

UPF USA, ACLC and Women in Ministry Celebrate USA National Parents Day 2023

Tomiko Duggan
July 22, 2023

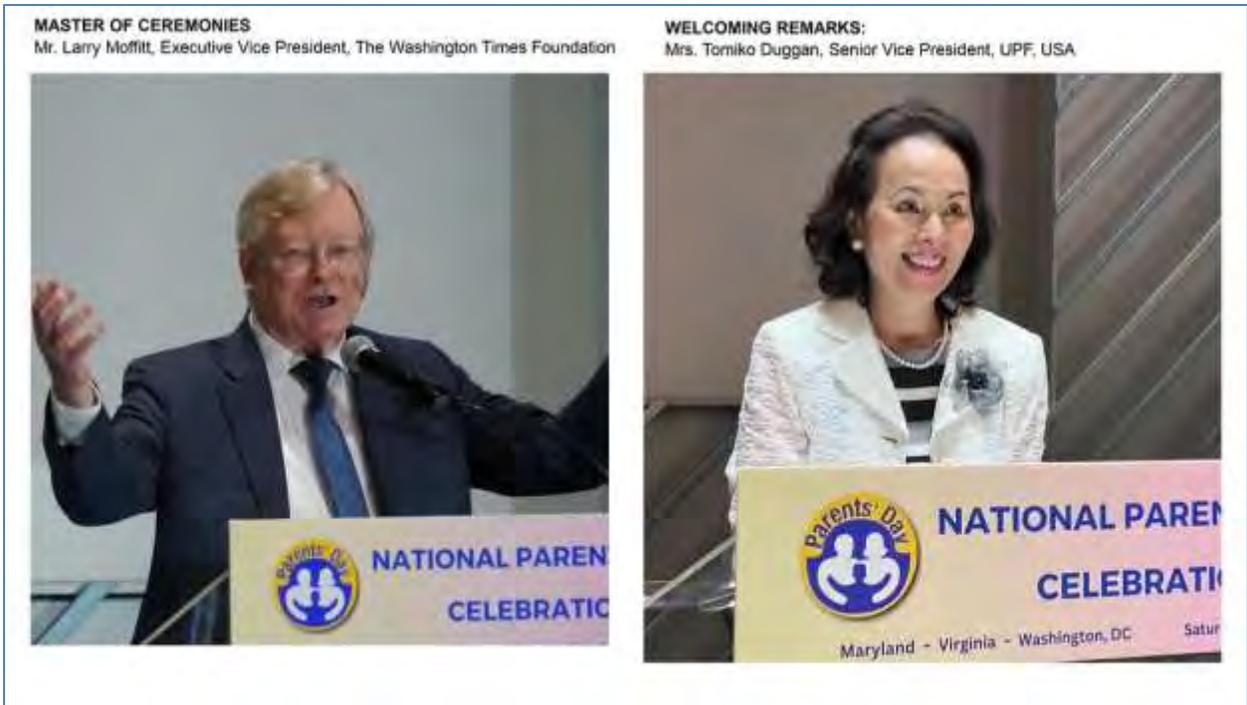


Washington, DC, USA -- The Universal Peace Federation (UPF) USA and ACLC, Women in Ministry celebrated National Parents Day for the DMV area on Saturday, July 22, 2023, at the Arbor Ballroom at *The Washington Times* building. Over 150 people gathered, including the awardees and their families and friends. It was a joyous and happy gathering to honor the nominated outstanding couples and enjoy delicious food.



Larry Moffitt, secretary general of UPF, was the emcee. The program began with an invocation by **Rev. Dr. Sharon Anderson**, executive pastor of Temple of Praise, followed by a musical selection, *Open My Heart*, sung by **Rasheedah Sharif**.

Tomiko Duggan, senior vice president of UPF, USA, welcomed the participants and guests on behalf of all the sponsoring organizations and thanked them for their recognition of the importance of this day. She read a quote from Dr. Hak Ja Han Moon, Co-Founder of UPF, who in her address at the US Congress in 1993 declared: "The family is society's eternally unchanging origin, foundation, and building block. Neither your nation nor the world is the base for your happiness. Your family is. Therefore, the ideals we first seek should not be in the world. They must be in our family."



Minister Reiko Jenkins, co-chair of ACLC, Women in Ministry, a co-sponsoring organization, expressed her joy and honor to be invited to such a beautiful event. She remarked that we are facing such a confusing time in finding the value of marriage between a man and woman and the importance of celebrating and honoring parents as we are created, male and female, in the image of God.

Rasheedah Sharif: The Melodic Philanthropist



Rasheedah Sharif, an accomplished IT professional with over 20 years of experience, has emerged as a Master of Technology and a compassionate force for change. Born and raised in vibrant Baltimore, she cherishes her diverse backgrounds from Egypt to North Carolina, but it is in her hometown where her heart truly resides.

She motivates others to embrace compassion and unity while making the world better for future generations.

Rev. Zagery Oliver, executive vice president of UFP, USA, spoke about how he has seen movies and TV programs about divorced parents, and observes when one parent comes to pick up the child from the other parent's house to spend time with him, the struggle within that child is portrayed as so painful. We understand why the child is in turmoil, because the child needs both parents.



Today there are cultural clichés of single parenthood, such as: "I don't need no man" and claiming that the traditional need for a mom and dad to be in the same home is antiquated and not expected or relevant in contemporary life. But we know the order and balance of this vast universe functions harmoniously by the universal law of complementary elements. That same complementary power is translated into creating true love and harmony in the beautiful structure of Mom and Dad.

The keynote speakers were **Ed Polk and Sharon Polk**, the recipients of the National Parents Day Award in 2022. Ed Polk shared that there is no more critical thing than being a parent to children. Parents are

shaping the minds and hearts of the next generations. We do not have a manuscript on how we raise children; we all had to figure it out. Fortunately, God is teaching us how to become good parents. Ultimately, we have to focus on a God-centered family.



Pastor Pamela Peebles

- My husband and I are nominating Pastor Pamela Peebles in Maryland for Single Parent Family.
- Her husband Rev. James Peebles passed away in 1997. They had 3 teenager children. Her husband was an assistant Pastor of Jerrico City of Praise in Maryland. His father was the Founder and Pastor of the Church.
- After his passing she went through the suffering of her husband's sudden death, but she gained the strength and power of God to become a Minister. She has been serving as a president of Women of Destiny.
- Her 2 children have been married and have 5 grand Children.
- Attached is her photo, her article in Gospel Today and family photo.

As the son of two preachers, he recognizes the need not to forget God's Words or turn away from them. He said we must dig into those words and figure out what God tells us to do. He started forcing himself to read God's words daily and seek what God told him to do. We get to know what God is asking us. From God's commands and wisdom, we develop good judgment and instruction in life.



Dr. Surinder Singh Gill & Mrs. Rajinder Kaur Gill

- We made our children independent from the very beginning. We did not make it to be dependent. They make self-decision in academics and choices in food and clothing. We never stop from anywhere. They were taught to do what was good for them, which was acceptable to the community. That may not make your position awkward. The decision and work may not make parents uncomfortable too.
- We never had any complaints about them from school, community, and friends. We are so proud that today they are independent, self-supportive, and taking care of us.
- Raising good children means teaching good etiquette, good dealing, good attitude and making them brave to fight every good and bad situation in a happy mood. Do not trouble anyone; rather, help the needy.
- Because of this we never face any problem from them. They are well settled and living the good life by living with us.

When you face difficulties and challenges, you have to make a decision; go back to the Words. It is easy to have faith when everything is going well, when God is pouring abundant blessings on you. But when everything is taken away and you must go through the most challenging moments of your life, is your faith still there? Can you still say to God, "God, I love you"? Do you still have faith in God?

Mr. Polk stated that his family had gone through many difficulties. His advice: If you listen to God's word, obey God, and let Him guide your life, everything will work out. You may not know how to get from point A to point Z, but learn to get to point B, and you will always find God's plan for you.

Mrs. Angelika Selle, representing the Selection Committee for the National Parents Day for the Year 2023, introduced the outstanding DMV 2023 awardees:

Mayor Tim Adams, mayor of Bowie, Maryland, and Judge Sheila Adams

Mayor Adams grew up in deep poverty in New Orleans but lifted himself through education. Some 20

years ago, he suffered a slip-and-fall and was left paralyzed from the waist down and confined to a wheelchair. Elected in 2019, he is the first black mayor of Bowie and the first Bowie mayor who is disabled.

Mr. Thai Thanh Nguyen and Mrs. Ngoc-Thuan (Tina) Le

As children of immigrants, they are uniquely positioned to bridge between two worlds: their Vietnamese culture and their lives in the United States. These two worlds constantly challenge them, but their respect toward their parents has never swayed, from whom they inherited the value of hard work and service to the community.

Pastor Pamela Peebles

Her husband, Rev. James Peebles, passed away in 1997. His sudden death caused her to suffer, but she gained the strength and power of God to become a minister. Her two children have married and she now has five grandchildren.

Angel M. & Sonia Mabel Reyes

Sonia and her husband arrived in the USA from El Salvador close to 40 years ago. During this time, they have raised their 2 girls, both now married ages 35 and 33, and are presently involved in raising and educating 5 grandchildren.

One day several years ago, Mr. Reyes received a gunshot wound while at work; the wound has altered their lives to this day. Mr. Reyes, a big and strong, hard-working husband, and father, was now struggling with just surviving. He remained in a coma for several months. Sonia was his prayer worrier as well as his main caregiver and remains so to this day. In light of this tragedy, this couple has invested many years of sacrificial love and caring for each other.

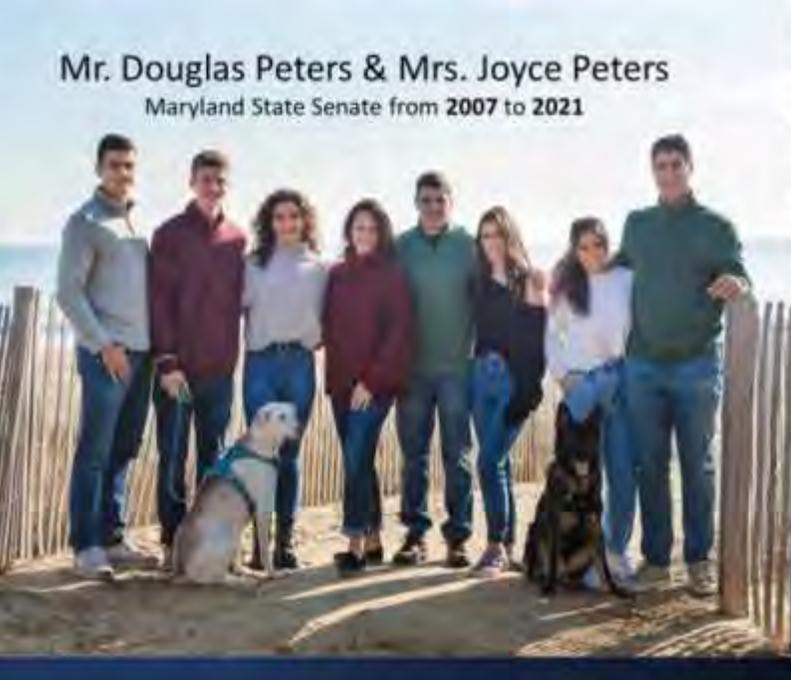


Angel M. and Sonia Mabel Reyes

Mr. Reyes suffered a gunshot wound while at work; the damage has altered their lives. Mr. Reyes, a big, robust, hard-working husband, and father, was now struggling to survive. In spite of this tragedy, this couple has invested many years of sacrificial love and caring not only for each other but with parental concern and support for the large immigrant community of their neighborhoods.

Mr. Douglas Peters & Mrs. Joyce Peters

Maryland State Senate from **2007 to 2021**



- 1. Former Maryland State Sen. Douglas Peters and Joyce Peters have raised six extraordinary children.
- 2. Sen. Peters served on the Bowie City Council for four years, the Prince George's County Council for four years, and the Maryland Senate for 15 years. Douglas was instrumental in constructing a huge hospital complex in Largo, Maryland. He oversaw the distribution of federal Covid-19 stimulus funds to all of Maryland. He participated in over 500 Eagle Scout ceremonies. He resigned from the state Senate in 2021 after Gov. Larry Hogan appointed him as one of the 21 University System of Maryland Board of Regents members, overseeing the finances, policies, academics, and leadership of the 12 universities in the University of Maryland system.
- 3. Douglas, Joyce, and their children are devout Roman Catholics who care deeply about family values. Douglas' faith has made him a socially conservative Democrat, so it is not surprising that, as a state senator, he voted against gay marriage and opposed abortion.

**Mr. Thai Thanh Nguyen &
Mrs. Ngoc-Thuan (Tina) Le**

- As children of immigrants, they are uniquely positioned to bridge two worlds: Mine and Tina's culture from Vietnam and their lives in the United States. Two worlds constantly challenge them, but their respect toward their parents is never swayed, and they inherited the value of hard work and service to the community.
- We are proud to see them as Americans but, at the same time, still have strong roots in their Vietnamese heritage, such as speaking the language fluently, volunteering with the diaspora, and being advocates for issues being faced by the Vietnamese American population.
- Our sons have essentially taken over our car wash business and revamped everything with their input—increasing the quality and level of service we have never reached before. Tina and I can tell this was an act of love and passion, which is what being a family is about.



Dr. Surinder Singh Gill and Mrs. Rajinder Kaur Gill

Dr. Gill commented that they allowed their children to be independent from the very beginning. The children made their own decisions regarding academics and choices in food and clothing. They were taught to do what was good for them and acceptable to the community.

Mayor Adams grew up in deep poverty in New Orleans but lifted himself up through education. He earned a B.S. degree in chemistry from Xavier University and an M.B.A. from the University of New Orleans. Some 20 years ago, he suffered a slip-and-fall and was left paralyzed from the waist down, confined to a wheelchair. He is the first black mayor of Bowie and the first Bowie mayor who is disabled, elected in 2019.

Mayor Tim Adams and Judge Sheila Adams are parents of unstinting selflessness and have raised three wonderful children of integrity, honesty, and compassion. Their oldest daughter tragically passed away in 2021, and they and their two remaining children, college-age twins, are still dealing with the pain of that loss.

To honor their daughter's memory and her positive impact on others, Tim and Sheila established a foundation in their daughter's name, creating scholarships in her memory, advocating for causes related to the circumstances of her passing, and providing support to bereaved families through counseling and support groups.



Pastor Manyango Wilson and Mrs. Angela Wilson

Recipients of the National Parents Day Award 2023

Pastor Manyango came to the USA to attend college in North Carolina after being sentenced to death (as a student leader) and released by the then-military government in his home country (Liberia). His best gift from God (after his salvation through

Christ), the love of his life, Angela, joined him a year later. They have been married for 34 years, raised four awesome children, and were blessed with an additional child after she lost her mother to cancer.



Hon. Douglas Peters and Mrs. Joyce Peters

Maryland State Senator from 2007 to 2021

Sen. Peters served on the Bowie City Council for four years, the Prince George's County Council for four years, and the Maryland Senate for 15 years. He was instrumental in constructing a vast hospital complex in Largo, Maryland. Douglas Peters and Joyce Peters have raised six extraordinary children.

The program ended with a final song by Pastor Michael Nattles, an evangelist, expressing his appreciation for those who contributed to the program.

