karen Harris 419.290.8280  
 (reserve seating available for early purchase only)

**WEDNESDAY, DECEMBER 31ST**

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 237 N. ERIE ST. TOLEDO, OHIO

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ASSETS Toledo, with Executive Director Olivia Holden, is a faith-based, 13-week business-training course that utilizes experienced business operators to help instruct the aspiring entrepreneurs. The Expo brought out dozens of Toledoans view the vendors' products and services.

## The House of Day Funeral Service

*"Locally Owned And Operated"*  
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- \* On Line Arrangements
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