

A Dedication to Sylvia Lee.

Titled: I remember Sylvia Lee

Grand Mommy referred to her affectionately as, (Ms. Sylvia). I remember her being a very generous and compassionate and a very strong woman. As well as very spiritually grounded woman. I remember being as close to her as my own grandmother, and I remember her treating me and my sister Tammy, just like her own children.

As I now reflect on the greatness and the beauty of 84th and Morgan, the beauty and character of Sylvia Lee stands out to me. She provided a home for us, one that was instrumental in my development as a young man. I remember walking up the steps to 8445 S. Morgan with my Grand Mommy, my legs barely long enough to scale each step. My sister was likely in her arms.

She talked with Ms. Sylvia for some time, and I gather her compassion for this little lady with the two grandchildren, convinced her that my grandmother was the right tenant.

The relationship went on for another 15 years and I'm convinced the help she gave our family contributed greatly to our stability.

Ms. Sylvia gave us the opportunity to flourish and to experience what it was to live in a neighborhood among traditional families, on the south side of Chicago who were post Civil Rights era.

I was telling Pee-Wee, (Edonas Thornton), just a days ago that so many of the great things about our experience growing up on 84th and Morgan, were the things that we weren't exposed to. As a result of and attributable to the people and all of the parents on the block like Sylvia Lee.

Ms. Sylvia often gave me a summer job in her store, and I remember often times eating more than I was selling. I remember the sense of pride and maturity I felt from working in her store. She empowered me and inspired me by trusting me. I recall standing behind the counter serving people, feeling like I had this strong and innate sense of purpose, dignity and authority.

Sometimes, Ms. Sylvia would just look at me and smile with that encouraging look of approval or contempt that she had could render on the fly. This one particular day when I was cutting the grass, she was all warm smiles towards me. That same magical sparkle and charm and physical beauty shines through and is apparent in her beloved daughter Donna. Ms. Sylvia and Donna, both remind me of a Dorothy Dandridge or a Lena Horn types of models. If you've ever seen pictures of her back in that space in time, I'm sure you'd agree.

Ms. Sylvia encouraged me, she loved me and helped to mature me. I remember how proud she made me feel standing in her living room, showing off my Boy Scout uniform. She had special style and grace coupled with demonstrations of industriousness that inspired me. She was probably the first example of an entrepreneur and a sole proprietor that I'd ever witnessed.

The impact that Sylvia Lee had on me was invaluable. I don't believe in coincidences. I do believe in ordination and God's intention. I am convinced that our paths were destined to cross in the way that they did, and I know she was here to help to foster my character and to make us better people.

God bless her wonderful soul. I'll see her again someday and thank her for her influences on me. I believe that our lives are so much greater having had the influence of this great spirit, that is Sylvia Lee.

Michael C. LeMay,  
(aka Mikey).