



## BATISTE • LAVALAIS • SAMPSON FAMILY REUNION NEWSLETTER

SMOOTH SAILING WITH BLS IN THE VALLEY OF THE SUN  
SHERATON WILD HORSE PASS RESORT AND CASINO  
CHANDLER, ARIZONA - JULY 22 – 24, 2016

REUNION WEBSITE: [www.blsfamilyreunion.com](http://www.blsfamilyreunion.com)

### **MEET THE 2016 BLS REUNION COMMITTEE:**

features members of the 2016 BLS Family Reunion Committee. Shiela, Trudi, and Gina have volunteered their time and talents to preserve our cultural legacy by planning/participating in multiple Reunion committees.

**HONORING OUR MILITARY:** features members of our family who have served our Country.

### **IT IS NOT TOO LATE TO REGISTER FOR THE BLS FAMILY REUNION -REGISTRATION IS AVAILABLE ONLINE AT THE REUNION WEBSITE**

*Pay Pal assesses a nominal fee.*

TO BOOK HOTEL CALL SHERATON WILD HORSE PASS RESORT AND CASINO - ANEKA DICK, at 520-796-8219; MENTION THE 2016 FAMILY REUNION.

Ms. Dick's hours are M-F, 8am to 5pm (PST)

**A BRIEF REFLECTION CORRECTION:** ALFRED COLEMAN celebrated his 65<sup>th</sup> birthday last year. He was born December 4, 1950, not December 4, 1952 as the Managing Editor incorrectly reported in the April Issue. **AL, HAPPY BELATED BIRTHDAY!**

### **MEET THE 2016 BLS FAMILY REUNION COMMITTEE**

#### **GERTRUDE "TRUDI" MARIE WILLIAMS - MULTI-YEAR COMMITTEE CHAIR/MEMBER, 2016 TREASURER INDEPENDENT AND SELF-CONFIDENT - by Linda Felder**

Trudi was born on November 26, 1941 to the parents of Fannie and Althread Coleman. She is the oldest living granddaughter of Lena Lavalais and Jules Batiste. She has been married for 53 years to the love of her life, Freddie Williams and in December of this year, they will be married 54 years. Their generations include three daughters: Sharon, Sandra and Gina; three grandchildren: Cedric, Jasmine, and Jessica; and one great grandchild Ha'Layah. She said, as she reminisced about meeting Freddie, "He was standing on the corner in Alexandria, Louisiana. My friend and I started a conversation with him about an incident that happened in the city. He asked for my telephone number. I didn't think he would remember my number because he did not have anything to write with. I was impressed. Fred had memorized my number and called me the same day. We would take long walks and sing together "Chances Are," by Johnny Mathis.

Independence and self-confidence are dominant traits of females in the Batiste Lavallais Sampson (BLS) lineage, and most particularly of our Grandmother, Lena. Trudi manifest these traits early in grammar school when she made an independent decision that she would be a teacher. These traits compliment her educational achievements when she has to take charge and lead. She was junior high and senior high school teacher in the greater Los Angeles Area throughout her teaching years where she controlled classrooms of students without being rude or brash. Her great accomplishment and a resounding example of Trudi's leadership skills are evident in how faithful she ensured that the BLS family reunion happened every other year for the last 30 years. As a founding member she led a team of her elders and cousins to plan and move the BLS family reunion from a small celebration at a park adjacent to El Camino College in Gardena, CA in 1983 to the nearby five-star Century City Plaza Hotel. That move, a signature achievement, established the BLS Family Reunion as inclusive of all branches of ancestor Clarice (Gaspard) Batiste's generations. Trudi has many other noteworthy accomplishments. At the dawn of the civil rights movement of the early 60s and continuing through the 70's she acquired numerous educational degrees including: Bachelor of Arts in English with a Minor in French from Grambling University, in Rustin, Louisiana; Teaching Credential in Special Education from California State Los Angeles; and a Masters degree in Administration from Pepperdine University. In the 60s, along with her husband, she also owned and operated a childcare center.

Trudi supports the BLS Family Reunion in numerous and sometimes multiple volunteer roles. She was Chairperson as late as 2010, and continuously volunteers as treasurer and family historian. She has not waived her commitment to preserving the BLS heritage even in prior years when interest and participation may have seemed to waver. We are grateful for her continuing commitment.

#### **LOUISIANA CREOLE PRALINES ...A Batiste-Prier Family Recipe:**

Place two (2) cups of granulated sugar, or 1 cup of granulated and 1 cup of brown sugar, and 1-1/2 cans of evaporated milk in a medium heavy-bottomed saucepan. Stir and cook over moderate heat until sugar melts and lumps dissolve. Bring mixture to boiling over moderate heat, stirring constantly. Continue cooking and stirring, to 242 degrees Fahrenheit on the candy thermometer or until a firm (not hard) ball forms when you drop a half teaspoon of the syrup in cold water. Remove from heat and cool to 140 degrees – about five (5) minutes. Stir in two (2) tablespoons of butter, 1-1/2 teaspoons of vanilla extract and one 1 cup of pecan halves. Drop from a teaspoon onto waxed paper to form thin wafers 1-1/2 to 2 inches in diameter. Candy hardens quickly so work fast when dropping them; store in airtight container; makes about 3 dozen pralines.

#### **BUILDING FAMILY, CELEBRATING HERITAGE**

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**THANKS GREG, STEVE AND VON FOR SPONSORING THE JUNE 2016 NEWSLETTER**



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## **MEET THE 2016 BLS FAMILY REUNION COMMITTEE**

### **SHARON LOGAN - 2016 COMMITTEE CHAIR**

I can remember when my mother, Trudi, was involved with hosting the first reunion in Century City, CA. I was not quite 21 years old and "full of myself," going through life as if the world revolved around me. As a result, I did not put too much stock into going to family reunions. I attended the first reunion, but only for the picnic. In fact, I barely remember events offered. Years went by, and so did family reunions. I attended a few but not nearly as many as I should have.

Now...fast forwarding to the present day... When I think about our many family members throughout this United States of America, I am ashamed to say that I do not know as many as I would like. My children are now around the same age as I was when my mother hosted that first reunion. I do not want them (nor any of my relatives that have children in this same age group) to grow up not knowing our family and our family heritage. We can argue that this is something that you begin to take interest in as older adults, but with technology and a continued commitment to connect at reunions our generations will enjoy multiple ways to get to know each other. I recognize that the BLS Family Reunions, largely organized by my mother's peer group, need generational infusion. To restore and preserve our heritage it is imperative that our Reunions are inclusive of all ages from the youngest to the oldest. This underlying current drove the 2016 Reunion Committee to choose the Sheraton Grand Wild Horse Pass Resort as our location for the 2016 BLS Family Reunion in Arizona. That underlying current drove planning family activities during the Reunion weekend. We listened to the feedback from the 2014 BLS Family Reunion in Las Vegas, NV where we had a wonderful time and turnout. The feedback from the surveys suggested that we try to take a cruise as a family; have more inclusive activities promoting getting to know each other; and make sure the Dinner Dance include time to dance. The Sheraton Grand Wild Horse Pass Resort is a perfect setting in which we can do all of those things and more. The best part of it is that we got in on this location at the lowest rate it will ever be because it recently upgraded to "Grand" status!

As the Hostess of the 2016 Family Reunion, I have the privilege of working with an amazing reunion committee that has a tremendous legacy of not only putting on these family reunions, but are known personally by a lot of you that have attended previous reunions. I am having so much fun planning this reunion and working with these ladies. Their wealth of experience and knowledge planning family reunions has made my job, as a novice planning this reunion that much easier and enjoyable. I have worked with lots of teams as project manager and pastor, but I can honestly say that this 2016 Smooth Sailing with BLS Family Reunion Committee has been the best.

### **SHIELA MOSZZKLEY - FUNDRAISER AND MULTI-YEAR COMMITTEE MEMBER**

My Fundraising Efforts for BLS Family Reunions: In 1985, Lillian Batiste Williams, Marie Batiste Wade, Jules Batiste, Trudi Batiste Coleman Williams, Eugene Vaughn, and I, Shiela Batiste Jacobs Moszzkley, hosted our first family reunion to celebrate our matriarch, Lena Lavalais Batiste birthday\*. Thereafter, we held a family reunion every two years. My function as a committee member was always fundraising. My first fundraising was a weekend bus tour to Las Vegas in 1985. I spearheaded the second and third fundraising bus tours to the California Indian casino. Each member took an assignment, making the bus tours fun for everyone. The fourth fundraising was a backyard fish fry held at Trudi's residence on February 27, 2016. It was a classic old-fashioned Louisiana fish fry with contests, games and prizes. The fish fry was a huge success. Every committee member played an important part from frying the fish to clean up after the event was over. The love and support we give each other makes me so proud to be a member of the BLS Family.

\*Lillian was the oldest daughter of my grandparents (Jules Batiste and Lena Lavalais). Marie Batiste Wade is the oldest surviving daughter of my grandparents. Jules Batiste is the only surviving and middle son of my grandparents. Trudi is the oldest granddaughter of my grandparents. Eugene Vaughn (deceased) was the only son of Dorothy Batiste Vaughn one of the eight daughters of my grandparents. I am the daughter of Margaret Batiste Harris who was one of eight daughters of my grandparents.

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**MEET THE 2016 BLS FAMILY REUNION COMMITTEE*****GINA SCOTT – MULTI-YEAR COMMITTEE MEMBER, TECHIE, AND GUERILLA MARKETING CHAIR***

My name is Gina Scott, one of many great grandchildren of Lena Lavalais Batiste: one of many granddaughters of Fannie Batiste Coleman, and middle child of Gertrude Williams (the chairperson of the very first BLS Family Reunion). This is the third BLS committee I have had the pleasure to serve. My first was the last Los Angeles, California (LA). Reunion: **HONORING OUR PAST RECOGNIZING OUR FUTURE**. We honored our seniors with awards, video interviews, and special mentions in the souvenir booklet. We recognized and awarded our (attending) youth who had achieved academic excellence within the prior two (2) years and we enjoyed all that joined and participated in the activities planned. Our committee worked so well together that family recruited us to work the following reunion in Atlanta. Although a bit more challenging, the committee planned turn-around casino bus trips to keep registration costs reasonable. Attendance was a pleasant surprise, and an equally enjoyable time as in LA. Many who attended had never done so before but we hung out like old best friends. That brings me to this 30th year reunion for which I currently serve. Again, I join a great committee who is as passionate about uniting, reuniting, and inspiring others as I am. We share common goals: to connect and gain new and refreshed understanding of our heritage, our native language, our multi-faceted history, and foster that connection through the use of the social media tools of the millennial generation.

Welcome to all that will be fortunate to join us in Arizona; and I encourage those who will not be there to tune into the BLS Family Facebook page to “virtually experience” the fun. Much love to you all...Gina

***RILEY AUSTIN-ROCHESTER – COMMITTEE MEMBER AND NEWSLETTER MANAGING EDITOR***

It is a great experience reconnecting with family as a member of the 2016 planning committee. I participated because my Aunt Marie Wade suggested that I get involved during her short speech at the 2014 Las Vegas BLS Family Reunion. Over the past thirty years, I have attended three. I attended the Las Vegas reunion only because it was in my newly adopted home state. When my immediate family migrated to Southern California in 1957, every weekend, every holiday, every birth, every birthday, every wedding, and every other celebration was strictly a family affair. They spoke creole, cooked with rues, ate gumbo, dirty rice, and shrimp not catfish. They were their own best friends; and they were fiercely independent and self-reliant. In those days, I found it difficult to reconcile how different our closed family system was from the family systems I observed through school friendships. I would ask myself, “Don’t they know they are Black?” At home, both my Mom and Dad spoke Creole and English. My mother, Mercedes (Josephine) Batiste – daughter of Jules and Lena Lavalais, told all of her generations, including her grandchildren and great grandchildren that we were Creoles and that Creoles were like Cajuns. Most of them understood and believed her even when I did not. I often laughed when my daughters and granddaughters said they were creoles. I did understand on some level that our culture was unique, but did not really understand how or why. I just understood that there were cultural differences and those differences were clearly puzzling to me especially as an eleven-year-old. Since those early years, the need to understand our culture has only grown; and suddenly, during the 2014 Family Reunion Dinner Dance, I realized that the opportunity to find out who our ancestors and elders are was slipping away. One more generation gone and with them would go our strongest connection to the cultural heritage and anecdotal history/lineage of our ancestors. That realization drove me to get involved. It also drives my desire that all Branches of the Clarice Gaspar-Batiste-Sampson participate in all aspects of this and future reunions.

I am so personally grateful to the many family members who have helped to establish a viable Newsletter, **and** by extension, promoted what is shaping up as a successful family reunion. Trudy, Sharon, Linda, Gwen, Clarice, Gina, Sheila submitted articles. Tamico, Mary Ann, and Gwen edited and/or produced the French Creole Language Corner. Ras Kass (Cre8yte Corporation), Gwen and Charles Patrick (Legal Shield), Rosa and Steve (Greg & Steve) paid for printing and/or mailing the BLS Family Reunion Newsletter. Sharon and Shiela gave us their cherished recipes. Gwen agreed to lead the Louisiana Creole language workshop, and said, “I’m having a lot of fun planning it.” Winter developed our 2016 Reunion logo that appears on the address page of the newsletter. (WINTER’S ARTWORK WEBSITE: [superiebunee.deviantart.com](http://superiebunee.deviantart.com)) Moreover, I marvel at the family members who preserved the family reunion over the last 30 years. Finally, let me give a “shout out” to my super-editor and daughter, Tiffany Austin: jazz singer - like her on Facebook or visit her website ([tiffanyaustinmusic.com](http://tiffanyaustinmusic.com)). She regularly edits my edits despite her full schedule. They all keep me humbly appreciative.

**BECOME A FUTURE BLS FAMILY REUNION COMMITTEE MEMBER**

Because of the sustained efforts of the 2016 BLS Reunion Committee Members, we are about to celebrate the 30<sup>th</sup> year of planning and holding family reunions. Going forward, you should consider hosting, co-hosting, or volunteering your time and talents. Also, consider submitting articles for the BLS Family Reunion Newsletter. There will be quarterly publications of the newsletter, at a minimum, in electronic form following the 2016 family reunion. You may choose to sponsor the cost of mailing the newsletter. Moreover, I encourage family to regularly post to the BLS Family Reunion website ([www.blfamilyreunion.com](http://www.blfamilyreunion.com)). The Committee Chair has graciously funded the site for three years. You might also consider supporting our efforts to become a nonprofit to provide a singular platform upon which we may identify, restore, preserve and pass on our oral traditions and lineage for succeeding generations. The 2016 BLS Family Reunion Committee is optimistic that the newsletter, website and nonprofit will be permanent additions to the BLS legacy.

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**CREOLE PHRASE/WORD\***

Submission by: Gwen Patrick, Co-host of 2016 Creole Language Workshop

English	Louisiana Creole	French
How are you doing?	Konmen to yê? Konmen ç'ap(é) kouri? Konmen ça va?	Comment allez-vous? Comment vas-tu? Comment ça va?
I'm good, thanks.	Çé bon, mési. Mo bien, mési. Bien.	Ça va bien, merci.

\*Learn pronunciation and other words and phrases during the Family Reunion

**HONORING OUR MILITARY**

**HONORING THE MILITARY SERVICE OF ERNEST MOSZZKLEY**

by Shiela Batiste Lavalais Moszzkley

Ernest, my husband was so desperate to leave Arkansas he caught a Gray Hound Bus in 1953 and enlisted in the army. He was only 16 and lied about his age. He completed basic training at Fort Bliss, Texas. Ernest loved the army but hated all the racism around him. Toward the end of basic training he ran into trouble, after making a formal complaint about the racism, they labeled him a troublemaker. After basic training, Ernest was stationed in Fair Banks Alaska for 2 years along with 4 othersolders. While stationed in Alaska, his duty was a crewman on a 75mm Skysweeper. His next station was in Korea as a Sentry Dog Handler. He completed his military service in the California National Guard as a Chief Warrant Officer 2, with 20 years of service

**HONORING THE MILITARY SERVICE OF DONALD E. LEVY**

by Claris Jean Levy, daughter of Victoria Batiste-Guillory

Donald is my husband, the father of my children, and my friend. As a young man, he served in the United States military for over four years. He entered the Army on September 15, 1963, in Jacksonville, Florida, and completed his basic training at Fort Gordon in Georgia. During his time in the Army, he served in the Motor Pool and ultimately rose to the rank of Staff Sergeant E-6. His stations during enlistment included the following states and countries: Fort Bragg, North Carolina in 1963; South Korea in 1963-1964; Fort Stewart, Georgia in 1964-1964; and finally Vietnam in 1965-1967, where he volunteered and fought bravely for our country. In December 1967, Donald received an honorable discharge in San Francisco, California.

Because the Vietnam War was controversial and political, the returning soldiers often did not receive a warm welcome when they came home; and there were certainly no parades or other celebrations to honor their service. This left many soldiers questioning why they had bothered to serve their country and whether their sacrifice had really been worth it. It also made the transition back into civilian life more difficult than it should have been.

Over time, however, most people have come to recognize that our Vietnam veterans are heroes who honorably served the country in that war. These days, Donald proudly wears his "Army/Vietnam: caps. People regularly come up to him, shake his hand, and say "Thank you, sir, for your service." He smiles - sometimes with a chuckle - and basks in the appreciation.

Other members in Victoria Batiste-Guillory-Lopez branch that have served honorably in the military include a son, grandson, granddaughter, or son-in-law as follows:

Phillip Guillory\* (son) Army – WWII;

Waddle Roberts II\* (son-in-law), Navy –WWII

James Guillory (grandson), Army – Vietnam era

Julius Williams\* (son-in-law), Army – WWII

Gene Monroe Guillory (grandson) , Army – Vietnam era

Waddle Robert III\* (grandson), Army – Vietnam era

Suswella Roberts (granddaughter), Army Reserves

CLARIS JEAN SAID, "THANK YOU ALL FOR MAKING OUR COUNTRY A SAFER AND A BETTER PLACE TO LIVE!"

<b>THE REUNION COMMITTEE</b>	<b>THE BLS NEWSLETTER COMMITTEE</b>	
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**DO NOT MISS THE 2016 FAMILY REUNION.**

**IT PROMISES TO BE A MULTI-CULTURAL AND MULTI-GENERATIONAL EXPERIENCE.**

**Stay hydrated. Come prepared. Bring sunscreen, hat, swimwear; formal/semi-formal/dress to impress/after five (5) attire for the Saturday Dinner Dance; and young adult attire for Saturday Phoenix nightlife scene. Listen to stories from and about our ancestors by the Riverwalk. Participate in karaoke or talk sports. Watch a Dive In Movie. Take a nature walk. Win or lose money at the nearby Casino. Bid at Silent Auction. Spend three days learning to speak Louisiana Creole. Visit the nearby waterpark. Go horseback riding or golfing. Scavenger hunt at the mall for prizes and eat s'mores while listening to Indian folklore at the hotel fire pit. See a Wild West shootout at Rawhide. Receive a 10% discount at Aji Spa – first come first served. (Call and reserve with Sharon Logan, Committee Chair.) Wear your BLS T-shirt for breakfast in the park and family photos on Saturday. Just some of the exciting events planned. You choose.**

BLS FAMILY REUNION COMMITTEE

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*Smooth Sailing with B.L.S.*



**Batiste - Avalais - Sampson**

**Family Reunion**



WINTER'S ARTWORK WEBSITE: [superiebunee.deviantart.com](http://superiebunee.deviantart.com)

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