

ALIGNMENT

Last Say So Holiday Newsletter

December 2023

Fifteenth Edition



W. MARICHAL GENTRY



With Terry, Amy, and Ariona.
Headed to the UNC
football game.

DON'T SWERVE AND MISS YOUR BLESSING

Greetings! I hope this year's holiday newsletter finds you well. This year marks a milestone for me. I turn 60! Can you believe it? God continues to bless and prosper me, and I continue to *lean not to my own understanding*. This year also marks the fifteenth edition of the Last Say So publication. It has become a biography of sorts, because it has chronicled the past fifteen years of my life and highlighted the people who have crossed my path each year.

I chose the term *Alignment* as this year's title, because it's a metaphoric term that I use in my coaching practice. Like a car that needs an alignment, as humans, we also must be in alignment, so that when we face life's challenges, we don't swerve and miss our blessing, but meet them head-on.



Having dinner and smiling for the camera with Ariona.

In this issue, I highlight The Porches Writing Retreat that I attended this summer (page 2), a nice three-day visit from my family (pages 1 and 3), good times with friends and colleagues (page 4), the yearly *Tout a' Fait* gathering (page 5), celebrating friendships at my home (page 6) my work with young people (page 7), watching UNC basketball with Kenny and Jackson Fischler (page 8), at the Dean Dome with friend, Michael Reeves,, and a chance encounter with retired Hall of Fame UNC basketball head coach, Roy Williams, and former UNC players, Derek Phelps, King Rice, and Brian Reese (page 8). Read on. Love to all! WMG

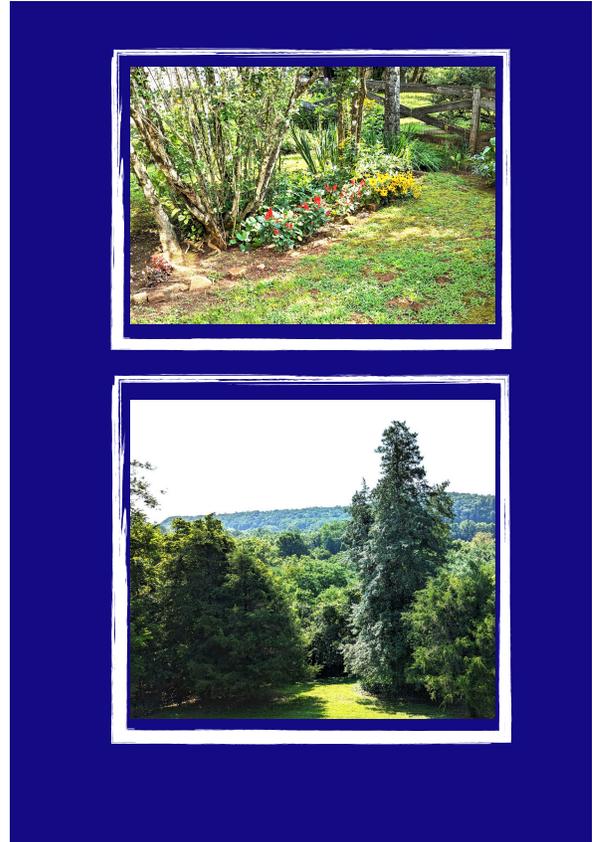
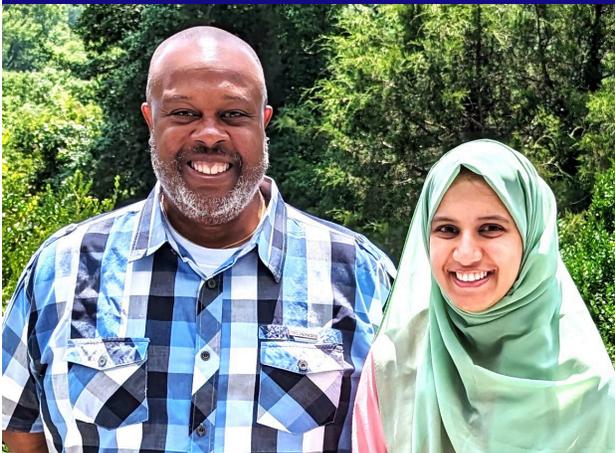
Check out my new website: eleminnopea.com

Carving Out Time to Create

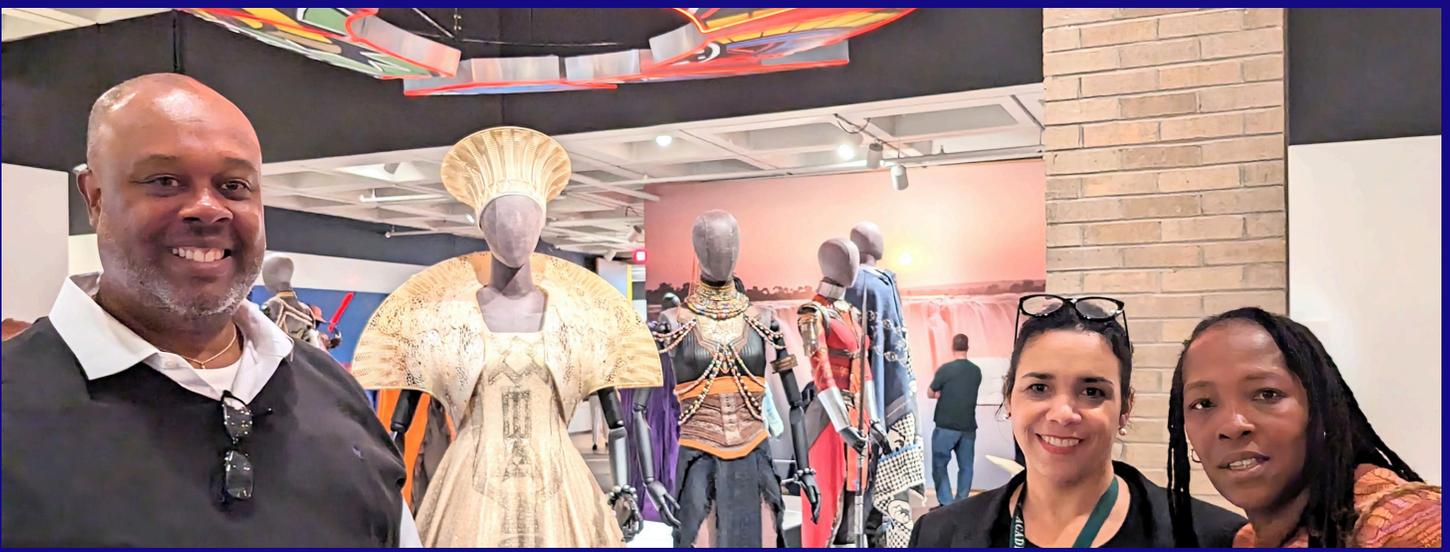


PORCHES WRITING RETREAT

This past summer, I was fortunate to spend six days in seclusion at Porches Writing Retreat, nestled on the James River in an historic Virginia farmhouse built in 1854. There I met several published writers who, for years, have come to Porches to make progress on their books. There also were writers, like Fizza (below, from UVA) and me, who went there for inspiration and for a new setting to create. Trudy Hale (above) and her husband, Billy, now deceased, opened Porches nearly 20 years ago. When I stepped away from my favorite writing spot to take a break, Trudy was the perfect host and conversationalist. I plan to return to Porches again, soon.







With my colleagues, Dr. Cindy Moore and NC Central Hall of Fame basketball player, Zakia Vanhoose, at the North Carolina Museum of Art.



At Gizmo's in Durham with long-time friend, Jeff Heitzenrater.



With children's book author Darren Farrell.



Taking an after dinner selfie with Dr. Becky Spurlock, a former Sewanee colleague.



At the Dean Dome ready for tip-off with my cousin Stephanie Maxwell who was in town for UNC's Homecoming.



With colleagues at a conference in Las Vegas.



With friend Laura Fischler after attending the Broadway musical SIX at DPAC. We attended the Michael Jackson musical, as well.

FUN TIMES WITH FAMILY AND FRIENDS



The Tout a' Fait social club was established 45 years ago. Here we are at one of our annual gatherings. Though he wasn't a member, Mousey Liggett (rear left) joined our latest outing. We lost Mousey to death this year. We honor him for his friendship and we'll miss him. Rest in power, Mousey!

AN UNLIKELY MEETING



Having dinner with authors, turkey farmers, and educators

This past spring, I hosted a dinner party for my Vermont friend, Dr. Francois Clemmons. He is a celebrated author, singer, actor, and raconteur. He traveled to NC with his friends, Paul and Francis Stone, who own Stonewood Farm, the largest turkey farm in Vermont. Also, invited to the dinner party were award-winning children's book author and illustrator, Darren Farrell, and his wife, and my colleague, long-time educator, Caroline Farrell. We had a grand time feasting on my world-famous meat loaf, which has taken me years to perfect. What a delightful evening we had over food, drink, and great conversation.



WAKANDA FOREVER



This past spring my colleagues, Cindy and Zakia (pictured on the far right) and I took a few of Durham Academy's middle school students to the NC Museum of Art to see multi-Academy Award-winning costume designer Ruth Carter's Afrofuturism exhibit. We saw her costume creations from both Black Panther movies, Selma, and Do the Right Thing. It was a fantastic exhibit!



THE TARHEEL CORNER

