

The Vanderveer Park Perspective

Mark Your Calendar

6.19
Father's Day Brunch

6.20
Juneteenth

6.22 - 6.26
New York
Annual Conference

7.2
Sunday School Fun Day

7.3
Outdoor Worship Service &
Communion

7.23 & 7.30
Mission u: Rev. Boone will be
teaching

Register at <https://ny-reg.brapp.com/2022>

A Word From Pastor Boone

Trust in the Lord with all your heart, and lean not on your own understanding; in all your ways acknowledge Him, and He shall direct your paths.
Proverbs 3:5-6 (NKJV)

Grace and Peace Graduates,

How wonderful it is to share in your academic accomplishment, your graduation. You have worked extremely hard to reach this important life milestone and we are very proud of you. You have gained an incredible amount of knowledge over the years and it is likely that you will spend the rest of your life uncovering how all that knowledge fits together, how you may connect the dots of information to arrive at practical applications and understanding.

I have found the Lord to be particularly helpful when it comes to leading us along the path from knowledge to understanding and ultimately to wisdom. Our God is omniscient, all knowing and all wise.

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GRADUATION

OUR 2022 COLLEGE GRADUATES

Isaiah Caldwell:

University of Albany

Jonathan Logan:

Howard University

Nayancie Matthews:

Baruch University
Summa Cum Laude

Brianna Watson:

SUNY Oswego, MBA
Magna Cum Laude

Raised With Two Fathers: A Bronx Boy's Experience *By Benigno Rodriguez*

Someone once told me, "Be the Father You Always Wanted." What an interesting thought stepping into the month of June 2022, where I will be celebrating, not only my first Father's Day, but also my 42nd birthday. As I reflect on this month, I'm astonished at all God's works in my life and how the story continues to be written. In John 6:29, Jesus states, "the work of God is this: to believe in the one He has sent." What I will share with you is how fatherhood evolved in my life, the lessons I learned, and how important it was for me to believe in the one that God had sent to enable me to understand the experience. I was raised by two fathers.

In the early 1970's, my biological father, Benigno Rodriguez, Sr. arrived in the United States from Arecibo, Puerto Rico. He was only in his 20's and with a 7th grade education. While on the Island, he cleaned and shined shoes with his father. When Rodriguez Sr. established himself in the Bronx, New York, he landed a position in a boiler repair company. In the late 70's, Rodriguez Sr. met my biological mother, and they had 2 children, Manny and Benny. One of the early positive memories I had of my father was how he would treat us to special meals on pay day. He would provide my mother the monies to pay the rent, the electric, and gas bills, and with what remained he would take us out to dinner. These were great times for the family until Rodriguez Sr. was laid off in 1991.

The stress of being the breadwinner, and my mother being a stay-at-home common-law wife on public assistance affected him. Having to apply for public assistance emasculated him. In his weakness, drugs and alcohol

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A Word from Pastor Boone Continued

If we follow the advice of proverbs 3:5-6, we will make it a point to trust the knowledge, understanding and wisdom of the Lord even over our own. Keeping the Lord always before us will enable us to live life in the blessings and fullness God has intended. It will allow us to take all we have learned and use it not only for our own benefit but also to God's glory.

It is my blessing to be your pastor and my privilege to pastor such an accomplished group of young people. I look forward to your continued growth, success, and service to God's church. I also look forward to hearing from you about new and innovative ways that we can reach your peers and share with them the goodness of the Lord. Congratulations!!!

In God's Service,
Pastor Melvin Boone

Is There a Doctor in the House?

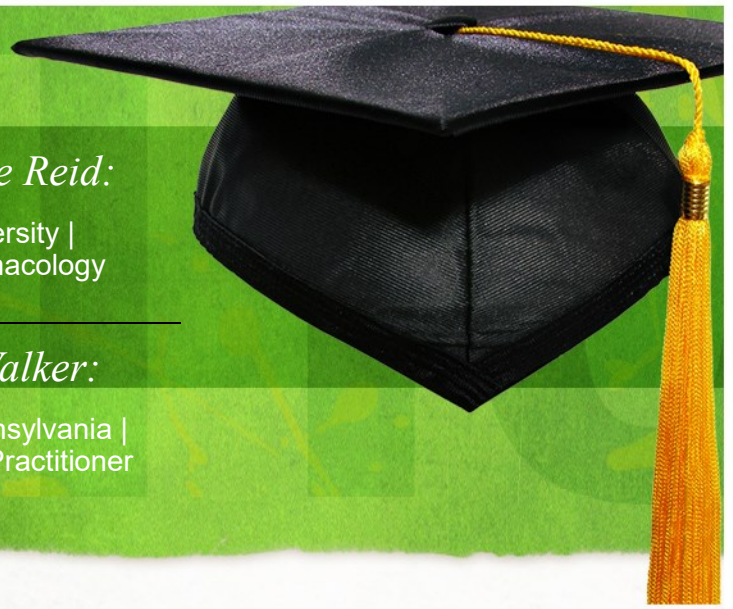
**Yes,
We have 2
New Doctors!
Congratulations!!**

Dr. Stephanie Reid:

Howard University |
Doctor of Pharmacology

Dr. Tracy Walker:

University of Pennsylvania |
Doctorate Nurse Practitioner



Raised With Two Fathers Continued...

consumed him. Worst days came when my mother left home on multiple occasions to be psychiatrically hospitalized due to delusions and hallucinations. Opening the refrigerator and seeing a gallon of water, half dozen eggs, and a quarter ounce of milk became a harsh reality. We lost our one-bedroom apartment and settled in two furnished rooms for which my father paid \$60 a week. Whatever happened to dinners Friday night, or the crisp \$20 and \$50 bills I saw my father handing to my mother to pay the bills? Rodriguez, Sr., the man I looked up to, who was hardworking and popular with his co-workers, could now be labeled an alcoholic. As the arguments grew in our household with mom and dad, so did the blue and white lights from the police or the red and white lights from EMS, escorting my mother to a hospital. The last words my father shared with me were: *"Mi nino, no te preocupes. Oren mucho a Dios. Todo estara bien"* (My boy, don't worry, pray a lot to God, everything is going to be ok).

By age 15, I saw myself entering what I now like to call, "my upgrade", the foster care system. This was something that my brother and I had initially feared. We were placed in the home of strangers. The first dish I was introduced to was rice and peas, and chicken. The man and woman, who later became my foster parents said to my brother and I: "Help us to set up the table in the dining room. You can call us Ms. Z and Mr. B." As I sat down to eat the dish that my foster parents prepared, it had a different taste. It was not Goya or Sazon. Ms. Z. replied, "it is curry chicken." As I smiled, I slowly started to learn and understand the customs of being raised in a Trinidadian household. I had gone from living in a one-bedroom apartment to furnished rooms, and finally to residing in a two-family house with a basement floor Mr. B called "the Cave." Mr. B helped me to get into James Madison High School. He stayed up with me to fix mid-term papers and finals. All this time, I had an understanding from my biological father that paying the bills, giving your wife money, and taking your children out for dinner made you a father. Now I had a new understanding. Someone who dedicated his time to making his children grow and develop even if they are not his biological children is a father. The next four years were life changing for me. The smell of turkey dinner, and the smell of pine from the Christmas tree became a tradition. The salsa songs Mr. B played by Marc Anthony, or the *soca* music by Byron Lee & the Dragonaires became all too common to my new mixed culture. Mr. B would say, "You're no longer Puerto Rican. You are Trini Rican." Just writing these words melts my heart as I felt the sense of belonging for which we had been searching. Parties were every weekend occurrences and unfortunately, Jack Daniels and Barcardi were names with which I

was too familiar. Alcohol became a problem for my foster father as well.

There are three life lessons I learned from observing these men. First, you can have money and work, but that does not build a foundation like trust and communication. Second, when love and compassion whisper, it is important to lower the volume on life. Lastly, it is important to learn from your own history to avoid it from repeating itself. My fathers, my Puerto Rican and my Trinidadian father were both compassionate men. Psalms 103:13 states, "As a father has compassion on his children, so the Lord has compassion on those who fear Him." These men did their best to raise me based on their personal experiences and products of their own historical context. Therefore, it's important to learn from your own history. Proverbs 22:6 states, "Start children off on the way should go, and even when they are old, they will not turn from it." I still remember these words my fathers shared with me, each from his individual cultural context, and they place a smile on my face.

I learned from the successes and failures of both my fathers. They passed their goodness down to me. I will follow them on this journey I now undertake with my wife, Tanya and daughter, Trinity, not only as a husband, but also a father. I want to be the father I always wanted, a father of whom a daughter can be proud; and a model for her future mate. I pray Trinity will seek me for guidance, just as I seek my Lord, Jesus Christ, my Father. 2 Samuel 7:14-15 states, "I will be a father to him, and he will be a son to me. When he does wrong, I'll discipline him in the usual ways. But I'll never remove my gracious love from him." No matter what life brings tomorrow, the gracious love I have for Trinity will live inside her because I was the father to her that I had always wanted. She, too, will believe in the one whom God has sent. Jesus is the center of all of our family's decision making.



Her Story is Our History

By Tanya Rodriguez

As we prepare to celebrate Juneteenth, it is important that we recognize the recent strides in Black history. On February 25th, 2022, President Joe Biden nominated Ketanji Brown Jackson to be the first African American woman to serve in the Supreme Court. On April 7th, 2022, she was confirmed by a 53-47 Senate vote. She is expected to be sworn in this summer when Justice Stephen Breyer retires.

Judge Brown Jackson was born on September 14, 1970, in Washington, D.C. to Johnny and Ellery Brown. She was raised in Miami, Florida, where it is clear that her parents set fine examples for their daughter. Both her parents attended HBCUs and started their careers as public-school teachers. Later her mother would rise to principal of New World School of Arts and her father chief attorney of the Miami-Dade County school board. Judge Brown Jackson graduated Harvard University *magna cum laude* in 1992 and then from Harvard Law School, *cum laude* in 1996. She has had an impressive career serving as a judge of the U.S. Court of Appeals of D.C. (nominated by President Joe Biden) as well as a judge in the U.S. District court for D.C. and Vice Chair of the U.S. Sentencing Commission (both as a result of nominations by former President, Barack Obama) She is truly an inspiration, pursuing her destiny even after being cautioned by a high school guidance counselor not to set her "sights too high".

For wives and mothers like myself, it is not only the judge's esteemed profession that captivates us in awe, but also her admirable ability to balance career and family. In 1996 she married her husband, Patrick Graves Jackson and had two daughters, Talia, and Leila.

As a new mother, I was often warned not to name my

daughter anything "too black" due to concern that it could later cause lost opportunities, should she be prejudged by her name. When the judge was born her parents consulted her aunt, who was a Peace Corps volunteer in West Africa for a list of names. Imagine my delight when I learned that this brilliant driven sister accomplished all her well-deserved success proudly bearing the name chosen from that list, "Ketanji Onyika," meaning "lovely one."

Judge Ketanji Onyika Brown Jackson's achievement is more than an accomplishment for her family, more than an accomplishment for women, and more than an accomplishment for the African American community; it is an accomplishment for the United States of America. To God be the glory, great things He has done!

Sources:

<https://ballotpedia.org/>

[Ketanji Brown Jackson confirmation hearings and votes](https://www.ballotpedia.org/Ketanji-Brown-Jackson-confirmation-hearings-and-votes)

https://en.m.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ketanji_Brown_Jackson

<https://www.whitehouse.gov/kbj/>

June/July Book List

Adult

Sound the Trumpet! Messages to Empower African American Men
Darryl Sims

365 Days of Prayer for Men
Broadstreet Publishing

Youth

Amazingly Amusing A-Z Animal Facts for Kids
Mary Beth

Becoming: Adapted for Young Readers
Michelle Obama

Sports Shorts: 52 Stories of Faith from All-Star Believers
Del Duduit

Children

Bible Infographics for Kids
Harvest House Publishers

Most Perfect You
Jazmyn Simon

When Daddy Comes Home
Britney Harris

Farewell / Welcome

On June 30, 2022, our District Superintendent, Rev. Sungchan Kim will retire. We thank Rev. Kim for his faithful service and for his fervent prayers. We wish him and his wife well as they relocate to the West Coast to be closer to their family.

On July 1, Rev. Abel will assume the appointment held by Rev. Sungchan Kim, who will be retiring after eight years of service to the Long Island West District. "We're grateful for his time at the table. Rev. Kim's deep prayer life and spirit will be greatly missed," says Bishop Bickerton. "We're praying for his retirement transition with a deep sense of appreciation for his contribution to our Annual Conference."

Rev. Abel is aware that she must fill a pair of large shoes—and also that her move from Cornerstone will trouble many in the congregation. It will, however, be a mutually challenging departure. "During Sunday service on February 6, I informed the congregation at Cornerstone. It so hard, and I will miss so many people that I've come to love and respect. I literally started crying before we started and the tears keep flowing until after service finished," Rev. Abel confides.

But as challenging as the decision to walk into a new season of ministry can be, Rev. Abel is excited about the possibility for true change and impactful leadership that the role can and likely will have, not

Continued on page 6...

GRADUATION

Miles Johnson:

Edward R. Murrow |
Berklee College of Music

Zoe Pyne:

Berkeley Carroll School |
Barnard College

Nemar Scott

*Jamaal Thompson:
Summa Cum Laude*

Congratulations To Our Graduates!!!

Farewell / Welcome Continued

only on the local churches under her purview, but on the New York Annual Conference (NYAC) as a whole. It's no surprise that Rev. Abel—who sits on NYAC Anti-Racism Task Force and leads its steering committee—is passionate about the impact that new voices, bold reform, multi-generational leadership and other shifts taking place at the Cabinet table will have on the future of our Annual Conference.

Throughout her career, Rev. Abel has thrived as an advocate for youth, capitalizing on her strong passion for community development. Since arriving in Norwalk she has integrated her ministry throughout all walks of the city—serving as a co-convener for the Norwalk Immigration Coalition, assisting the City of Norwalk in feeding those that are food insecure, working with Norwalk ACTS for Race Equity and creating new ministries and programming to support youth and leadership development at Cornerstone.

But indeed, Rev. Abel says it is time to live up to a new calling. “I aim to be impactful in this new role,” she says. “It’s important that we all be bold in partnership with God to craft the vision of what the church will be. I’ve always believed this was my call, from the time I was ordained. There have to be people in place to help build the next generation of our church and model how we are to respond and show up. Well, here I come...”



Rev. Elizabeth Abel
Long Island West District Superintendent