

## ***2019—A Sibling Message about Mrs. Emma L. Wilson King***

You are familiar with Mrs. Emma L Wilson King the mom of twelve children. One item about her you may not be too familiar with is that she too is from a large family. Her immediate siblings from her mom were ten. Her paternal father would make her forever linked to an additional whopping twenty-seven siblings. Add those numbers together and you have a large family bond.

In 1949, as she and her husband Willie settled in East St. Louis, there were many situations where she would house her immediate siblings on her maternal side at her small shotgun home at 1214 Colas Avenue. This is what was done as the great black migration from southern poverty was viewed as a golden opportunity in northern towns and cities.

As she would oftentimes return from visits to Starkville or West Point, Mississippi she would ensure a visit was made to her Wilson siblings in Memphis, Tennessee. The Wilson clan was always an important connection she ensured the Kings were close and aware of as well as the Dixons.

She was the eldest of her immediate maternal siblings and role modeling was always an integral part of her family and parenting Mantra. The five immediate girls would into adulthood hangout together on shopping junkets, sibling emotional supports and reunite with a maternal sibling later in life that would strengthen these women. She would baby her five maternal brothers and help them get a leg up as they too sought a better life in the paths of their elder sister.

As her step father had been threatened in Mississippi with death by white vigilantes because a nominal incident, she would ensure him shelter in this same shotgun home until he could find employment and shelter and send for her mother. Her immediate siblings would join their elder sister whom they admired and would fondly pass on stories about the family and the importance of caring on the family traditions and keeping the bond. The children knowing their first and second cousins. Aunts and great aunts. These families would in turn be large families but above all there was a bond of love, trust and respect that would resonate from generation to generation.

You often hear the phrase there is a certain feature about that family which stands out. Mrs. Emma L Wilson King had a special bond that she threads through her life. Her humble Starkville, Mississippi upbringing would carry her on to the northern urban fields where she would create strong neighborhood relationships where she would befriend numerous mothers in her new town where her children would be recognized by the strong bond she instilled in their character where people would say, "You know those are one of Mrs. King's kids." A strong mom that was close to all her siblings. Emblematic of real family life in East St. Louis, Illinois.