Area Obituaries

Martha Clark

Funeral services for Mrs. Martha Stokes Clark were held Jan. 2 at Ebenezer Baptist Church. Mrs. Clark died Dec. 28 at Maryland General Hospital.

Born Feb. 18, 1910 in Germanlowa, Pa., she was the wife of the late Herbert L. Clark and the daughter of the late Arthur Powell Stokes and Phyllis Ann Carter.

Mrs. Clark moved to Baltimore at an early age and attended Dunbar High School. She was employed at the Schreter Tie Factory for 41 years and retired in 1972.

For 15 years, she was an active member of the Reminiscene Club. She was baptized in 1927 at Ebenezer Baptist Church and was a member of the Junior Missionary Society and the Senior Usher Board since 1936.

She is survived by one son, George Stokes; one sister, Mary Elizabeth Patterson; two nephews Kelvin J. Patterson and G. Edward Patterson Jr; one niece Deborah L. Austin; one brother-in-law, George E. Patterson Sr;.

Judy Lyons

Funeral services for Mrs. Judy Lyons were held Jan. 4 at James A. Morton Funeral Home. Mrs. Lyons was born in West Point, Georgia on Nov. 10, 1946.

She attended school in Atlanta and was a graduate of Turner High School. In 1962 she married Walter Eubanks. She was a member of the Interdenominational Church of God and a member of the Deaconess Board.

Ms. Lyons worked at South Baltimore General Hospital as a nursing technician from 1974 until her death.

She is survived by two daughters, Debra and Rose; her parents, Tommie Lyons and Georgia Gumby; stepfather, Daniel Gumby; two sisters, Patricia Hill and Pamela Turner; grandmother, Ellen Smith.

Vestelia Ransom

Funeral services for Mrs. Vestelia Ransom were held Jan. 4 at Shiloh Baptist Church. Mrs. Ransom died Dec. 30 at University Hospital.

She was the daughter of the late Milton and Nellie Ransom and was born Oct. 3, 1935.

She was a graduate of Sellers Point High School and was a member of Shiloh Baptist Church in Edgemere. Mrs. Ransom was employed for Park Sausage Company for 11 years.

She is survived by one son, Gary; one daughter, Valerie; two sisters, Miss Nellie Ransom and Mrs. Mildred Scott; two grandchildren, Brandy and Chantel; three uncles the Rev. Shirley Ranhom; Turner Ransom and Clarence Ransom; two aunts, Mrs. Ella Perrin and Ms. Clementa Ransom; three nephews; one niece.

Herman Conway

Funeral services for Herman Randolph Conway were held Jan. 3 at Doswell Cathedral Church of God in Christ.

Mr. Conway was born Oct. 12, 1934 in Baltimore and was the son of George and Martha Ann Conway.

He was a graduate of Dunbar Senior High School and was honored as an all city and Maryland fullback. He served in the Air Force.

He is survived by his wife, Elizabeth Conway; three daughters, four sons, one stepdaughter, two stepsons, one grandson and two step grandchildren.

Emma Jane West

Funeral services for Mrs. Emma Jane West were held Dec. 28 at Union Memorial Baptist Church.

Mrs. West was the daughter of the Rev. W. C. and Serena Tongue. She was born in West River, Md., Sept. 8, 1892. She was an active member of Union Memorial United Methodist. She was a member of the Pink Rose Circle.

She is survived by one son, William C. West; one grandson, William West Jr., two sisters Alice Robinson and Carrie Fairfax.

Bernice C. Smith

Funeral services for Mrs. Bernice C. Smith were held Jan. 3 at New Bethlehem Baptist Church.

Mrs. Smith was the daughter of the late James C. and Laura Thompson Brooks, She died Dec. 25, 1981.

In 1960, she joined Perkins Square Baptist Church and later became a member of New Bethlehem Baptist Church.

She is survived by her husband Frank V. Smith; one brothers, James C. Brooks; one sister Frances B. Barnett of Washington.

Lester White

Funeral services for Lester White were held Jan. 2 at William C. March Funeral Home Jan. 2. Mr. White was born Nov. 11, 1898 in Woodsdale, N. C. and died Dec. 28 at Lincoln Convelescent Center.

Mr. White was employed for Window Service Inc., Relatives describe him as a "jolly, humerous person." He was a member of the Supreme Lodge, Knights of Pythias Company.

He is survived by one son, Jerry White; a niece, Ethel Barnes and a nephew, German Watson Barnes; one granddaughter, Gerald Lecator; one grandson, Edward Baker.

Calvin D. Green

Funeral services for Calvin D. Green were held Jan. 1 at William C. March Funeral Home.

Green was the son of Pauline Samuels and Larry Green. He was born Nov. 17, 1964 and died Dec. 27, 1981 at Johns Hopkins Hospital.

Green attended city public schools. He is survived by his son, Calvin P. Green; father, Larry Green; four sisters, Ann Farmer, Agnes Lee, Jean Samuels, Denise Rainey; six brothers, Tyrone Green, Larry Green Jr., Earl Samuels, Paul, and Carl Samuels; Maurice Potter.

Abraham Green

Funeral services for Abraham William Green were held Jan. 4 at William C. March Funeral Home.

Mr. Green was born Feb. 5, 1925 in Baltimore and was the son of William Green and Lillian Green Hopkins.

He served in the Army from 1943 to 1946 and was employed with the city.

He is survived by his wife Beulah Green; one daughter, Thelma Green; five sons, Abraham Jr., Richard, Kenneth, Archie and Rodney Green; seven grandchildren; his mother, Lillian Green Hopkins; two sisters, Mrs. Dorothy DeBose of New York and Ms. Sylvia Wicker.

Arville Ward

Funeral services for Arville Ward were held Jan. 2 at William C. March Funeral Home. Born Dec. 8, 1905 in Baltimore, he was the son of Daisy Mae and Harry Ward.

He joined Samuel Wesley AME Church in Manokin, Md., and attended Southern Baptist Church.

He is survived by one son, Herbert Ward; two daughters in law Christina Ward and Anita Ward; 12 grandchildren, 10 great grandchildren.

Timothy L. Blow

Funeral services for Timothy Lee Blow Jan. 3 at Faith Baptist Church. Mr. Blow died Dec. 28 at City Hospitals. He was the son of William Ned and Virginia Allen Blow. Born on June 4, 1956 in Isle of Wight County, Va., he later moved to Baltimore and was employed at Bethlehem Steel Company.

He joined Faith Baptist Church on Feb. 15, 1961 and was an active member. He is survived by three sisters, two brothers, two stepdaughters,

James Wilson

Funeral services for James Albert Wilson were held Jan. 2 at Jefferson United Methodist Church in Smithville, Md.

Mr. Wilson was born Sept. 18, 1909 and died Dec. 30, 1981 at Provident Hospital. He was the son of the late William and Emma Wilson.

Mr. Wilson was employed at the Davidson Chemical W. R. Grace Company until he retired in 1974. He attended St. Paul United Methodist Church.

He is survived by his wife, Hazel Wilson; two brothers, Horace Wilson and Sherman Wilson; two sisters, Henrietta Lee and Emma Handy.

21st ANNIVERSARY 1982
THE GREATER NEW HOPE BAPTIST CHURCH, INC.
2720 W. NORTH AVENUE
Sunday, January 10, 1982 11:00 A.M.
Sermon By Rev. Hartman Lewis, Asso. Minister of Church
3:00 — 6th Anniversary of the YOUNG MEN OF HIRAM GRAND CHAPTER of MASONS
TODAY WE CELEBRATE THE 21st ANNIVERSARY OF THE BEGINNING OF THIS CONGREGATION IN 1961.
All members are asked to give a SPECIAL OFFERING for the occasion — The pastor, Thank You.
Monday, January 11, 1982 — 'The Flower Circle"
2nd Baptist Church, of Annapolis, Maryland
Dr. Thomas Taylor, Pastor
Tuesday, January 12, 1982 — "The Deacon Board"
Maranatha Baptist Church, Rev. Earnest Ross, Pastor
Wednesday, January 13, 1982 — 'The Office Staff"
"There will be GREAT MUSICAL PROGRAM"
Thursday, January 14, 1982 — 'The Missionary Circle"
The Shepperd Community Baptist Church. Rev. Henry Martin, Pastor
Friday, January 15, 1982 — "The Combine Youth Choirs
Zion Hill Baptist Church, Rev. Randolph Price
DR. LEONARD E. HICKS, Pastor

Moved To New Location
NEW TRINITY CHURCH
National Congregation Church of America
4260 Liberty Heights Ave.
Sunday, January 10, 1982
10:30 A.M. — Sunday School
12:15 P.M. — High Noon — Morning Worship
Sermon By the Pastor
3:00 P.M. — By Special Notice
6:00 P.M. — By Special Notice
Wednesday 7:30 P.M. — Prayer Meeting held in the chapel
Bishop M. D. Norton Sr., D.D.
Founder & Pastor
ALL ARE WELCOME

MORNING STAR BAPTIST CHURCH
"The Witnessing Church"
1068 West Fayette Street
Baltimore, Maryland 21223
SUNDAY, JANUARY 10, 1981
8:00 A.M. — SPIRITUAL PRAYER AND HEALING SERVICE
Minister Deacon James Gilliard
9:00 A.M. — CHURCH SCHOOL
Mr. Juanita Gaither, Superintendent
9:55 A.M. — CHURCH TRAINING
Deb. James Gilliard, Director
10:50 A.M. — MORNING WORSHIP Preaching, Rev. Dr. Samuel Ray
3:30 P.M. — Anniversary, The Lottie Henry Nursery Unit
Everyone is Invited to These Services
Reverend Dr. Samuel Ray, Pastor

DOUGLAS COMMUNITY CHURCH
"The People of the Way"
Lafayette and Madison Aves
MARION CURTIS BASCOM D.D. Minister
Jamie S. Hammond, M. Mus.
JUANITA HALL DAVIS Organist

Sunday, January 10, 1982
Eight and Eleven O'Clock
Marion Curtis Bascom Preaching

Men's Choir
Hallelujah, Amen —Handel
I Have a New Name —Kemper Harreld, arr.
11:00 —
Gloria (from "Twelfth Mass") W. A. Mozart
Better Is Ready R. Nathaniel Dett, arr.

If you ask me

By Bettye Moss

Hats off!

The line of holiday visitors to the National Aquarium at Pier 3 in downtown Baltimore was three blocks long.

Despite the sun, it was breezy, and many were impatient to get in. Time was 2 p.m., Wednesday, Dec. 30.

As they waited, some became cross, and spoke unkindly to the security guard on duty who was helping to facilitate their entrance.

But the security officer kept a pleasant disposition and explained the admission procedures. She answered queries with a smile.

Afterwards, we called to get her name. She is Miss Laura Robinson, one of 25 security officers employed under the direction of Aquarium chief security man, Norman Woingust.

Miss Robinson, not only performed her duties in a professional manner, but she looked good in her blue and gray uniform. She is a product of Baltimore public schools, a graduate of Western High, and formerly worked as security lady for another city agency.

Note to security chief Woingust: Miss Robinson is an excellent goodwill ambassador for the Aquarium. Hats off to Miss Robinson!

This column welcomes nominations to its Hats Off section. We seek to salute our young people observed doing well. The theory is that too many of us adults only talk about youngsters when they do poorly. Hats off!!

The Aquarium

Our visit to the Aquarium exceeded all expectations. What beauty, what an educational experience!

The striking and colorful exhibits defy description. Escalators and moving ramps take you on a trip which officials caption, "the aquatic environments of the Central Space to a Rain Forest above."

And, then you travel below, by inner ramps, through the Atlantic Coral Reef and Open Ocean ring tanks. The Aquarium offers you a liberal education in the whole history of the world of water.

Holiday visitors included hundreds of children, many with their parents, many of them black.

713,054

Since it opened its doors in August, the Aquarium has attracted 713,054 visitors.

Crowds are largest on holidays and weekends.

These who enjoy watching and listening to children's comments as they tour the facility will like to go on busy days. Any time you go, you'll come away with the realization that there is much to learn about our environment.

If you want to spend time studying the exhibits and reading the information, (cleverly designed at each exhibit), you'll want to visit at slower times.

Aquarium is open daily, seven days a week, 10 a.m. to 6 p.m., Fridays, until 9 p.m.

Admission is $4.50 for adults. There are special rates for senior citizens, children and school groups.

For more information, call, 727 - 6900.

Send cheer

Getwell cards to Union Memorial Hospital for Baxter Seay, the longtime Evans Chapel Rd. resident.

Doing better after a hospital stay is Charles E. Wells, the veteran printer, now recuperating at home.

Theodore Thompson, (he's hubby of AFRO hello lady), is much improved at his Springdale Rd home.

Thinking of you cards to Mrs. Dorothy Lymus, who has been ailing again.

Dr. Charles H. Wesley, the noted historian who was hospitalized in D.C. for a spell during the holidays, is doing fine. His wife, Dorothy, reports he marked his 90th birthday on Dec. 2.

Washington chapter of Alpha Phi Alpha Fraternity honors Dr. Wesley on Jan. 15, at Howard U. Event is a sell - out. Congrats will reach him if addressed to 7632 - 17th St., NW, Washington, DC 20012.

Samuel B. Little, city manpower exec, is in Provident Hospital, where he had surgery.

In the same hospital, Mrs. Vivian Pendleton, the retired nurse and civic worker.

Beth Henderson

When we were growing up, Elizabeth Johnson Henderson was a frequent visitor in our home. Mother always was adopting young women, calling them her daughters, even though she had five of her own.

So, we came to admire Beth Henderson, to follow her career in the public schools, her work in her church and the community.

Later, when we began work on this newspaper, we had frequent contacts with her and her husband, Paul S. Henderson. He was the AFRO photographer. He joined this newspaper staff in the 30's. In his fourth floor office, he did outstanding photos which won him recognition from his peers.

Both Paul and Beth took an unusual interest in young people. He trained other photographers — like our favorite, the late Frank W. Phillips Jr. and William Scott.

Mrs. Elizabeth Henderson
AFRO file photo

Principal

She devoted over four decades to training young teachers and young people. She retired from the Baltimore schools as principal of Cherry Hill School No. 163 in 1967.

On Tuesday morning, a large number of those who remembered turned out at St. James Episcopal Church to say goodbye to Beth. She died Jan. 2, at the age of 79.

This writer stood with St. James members who worked with her in St. Cecelia's Guild and recalled her 53 years of loving service to her church.

And, there were members of the DuBois

(Continued on Page 15)

ST. JAMES' EPISCOPAL CHURCH
Lafayette Square, Baltimore, Maryland
The Reverend Donald O. Wilson, Rector
Dr. Robert T. Ford, Deacon
Maurice Murphy, organist—Choirmaster
8:00 A.M.—Holy Communion
9:00 A.M. Church School
11:00 A.M.—Choral Eucharist Sermon
The Public is Cordially Invited To Attend

WOODLAWN CEMETERY
Baltimore's Most Beautiful Cemetery
FOR THE 1ST TIME IN 25 YEARS WOODLAWN CEMETERY IS
OFFERING A 2 for 1 SPECIAL
Buy 1 burial site at the regular price and get the other burial site free
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TOTAL 2 SITES..... $480
BEST SERVICE AVAILABLE
IMMEDIATE SAVINGS
Call 944-2600
WOODLAWN CEMETERY

PERKINS SQUARE BAPTIST CHURCH
Sunday, January 10, 1982
Communion
8:00 A.M. — Early Morning Worship Sermon by the Pastor and Holy Communion
9:15 A.M. — Church School and New Members
10:30 A.M. — Open Heart Service
11:00 A.M. — Morning Worship Sermon by the Pastor and Holy Communion
6:00 P.M. — Baptist Training Union and New Members Class
REV. RICHARD OGLE Pastor

Season's Greetings and Best Wishes for the New Year From your Quality Robe People
BACHMAN TAILORING COMPANY
We feature beautiful robes in all the newest styles. New wonder fabrics of 100 percent dacron polyester. Wide selection of colors.
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AT A PRICE YOU CAN AFFORD NOT CONNECTED WITH ANY OTHER FUNERAL HOME

SHOWTIME

AFRO's last interview with Sonny Til

IDA PETERS

The original Sonny Til and his world famous Orioles as they looked in Dec., 1955 when they appeared at a gala at the Howard Theatre in D.C. Members in this AFRO file photo are not identified.

They held two funerals in December, 1981 for Earlington Carl Tilghman... one in Washington and one in Baltimore.

To most folks he was known as Sonny Til, leader of the Orioles. He died of a massive heart attack at the age of 56. During the last years of his life, he fought a losing battle with diabetes and in the early summer of 1981 lost half of his left foot. He added crutches to his act and even when he was hospitalized, he entertained.

At the Washington funeral, more than 500 people passed his bier to pay tribute and they included politicians, business people, local celebrities and fans who remembered his rich and velvety voice a part of their youth, before and after World War II.

The Washington funeral was the most emotional with Radio stations WOL, WHUR and WPFW airing special programs of tributes. One of his last appearances was in November to benefit the Shaw Junior High School marching band.

The AFRO last interviewed Sonny Til on the Sunday after Thanksgiving in 1980. It was a cold day and Bob Matthews (the former car salesman) was trying to make a go of his newly opened The Spot, (formerly The Elgin) at Monroe and Elgin. (Matthews is gone now and the club is under new management.)

Remember, Sonny came in early to the club for the interview and we sat in somber twilight amid the empty tables while he laughingly recalled the days when he traveled around the country with Perry Como, Nat King Cole, Duke Ellington and Redd Foxx. He recalled that "Crying In the Chapel" was their greatest hit.

Editor's Note: Belated thoughts on this last interview with Sonny Til. He talked about all the bills he appeared on with Ruth Brown, Dinah Washington, Sarah Vaughn and Billy Holiday on the old TT-BOA circuit. Most of the advertising and promotion for these concerts in Baltimore-Washington-Philadelphia and Richmond back in the 1950s was handled by the Feld Brothers. The same Feld Brothers who had owned Super Record Stores on 7th Street in downtown Washington; later Super Attractions; later Carter Barron Amphitheatre and now Ringling Bros., Barnum & Bailey Circus and Walt Disney World On Ice, among other things.

Throughout the interview with Sonny Til, he never mentioned his real name, Earlington Carl Tilghman. He remembered fondly his parents Mr. and Mrs. Charles Tilghman. He was born in the 1000 blk. of Woodyear Street between Riggs and Mosher. He grew up in the 1300 blk. of Whatcoat with members of the Swallows and Flamingoes living nearby.

Original Members
George Nelson — second tenor — replaced by Gregory Carrol in 1953
Alexander Sharp Tenor
Johnny Reed - bass
Tommy Gaither - guitarist - killed in auto accident in 1950

Sonny remembered graduating from School 112 where Mrs. Estelle Lee was principal and attending School No. 130 at Lafayette and McCulloh. His earliest memory of singing was with a quartet with William Wren for Llewellyn Wilson the music teacher at Douglass High School. He had a high tenor voice and never had any formal music training.

He graduated from Douglass High School in 1940 and went into the Army in a Chemical War Unit No. 162. He trained in Alabama, Camp Seibert, Camp Gordon Johnson, Fort Lee, Va. and served overseas in Patton's Third Army. Their job was to lay down smoke screens for the engineers to build the bridges over the Rhine River in Germany.

Sonny remembers his Captain, Maceo Turner of Atlantic City, who had him drive a jeep all over Europe singing in officer's clubs.

He also remembers the beaches of Germany and how the men had him singing "Till Then".

When he came back from World War II all he wanted to do was sit on the front steps but his girl wanted to go down to the Avenue Cafe at Pennsylvania Avenue and Pitcher Street.

There Flink Johnson was M.C., Bill Lindsay the manager and George Nelson was rapping and singing. They had amateur nights and Tanfett Hines did an "Open the Door Richard" routine. Johnny Reed was playing bass and the late Hezekiah Rock urged Sonny to enter the contest. With Alexander Sharp, Sonny won a $50 prize and Alex, $20.

Sonny was hooked on singing and he formed the Vibraires with George Nelson, Alexander Sharp, Tommy Gaither and Johnny Reed. Their first job was at Smith's Hotel, across from the AFRO at Pace and Druid Hill.

Then Bob Lindsay booked them at the Avenue Cafe and a Jewish girl, Deborah Chessler became their manager. Their first recording was "It's Too Soon To Know" backed by "My Barbara Lee".

Chessler took them to N.Y. to appear on the Arthur Godfrey Talent Show. George Shearing won but fans all over the country wrote the Lipton Tea people asking to hear more of the Vibraires. They were called back to the Godfrey Show and in 1947 played the white Club Charles, the first black act ever.

Sonny remembers getting paid $1,000 "more money than I'd ever seen."

They recorded for Jerry Blaine and Natural Records then Jubilee. When they switched to Jubilee, the man said, "you cats from Baltimore, we'll call you The Orioles".

Deborah Chesslet wrote all their hit songs "Tell Me So", "At Night", "Forgive and Forget", "To Be To You" and "Crying In the Chapel".

Sonny recalled he had paid his dues as he remembered traveling the chitterlin circuit, riding in a black touring car with their manager, a white woman at that. He laughs and recalls a gig for the Ku Klux Klan.

A special one-night Oldies-but-Goodies show at the Howard in 1978 prompted Sonny to revive the Orioles. The new group Gerald Holman, Albert Russell, Billy Taylor toured Australia, New Zealand, Switzerland and England, before trying for a come back in local clubs in Baltimore and D.C.

What's Happening

Samm Art Williams, author and director of "Home" and Morgan State College grad will be in Baltimore this weekend to conduct auditions for Belva Scott's playmusical "Double Handicap".

The play will be presented by the Free Spirit Theatre in May. Williams will audition Saturday, Jan. 9 from 1-5 p.m. and Sunday, Jan. 10 from 1-5 p.m. in the Little Theatre of Morgan State University.

There are seven main characters in "Double Handicap" and 23 actors and actresses who can sing and dance are needed. Also two children ages 8-12 who can dance and sing.

Sonia Stockton, teacher of Marketing at the University of Baltimore is in charge. Belva Scott, the playwright is on the Mayor's Art Council. Melvin Miles, director of Morgan's Jazz Ensemble will handle the music.

Foster Johnson, famous tap dancer with Ellington, Basie and Hampton

By Ida Peters

Foster H. Johnson, acclaimed as one of the most famous tap dancers over five decades and who played The Cotton Club, Small's Paradise, Cafe Society and toured with some of the world's greatest bands, died Oct. 29 at the age of 64 in Los Angeles.

Johnson had only recently returned from a successful tour of South America with his production of "1,000 Years of Jazz" and had appeared with students in the Los Angeles Street Scene festival in September.

He died at Queen of Angeles Hospital following a brief illness on the eve of the first Los Angeles Hoofers Convention scheduled for January, 1982 at the Variety Arts Center. It was designed to bring fellow tap dancers from across the nation to a reunion style meeting and exchange of ideas.

In his later years Johnson was distinguished by striking white hair styled in a large Afro. He thrilled audiences with his agile and intricate dance routines, considered phenomenal for a man his age.

He was married four times. Among his wives was actress Nichelle Nichols, star of the former "Star Trek" TV series. She is the mother of their actor-son, Kyle Johnson who starred in the film "The Learning Tree".

Johnson was also married to Jeannie Richstein, a member of The Blossoms, a backup group for singer Tom Jones.

He is survived by two daughters Debbie and Lisa Johnson of Washington, DC; and a brother, Ribble Johnson of Columbus, Ohio. His body was cremated and a memorial tribute was conducted thru Village Warm Productions.

Johnson began his dance career at the age of 8 while vacationing on his grandfather's farm in Virginia where he performed in the, "Silas Green from New Orleans" one of the leading minstrel shows of the early 1920s.

In his hometown of Columbus, OH he taught himself tap dancing and was heavily influenced by the shows booked through his town on the T.O.B.A. (Theatrical Owners Booking Association).

At 17, he accepted an offer to join Benny Moten's orchestra as a dancer, with Count Basie on the piano. In his time he worked with scores of prominent entertainers including the bands of Duke Ellington, Count Basie, Lionel Hampton, Ray Anthony and Louis Armstrong.

He appeared in several musical comedies including "Kiss Me Kate," "Hell's - A - Popping" and "Rhapsody In Rhythm." He was booked into major nightclubs throughout the country including New York's Cafe Society, Basin Street, The Cotton Club and Small's Paradise.

On television he made guest appearances on Ed Sullivan, Merv Griffin, Sid Caesar and Kate Smith shows.

The debonaire entertainer also won praises as a jazz dancer, choreographer, singer, congo drummer, piano-player and music composer. A charter member of AGVA he played scores of night-clubs including Caesar's Palace, the Flamingo and the Sands.

For a time he operated a theatre-restaurant in LA called the Finale Club which showcased such talent as Charlie Parker, Miles Davis, Errol Garner.

Johnson also held positions as a radio announcer, newspaper reporter and publisher-editor of the Las Vegas American.

In his later years, he worked with students at USC in attempt to bring back the pure form of tap dancing, at one time one of the most popular dance styles.

1948 — Foster Johnson was an M.C. at Classic Gardens in Toledo, Ohio; had shelved his band and was joining Bobby Johnson on a nationwide - tour. At his death, he had startling white hair worn in an Afro.

End of era...

Show business deaths - 1981

Gertrude Ward, manager of world's greatest gospel group, the Ward Singers

★ In 1953, 25,000 persons paid $40,000 to hear the Ward Gospel in Pa., N.J., Md. Calvacade- They wore $4,000 wardrobes

★ In 1958, it was estimated the group traveled one million miles. They had a 12 passenger 8-door cream colored Chrysler, custom-built in Italy and in those days, cost $12,000.

★ By 1958, they had sung in 5,000 Baptist churches

Gertrude Ward

Clara Ward & Gospel Singers 1961 — Top Gertrude Ward, manager and business brains. Front, Mildred Means, Voyla Crowley, Clara Ward at piano. Standing from (L) Malvilyn Statham, Willa Ward Royster and Madelyn Thompson.

By Ida Peters

A going home celebration for Evangelist Gertrude Murphy Ward, manager of the famous Clara Ward Singers was held Wednesday Dec. 2, 1981 at Victory Baptist Church, Los Angeles, Calif. with the Rev. Charles N. Chapman, pastor; Rev. William Turner, officiating.

Mother Ward, as she was affectionately called, died at the age of 80 on Nov. 27, at French Hospital, Los Angeles. She is survived by one-daughter Mrs. Willa Royster, of Philadelphia; son-in-law Harry Royster; granddaughters, Mrs. Charlotte Gertrude Sims, Los Angeles and Mrs. Rita Claire Bell of Philadelphia.

The funeral for Mother Ward is being described by participants as almost identical to the "going home service of praise" for Clara Ward in 1973. The Rev. James Cleveland paid tribute" Prof. Thomas A. Dorsey ("Precious Lord Take Mv Hand"), the man credited with starting Gospel music in American, paid tribute and the famous Ward Singers sang their million seller "Surely God Is Able".

Gertrude Murphy Ward was born in Anderson, S.C. on April 19, 1901, the twelth child of Dave and Hannah Murphy.

She joined Ebenezer Baptist Church, the Rev. R.D. Glen, pastor at age 12. She was active in the Sunday School and choir.

In 1920, seeking up-

(Continued on Page 14)

Night Scene Seen

By Bob Matthews

Glad to note that the Sportsmen's Lounge is back to is live music policy. There was an understandable hiatus for a week, but for the month of January, Joy Delight, vocalist will be holding down the weweekend stage.

She will be accompanied by the Tom Hurley trio, which of course will have its full-scale outing. The Saturday afternoon jazz jam, 4 to 8 p.m., will feature a group headed up by Bobby Ward.

There will be Bobby on drums, along with Dennis Russell, Rich Coleman, Jimmy Bethea and Charles Edsel. Our spies report that this is the same group that will be holding down the night bandstand over the weekend at the Club Astoria.

— —

Having been watching with interest the live music policy at the Astoria, for oldtimers have a special fondness for the place. For example, this is the last place we remember hearing Billie Holliday sing.

Shirley Scott and Eddie Lockjaw Davis played their last engagement together at the club In fact, during the live music heyday, the Astoria was one of the places to be.

While we have not physically made one of the sets, we are told the band occupies a space along the far wall, which leaves intact the island in the middle which used to be the music forum.

Bobby Ward is one of the premier drummers in town, and this should be a swinging set. We'll check it out.

— —

Said we would check out another new club in town, the Woodstock nite club, out on Park Heights Ave., and we did. Discovered that Reggie K holds down the disc-jockey chair on weekends, and the club is spacious and well done.

Noted one interesting fact on the night we were there, and this was an off-night supposedly: the bar was loaded with females who were out to enjoy the evening.

In addition to the music, there are games available—in fact discovered that Reggie is a great disc jockey, but a lousy backgammon player.

— —

Speaking of backgammon, there is a continuous game each evening at Rasaan's Bar on Hilton and Gwynn Falls Pkwy, with some of the denizens laying claim to being the tops in town. They are waiting for a challenge from players who use the doubling cube.

— —

Keep forgetting to mention it, but the Garrison Lounge has started a jazz-records evening each Thursday night. Joe Williams brings in albums from his vast collection, and the audience really gets down.

On Wednesday nights, jazz albums are played at The Place, over on W. Franklin St. Regina and her daughters still handle all the proceedings, and the jazz night has become an institution.

Mack had instituted a policy of playing jazz albums at his club, Mack's C'est Bon, on Sunday nights. Haven't been there is a while, but hope it still is continuing.

— —

After a lot of grousing by disgruntled older customers, the Sphinx Club has reverted to its live music policy. Once again on weekends, live jazz, sprinkled with soul, reigns supreme.

Freddie Thaxton has been heading up the group, and it is kinda fun to watch some of the dancing done which dates back to the days when dancing meant holding someone in your arms.

— —

At the Ritz, it is Bill Harris and his revue, who will be in place through the month of January. Bill has been reaping a lot of publicity locally recently, and we hope it is a harbinger of exposure on the national scene soon.

— —

At The Closet, Mickey and Shirley Fields will hold down the bandstand on Friday and Saturday evenings, with Sunday night given over to the Billy Murphy trio.

— —

Live music will be the policy for 1982, according to Henry Baker, who has already booked pianist Albert Dailey for the weekend of the 15th.

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Things have not yet completely settled down regarding the operations at the Chez Ja'nel, Tiger Lil's spot over on Orleans St. We have heard all sorts of discussions over the vagaries of things, but nothing definitive yet.

We're keeping an eye out, and will report to you whenever something decisive occurs. 'Tis an interesting situation—so please forgive us for the scanty details—it'll all come clear at a later date.