

WHAT MY MEMBERSHIP MEANS TO ME

I think back to that day when I first remember hearing some ladies talking amongst themselves about an organization they belonged to and some of the things they were involved in. We were all working the barbeque booth at the annual Labor Day Brazos River Raft Races with the Shriners of Karem Temple in Waco, Texas. It was Labor Day 1980.

A few weeks later I received a letter of invitation to become a member of Merak Temple No. 104. I was so honored and excited to be joining this group of ladies and being a part of their organization. I did not grow up in a Masonic family but married a Shriner who believed in what his organization stood for and worked diligently towards helping get children sponsored to the Shrine hospitals. For me to be able to belong to an organization that worked side by side with my husband and Noble made me feel like I belonged.

My husband and I both continued to be very active in Karem and Merak until our move to Florida in 1984 shortly after the birth of our son. I remember telling my husband he could be as active in his Masonic organizations as he wanted but that I was taking a hiatus to raising a newborn baby while still working a fulltime career.

A few years later my name came up for membership in Aquarius Temple No. 138. Little did they know I was already a member of Daughters of the Nile. Wanting to fit in and BELONG, I demitted from Merak Temple No. 104 and joined Aquarius Temple No. 138. I held my first appointed position in Aquarius Temple No. 138 as Princess Nydia and studied hard to portray her station. I took pride in knowing that I had learned my part well when my daughter was the exemplifying candidate and wondered why her mother was blind.

Fast forward to 2005 and the passing of my Noble Illustrious Sir Wally Coleman, Past Potentate of Amara Shrine Center. Never have I felt such a wall of friends as I did at that time. Without my membership in Daughters of the Nile, I would have been lost and alone as my children were grown and gone from home.

In the years since, I have witnessed many of our members losing their spouses and becoming widows like me. We all have that strong bond of being there for each other and helping each other cope with our grief. We have found a definite purpose to life in the work we do for the Daughters of the Nile, the Daughters of the Nile Foundation and the Shriners Hospitals for Children.

My membership in Daughters of the Nile is so much more than a dues card. It's my lifeline to a productive, happy and meaningful life.

Charlyn A Coleman, Past Queen, Aquarius Temple No. 138

Supreme Temple Membership and Public Relations Committee