

GMP, INC.

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December 21, 2005

Dear Mrs. Lowery,

Thank you so much for your warm words at Idessa's Homegoing/Celebration of her life.

I meant to give you the enclosed, but I became so overwhelmed with finally realizing that I was losing a dear, dear friend of over 50 years. Those years flashed through my mind and heart from when I was age 12 and called her "Mrs. Idessa" until I was 50 when she gave me permission to call her "Idessa" to most recently at age 63, she told me to call her "Dess."

Please accept my apology for not including "Drum Major for Justice Award" in the write-up of recognitions and awards. I listed the awards she had given to the archives, and she had not given the "Drum Major Award" because she did not want to take it off of her "Wall of Respect" in her home; she so cherished that award. In the heat of pulling together everything, this escaped my memory.

Presently, I am writing a proposal to establish a gallery in Dess's memory at St. Jude. We have a commodious space that will display all of her awards, her jazzy attire, her home-made posters she created to accompany her on picket lines, and other memorabilia. The gallery will be temporary until we build the Interpretative Center in Montgomery, commemorating the 1965 Selma-to-Montgomery Voting Rights March.

I very much would love sitting down talking with you. I will come over to Atlanta for such a sisterhood, personal meet. Let me know what day is good for you in January. I admire you greatly. You are a woman of quiet determination, action and resolve. It is my desire to know you even better.

Again, thank you for sharing with us at Dess's homecoming. I know God will continue to bless you and all of your endeavors to uplift Women of the Movement.

With warm regards, I am

Respectfully yours,
Gwendolyn M. Patton

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January 18, 2006

Dear Joanna,

Thank you so much for your generous contribution. Presently, I am working on the establishment of a small gallery that will display Idessa's movement attire, e.g., the dress, purse and accessories she wore on the Jackson, Ms "March against Fear." Idessa's collection is very rich with papers, buttons, plaques, posters, clothing and photographs. Every time I think about her saving her manuscripts and artifacts to give to me when I returned home, as if she knew I was coming expressly to take care of her "stuff," I am overwhelmed with her loving fervor for freedom.

I had every intention of being strong at Idessa's home-going, but when I got up to say my "so long" to her, I felt a terrible loss. Just the thought that we would no longer be together at movement activities or my taking her to programs to talk with youth about the movement and their responsibility to continue the legacy brought flowing tears that "my buddy" is no longer with me. I do, however, find some comfort with my last words: "I look forward, Idessa, to that great mass meeting when we are sitting around the throne." As we say in the movement, "Idessa is now dancing with our ancestors."

Again, thank you for your contribution.

Sincerely,
Gwendolyn M. Patton