

RiseZine

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Welcome to **RiseZine** my electronic magazine (ezine) that can help you solve problems in your business and your life. It is my desire to bring you inspiration from my life experiences and those I gained during the twenty (20) years I spent as a Judge of the Denver County Court participating in the transformation of lives. I'm convinced that those experiences will heighten your knowledge, sensitivity and outlook on the issues you face in your business and your life. I am honored to share your precious time with you.

“MY HERO”

Clarence Patterson 1904-1964

In honor of Father's Day, I am dedicating this **RiseZine** to my father, Clarence Patterson, and all other fathers like him who taught us life lessons that made us better people. Born in Ogden, Arkansas, my father was the oldest child of Giles and Betty Patterson. While growing up in the country during the height of segregation, he had to work while attending school and to help take care of his younger brothers and sister (James, Barney, Lee and Cynthia Mae). About the time he was eight years old, his father went north to look for work in Kansas City, Kansas. When his father left, Clarence quit school and went to work doing odd jobs to help his mother feed and raise his brothers and sister. He learned to cook so he could prepare meals at home while his mother worked as a domestic in other homes. My father became a good cook; learned to wash clothes and made sure his younger siblings attended school.

As Clarence matured and his siblings became independent, he sought a better life. He followed the route his father had taken years earlier and moved to Kansas City

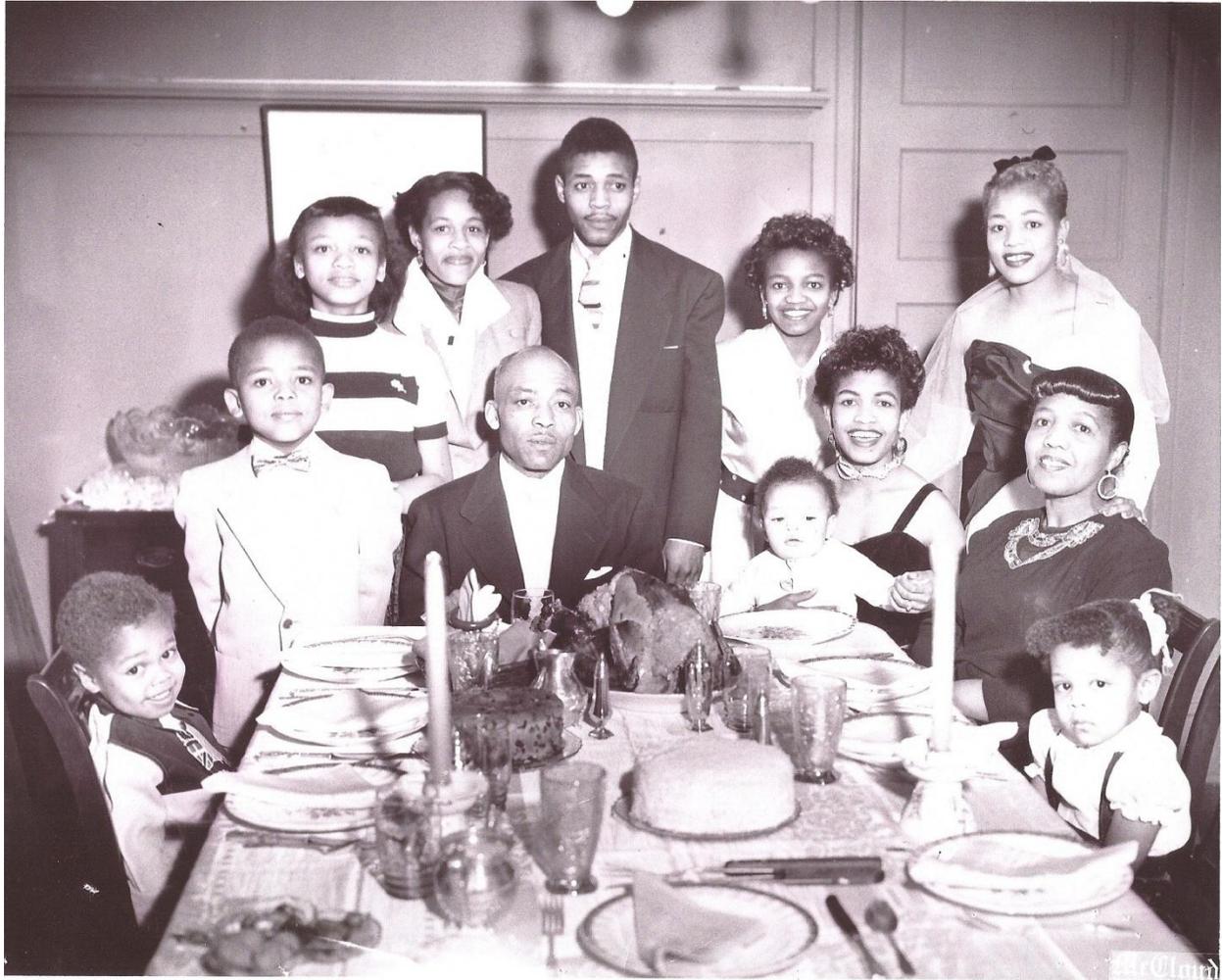
Missouri. He found work in the packing houses in Kansas City and for the first time he had money in his pockets. Not long after that, he met a young woman from Waverly, Missouri, named Florence Lucille Washington and they were married on February 23, 1927. He bought his first home and the next year, Betty Jean Patterson was born, but she died less than one later. In 1929, Clarence Junior was born; followed by Anna (1931), Beverly (1933) and Shirley (1935). When World War II began, my father followed the great migration and moved his family to Detroit, Michigan, where even better employment opportunities were promised. There, my father worked as a mechanic and waiter nearly around the clock. My mother studied cosmetology and together they purchased a home on Woodland Avenue in near Highland Park where she opened a salon. My sister Vera and I were born there. While my sisters and brother attended the highly rated Detroit public schools, my mother could work at home. My industrious father rented out rooms upstairs above our home to provide more income for our family.

My Hero! The indefatigable!

Our family had a good, stable life in Detroit until my mother was stricken with asthma. Her asthma attacks became so severe that doctors told her she had to move to a drier climate like Denver, Colorado or Phoenix, Arizona or she wouldn't live very long. In 1948, my father moved his wife and six children west. When we arrived in Denver, Colorado, my mother was treated at National Asthma Research Center and she breathed much easier. My father rented a house for us on Ogden Street. Two other large families lived on that street, the Wyatt's and the Smiths. Our respective families had children about the same ages and we would become life-long friends. Patsy Wyatt and I rode our tricycles together. Bonita was the youngest of the Smiths and we graduated from the same high school. (I performed the wedding ceremony for Bonita's son Wayne, some forty years later).

My father worked three jobs to provide a life for us in Denver; he worked at Capitol Chevrolet by day; Stanley Aviation by night; and on the weekends he shined shoes at the Union Train Station. Working like that he was able to buy a duplex home for us in what was then the Black Cultural Center of Denver, the Five Points area. Both the piano player Jimmy Roberts and the lead dancer in the

renowned Rossonian Lounge lived on our block.



(Christmas Dinner, 1953. my father is seated; I'm standing to his right)

Our family lived on one side of the duplex and my father rented rooms on the other side. Before I was ten years old, my father taught me how to clean and paint those rooms and that became my part-time and summer job. Some of my fondest memories of time spent with my father are when we sat by the radio at home and listened to the Friday Night Fights. He was an avid boxing fan who knew all about the best fighters in every weight class. It made me want to become a boxer, so I tried out for the Golden Gloves boxing club. I thought I would be a good fighter until I met "Beadie" Johnson in the ring. I can still feel my head bouncing back and forth with every blow he struck. My father recommended I play baseball instead. He taught me how to catch a ball and gave me the old glove he had used

when he was a young man living in Kansas City and tried out for the Kansas City Monarchs of the old Negro Baseball League.

My Hero!

My father always wanted to give us the best life he could. As my four older siblings married and left home and I was still in elementary school, my father bought a new house in a recently desegregated neighborhood. I didn't want to leave my friends, so I took a city bus to school in my old neighborhood. I continued that through high school and my father never derided my decision as long as I made the extra effort to attend on my own and performed well in school. But near the end of the first semester of my senior year in high school, I got in a fight after our high school basketball game and was suspended from school for three days. I upset my father and I put my high school graduation in jeopardy. He never said a word when he took me back to school after my suspension was over but I could see the disappointment in his eyes. Shortly after my suspension, my father became very ill. I wanted to do something to restore his faith and pride. Near the end of my senior year, I tried out to deliver one of the graduation speeches for our class. There was a competition among the top students for the opportunity to deliver the closing graduation speech. The Valedictorian, number one in the class, would deliver the first speech...I was not the Valedictorian. The Salutatorian, number two in the class, would give the second speech...I was not the Salutatorian. And the winner of the competition would give the closing speech. I was eligible for the competition. On the last day of school when I took the stage to deliver the closing speech at my high school graduation, I could see the pride in my father's eyes. That night he said, "You've made your mother and me very proud tonight." My father died six months later.

My Hero!

When I think about how rich he made my life without the benefit of formal education, I regret that he wasn't there to witness the impact of his indefatigability on me and my career. When I would burn the midnight oil preparing for an exam in college, I was energized by my father's sacrifice to insure his siblings were educated in Ogden, Arkansas all those many years before. When I stood as a lawyer in the courtroom and engineered successful defenses in a myriad of

criminal trials, I was using the dividends my father deposited those many days he spent working three jobs to give our family good food and a good home. And when I was sworn as the first African-American Chief Presiding Judge in Denver County Court history, I was reaping the rewards of his remarkable determination to migrate north from a segregated society to find a better life for his family all those many years earlier. That's was my amazing father!

He never told me how to live; he lived and let me watch him do it.

Clarence Patterson, MY HERO!

Is there a hero whom you owe a debt of gratitude? Don't wait until they are no longer here to collect. Thank them now. **HAPPY FATHER'S DAY!**

Postscript: I have lost 2 more pounds since the last RiseZine. To those who are joining me, continued success. I look forward to hearing from you with your success stories.

Can't your organization use a healthy infusion of inspiration, motivation or training in Leadership, Decision-making, Communication, Ethics or Team-building? I can provide a keynote, workshop, seminar or individual coaching tailored to meet your needs and help you and your team ***RISE***.

“Do just once what others say you can't do, and you will never pay attention to their limitations again.” James R. Cook.

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