**BIRTHDAY SPEECH**

**FOR**

**JUNE HARRIS**

**LETTER TO AUNT PEARL FROM THE HARRIS FAMILY**

Dear Aunt Pearl….and believe me, when we say **DEAR**, we **MEAN IT**!!!! We’re all gathered here….family, friends, nieces, first cousins… **MORE** cousins… your son, Sonny, and of course, Gwen, to honor **YOU** and this **MOMENTOUS day**.

On this, the occasion of the **GLORIOUS** celebration of your **ONE HUNDREDTH** birthday…. The natural question to ask is… “What were **YOU** doing one hundred years ago today???” I think it’s safe to say that just about all of us were not even a “wink” in our parents’ eyes…. But you, dear Aunt Pearl, you were here and on that day, one hundred years ago, the world became just a little better, brighter, and kinder. Of course, it took a few years for you to grow and learn and “pick up speed,” (**wait for the laugh**) but **BOY**! Was it ever worth the wait!!! And in spite of all the ups and downs you may have faced along the way, we, the Harris family, are so blessed to claim you as “ours.”

Although it’s not usually mentioned in “polite society,” and one doesn’t often mention a number when it comes to a woman’s age, we cannot think of anyone more worthy of celebrating such an incredible milestone!!! There’s a popular news site that shows “now and then” photos of celebrities in a feature called, “Good Genes or Good Docs???” In your case, we can look at you and just say, “**GOOD**.” I mean, it doesn’t hurt to have good medical care, especially as we get older, but **YOU**, Aunt Pearl, have something almost indefinable that keeps the spirit glowing in your eyes and the smile on your face…. And it’s **BEYOND** good… you’re **GENUINE**. You’re **NICE**. you’re **KIND**. You **CARE**. And the best part is, you **SHARE** all that is good in you, and you’ve always done that.

Mother Pearl, according to an expression I’ve heard that really means so much, “I am part of all that I have met,” you, too, are a part of who birthed you, raised you, taught you, cherished and befriended you…and so, we need to acknowledge your parents, Martha and Javan Turner (**please note… are these Aunt Pearl’s parents? This was not clear in the instructions. Please correct as needed**). They taught you well….lucky us!!! Through growing up in \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ to marrying Uncle Tom, you lived and you learned, and while life was not easy, and through challenges and hardships, no matter how difficult the situation, you never ceased to inspire and uplift the family and friends whose lives have been enriched by your generosity and positivity.

We have always loved learning of the stories of you and my mother, \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ (**please add your mother’s name)….** We can just picture the two of you in your younger years… a “**dynamic duo**,” fast friends…. More like real sisters…. Sharing experiences… always spending lots of time together. During your younger years, we heard how you two “got around…” traveling together far a wide…. Well… it **WAS** far and wide for two young women!!!…. to places like Baltimore and Philadelphia, Nashville, Tennessee, to see your favorite gospel singer, Bobby Jones.

After we lost our mother in \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ (**please add year**), we were blessed to have our Aunt Pearl. Aunt Pearl, you did so much for us and did all that you could to help us heal and carry on from that unimaginable loss. Not one gesture of kindness, from doing everything you could to make sure we had happy memories to planning and serving delicious dinners on Mother’s Day, we knew … and **STILL** know that your heart has always been with our family and for that, we are grateful.

Since Bobby Jones was such a positive influence on you and my mother, let’s remember a little lyric from his song, “Can’t Nobody.” I think this speaks to all of us, especially today….

“**Lord before I came to know You. I had my head hanging low. Burdened down so heavy 'til You eased my troubled soul. Now I'm moving in a new direction by Your grace, Your mercy and by Your protection.**

**You keep me from danger seen & unseen.**

**And when trouble rises, You are right there to deliver me! I want to thank You and give You the praise for loving me the way that You do.**”

Aunt Pearl, I think we who know you and love you, can say the same thing about you. Through the years…. **ALL** the years, you’ve loved and protected and watched over each one of us, and for that, we are all truly grateful. You’ve never ceased to inspire us and there’s no one on this earth that is more deserving of the love and honor we show you today…. As you’ve showed the same to all of us throughout your wonderful, rich life, so on this most special of days, we all want to wish you the happiest of incredible birthdays!!! We love you!!

Love, your Harris family and friends.