

Reuniting family---a lifelong work

Written by Dr. Peter Hayden, Ph.D. CEO, Turing Point
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In growing up, I watched many of my friends with their parents, and I was often envious of what I saw. My mother was very young when I came along, and she needed time to work on her own growing up. I had Mother Bowers to raise me, and though I appreciated what Mother Bowers did for me, I still wanted to be with my own mother.

My mother and I worked hard to get to where we ended today. It took sixty years for us to get to where I wanted to be with her, where I had wanted to be for my entire life.

The good news is that 40 years ago we got on that path. That's the day that I sobered up. January 4, the day of my sobriety, is the day I started working on me and my mom's reunification. I had to take control- I had been waiting for my mama to do what only I could do.

That was a 20 year process, and 20 years ago my mom and I met at the right place and right time. Since then others have envied me for the relationship that I have with my mom.

My mother was a vessel. She brought me into this world. Her actions, giving me to Mother Bowers to raise, shaped my life, and when we finally came together again, I was ready to understand her and her choices in ways I couldn't as a child. I was ready to treasure our relationship in the present.

Finally, let me leave you with this: my mother's goal in life was for the Lord to call her by her

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name. If I can just take this time, not to play God, but just to say I know it would go something like this: "Welcome home, Verlea Barbee, my good and faithful servant."

Verlea Lee Barbee March 30, 1928 – December 22, 2012

Verlea Lee Barbee, mother of Twin Cities social services entrepreneur, Dr. Vincent Peter Hayden, Ph.D, and grandmother to the first African American State Senator elected from Minneapolis, Jeff Hayden, died in Minneapolis, December 22.

Verlea Barbee lived in Minneapolis since 1958 and retired from a career in Honeywell Corporation in 1991. While at Honeywell, she was an active member of the Honeybellies, an employee networking group that celebrated birthdays and holidays together.

A member of Zion Baptist Church, Verlea Barbee was a devout Christian who accepted The Lord Jesus Christ into her life as her personal Savior, her family members said.

Verlea Barbee met and married Robert Sullivan Barbee in 1962. They remained married for 45 years, until he died in 2007.

At a memorial service officiated by the Rev. Jerry McAfee, at New Salem Missionary Baptist Church last week, Verlea Barbee was remembered as an expert bid whist card player who enjoyed winning against her husband or anyone else that played against her. She was an avid reader, family members said, up to date on current events from all corners of the world. "She never missed a day of reading her newspaper and watching the local and national news. In recent years she expanded her television viewing to include all of the judge shows," the family said.

Verlea Barbee was born March 30, 1928 in Kansas City, Missouri to Lee Edward Hayden and Arlene Hayden. She was preceded in death by her parents, her brothers Edwin and Peter, and her husband Robert.

She is survived by her son Peter (Joyce), siblings Cheryl Richardson, Michael Hayden, Hartzell Gray, Donald Gray, and Diane Huff (Christopher); and by grandchildren Jeffrey (Terri), Selena, Kelli (Tim) Taylor, Erin, and Sidney Hayden, and an extended family of great grandchildren, cousins, nieces and nephews and in-laws.