The Multicultural Center would like to thank you for your support and participation in making this exhibit a success.

"A Place of Cultural Teaching and Learning"

Gallery Hours
Monday - Friday
8:00 a.m. - 5:00 p.m.

Ohio University Multicultural Center
Winter 2012 Exhibit
An extraordinary family once inhabited the city of Athens. It consisted of a brilliant and progressive father, a sensitive and gifted mother, and three exceptional sons. All Ohio University alumni, each overcame the rampant prejudice that old Athens held dear to become highly popular and successful members of society.

They also were musicians, having grown up in a musical home. The father, Herpel Saunders, played the saxophone and sang. Their mother, Mary Louise Pettiford Saunders, played the organ and piano for Mount Zion Baptist Church. She also sang quite beautifully, it is told. Ronald, the eldest son, played the French horn and cello. His cheery and self assured personality epitomizes that of a first born son. He is currently a cellist performing in New York City, where he lives with his lovely wife, Adriana. Gerry, the sweet middle son, played the saxophone and viola most exquisitely. The diversity of these two instruments indicates the depth of his personality. Last, and far from least, there was Phillip, the youngest, who played the bassoon and violin. One can just imagine Monday nights in their home after completing their school work. The extra treat is that these Thomas Jefferson/Woodson descendants also painted. Among Renaissance men, Herpel and Mary Louise created three.

Their stories are legendary. The father performed at the famed Berry hotel and the old Club 33 for New Year’s Eve, among other musical functions attended by luminaries from both coasts. Ron went on to a successful business and musical career. Gerry shared his kindness as an educator. Phillip, the first black drum major and class president of Ohio University, had a successful career in television in Chicago. He became a counselor, minister and also a founding member, with Reverend Jesse Jackson, Sr., of Chicago’s Operation Breadbasket (now Rainbow Push Coalition). As it is important for Athens to preserve all of her history, with great honor we share the genius of this family with you.

Raymond Abraham
Gavin C. P. Thompson
Tanya Thompson
March 2, 2012