

B TUESDAY, OCT. 16, 2007

The Atlanta Journal-Constitution  
**Metro**

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OBITUARIES INSIDE



An ace on, off court

Betty Goza founded a tennis team, championed bluebirds and spread good luck through pennies on her daily walks. B6

IN METRO



CURTIS COMPTON / Staff

**Atlantans recall momentous time**

When the call went out for the Million Man March, Cleo Manago went to D.C. See what Manago and three other participants say about the Oct. 16, 1995, event, which will be marked in Atlanta tonight. B1

4 OF A MILLION REFLECT

As told to ERNIE SUGGS / esuggs@ajc.com  
Photos by CURTIS COMPTON / Staff

Twelve years ago today at the urging of Minister Louis Farrakhan, the largest gathering of black men in American history converged in Washington for the Million Man March. Billed as a Holy Day of Atonement, the men were asked to take control of their lives, accept responsibility for their actions and return home and rebuild their communities. Here are four Atlantans who made that journey. Read their words on B4.

**Cleo Manago**

I was a doctoral student at the time. When I heard about the Million Man March, I was very excited. I am a black-community-rights activist, so I have always been very keen about what people who are pro-black do for us, including Minister Farrakhan and the Nation of Islam.

I was like, a million black men are going to come together in one place? That is unprecedented. Since we have been in this country, as former slaves, we had never come together on our own terms as black men. So I had to go. We needed to talk about things and tap into pains, frustrations and successes. Particularly pains and humiliations that we had not put our voice to. At one point during the march — and there was nobody on stage — we burst into tears. It was father, son, stranger, homosexual, heterosexual. Nobody cared. Brothers were snorting, crying and moaning on each other's shoulders. It made sense to me because we are walking around with a lot of stuff that we inherited from our ancestors that we had not talked about.

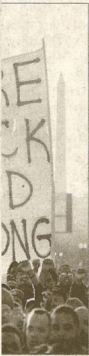
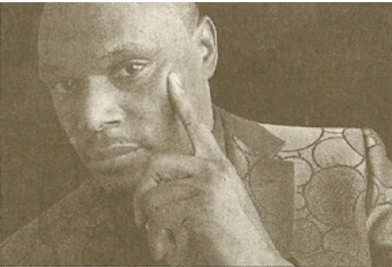
What is frustrating to me is that nobody acknowledged our tears from the stage. Very few people, who were organizing or leading the activities, acknowledged our tears. So we were not able to use that to organize black men toward going to another level of being so we could be more functional on a large scale. It was all in the abstract, it wasn't concretely articulated and used as a device to transform black men into being more functional, more thoughtful, more honest about what we are living with and dealing with as black men in this country.

The jails are still filling up. Some of the violence has come back. We have issues like HIV that are resolvable and preventable, but we are so distracted that we don't focus enough sometimes to synthesize our common sense with our behavior.



**Cleo Manago, 44**

CEO of AmASSI Health & Cultural Centers  
In 1995: Doctoral student



Washington Post / 1995  
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> **Why:** Since that day in 1995, Farrakhan has regularly held massive Day of Atonement events. This is the first time the event will be in Atlanta.

> **Where:** Boisfeuillet Jones Atlanta Civic Center, 395 Piedmont Ave., Atlanta

> **When:** Doors open at 5 p.m. The program starts at 7 p.m.

> **How:** Tickets are \$20 for reserved seating and \$100 for VIP seating. For more information and to find a ticket outlet, call 404-344-8533.

In their own words

**The Rev. Timothy McDonald**

I went because there was a positive call for black men to come together. To lay aside their religious differences, their education differences, any barriers or boundaries.

It was so exciting to hear such a positive call, given how black men were being portrayed in our society as negative and lazy. The Million Man March was a call for unity, solidarity and black manhood to stand up and be counted. It didn't bother me who issued the call. What excited me was this kind of unity had that potential and I could be a part of it. I was sick and tired of black men being put down and beat upon and all of these myths and lies being told.

I went expecting to see some brothers. I think we had more than a million. I would have been excited if we had 200,000. But when I went there and saw all of those black men, it was a spiritual experience for me. One of the most moving experiences of my entire journey and I shall never forget it — even 12 years later.

It was more than a march. It became a spiritual experience. A connection that I had not felt anywhere else.

Now, in many areas, things have gotten worse. Maybe society saw that positive energy and saw that black men were turning to their families and turning back to education, and it seemed like more barriers were put in our path with violence and guns and jail — almost to say, "We cannot let this positive thing continue."

The reality is, there are more of our black kids being raised by single moms than 12 years ago. There is a need again for a coming together. How that will happen, I don't know. That kind of consciousness, we need it now more than we did 12 years ago. Oppression is so sophisticated and subtle now. It is going to take a great kind of spiritual reawakening to get us where we need to be for our community. We need to do a lot of work to get back to that spiritual consciousness of black male solidarity.

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**Talib Shabazz**

I went to be part of men to converge on D.C.

I wasn't going to go. And I was a single father, I was walking around, looking for a place to eat, Farrakhan is speaking the message until we had seen and heard atonement. We tend to think that we have things that you have taken us away from the people who were so fired. When I got back, I really minded. I definitely regretted it. I was a whole, we were people who went down to do something more aren't supporting the people's lives, but I don't



We were at a point in time and come to grips with our communities better. When it was the camaraderie to have been there for the same page. There was an unbelievable moment.

Now, I think that was a direct result of our families to make a reference that we can't transcend it and work toward a common things, I can always put it together.

We can rise above so are Christians or Jews what can we do to make it that we are on God first.