

# Caregiving:

## Sacrifices and Sharing

### From The African American Perspective

\*\*\*\*\*

Marva Shegog Keys

**DLite Press**

P.O. Box 1644

New York N.Y. 10150

<http://www.dlitepress.com>

The author does not guarantee and assumes no responsibility on the accuracy of any websites, links or other contacts contained in this book.

Caregiving: Sacrifices and Sharing

All rights reserved.

Copyright © 2011 by Marva S. Keys

DLite Press/ published by arrangement with the author

**PRINTING HISTORY**

DLite Press/ 2011

Cover design and digital illustration

By Marva Keys

All right reserved.

No part of this book may be used or reproduced by any means, graphic, electronic, or mechanical, including scanning, photocopying, recording, taping or

by any information storage retrieval system without the written permission of the publisher except in the case of brief quotations embodied in critical articles and reviews or as permitted under Section 107 or 108 of the 1976 United States Copyright Act. Please do not encourage piracy or plagiarism of copyrighted material in violation of the author's rights. Purchase only authorized editions. Requests to the Publisher for permission(s) should be addressed to: the Rights and Permissions Department.

**Library of Congress Cataloging-in- Publication Data:**

Keys, Marva S. Caregiving: Sacrifices and Sharing  
LCCN Txu 1-585-418  
Includes bibliographical references and index

eBook edition

\*\*\*\*\*

To my caregiver mother

And

To all the caregivers

\*\*\*\*\*

***Disclaimer/ Limit Liability***

The purpose of this book is to educate and its resources are not intended to be a substitute for professional advice or therapy. While all attempts have been made to verify information provided in this book, neither the author nor

publisher assumes any responsibility for errors, omissions or contrary interpretation of this book subject matter.

This book contents are solely the opinion of the author and should not be considered as a form of diagnosis/ direction and treatment or therapy of any kind: medical, spiritual, mental or other. If expert advice or counseling is needed, services of a competent professional should be sought. The author and the publisher assume no responsibility or liability and specifically disclaim any warranty, express or implied for any self-help or products or self-help or otherwise services mentioned, or techniques or practices described. The purchaser or reader of this book assumes responsibility for the use of this book and referral sites, and information. Neither this author nor this book Publisher assumes any responsibility or liability whatsoever on the behalf of any purchaser or reader of this book and materials.

\*\*\*\*\*

## ***CONTENTS***

[Acknowledgments](#)

[Introduction](#)

[About the author](#)

[How can I be a Good Caregiver?](#)  
[An African American Perspective](#)  
[Solutions](#)  
[Aging and Families](#)  
[My African American Genealogy](#)  
[Historical Caregiving—A Step Back in Time](#)  
[Big Business in Caregiving](#)  
[Something is Wrong](#)  
[Women’s Role in Caregiving](#)  
[Men’s Role in Caregiving](#)  
[Children’s Role in Caregiving](#)  
[Bibliography](#)

\*\*\*\*\*

## ***ACKNOWLEDGMENTS***

I would like to express my deep appreciation to a number of people who made this project possible.

Mildred Shegog, Thank you for being an exceptional, gifted and tireless mother and a role model for your family for almost a century. As the daughter of a plantation slave

from South Carolina, you have experienced living history in the transition from slavery to freedom. You are also a good storyteller.

Roderick Keys, Thank you for your awesome support! You propelled me to write this book because of “my wealth of knowledge and expertise in the field of caregiving as it relates to seniors and their families.”

Pamela Keys, Thank you for being my research assistant, proofreading, providing critical assessment and technical assistance, and most important—your ongoing support and encouragement.

Michael C. Keys, Thank you for your computer and management skills, for being project manager, and for being responsible for photographs and graphic design of this book.

Clifford Shegog, Thank you for your support and the sharing of knowledge of the publishing process.

Robert DiNapoli, Thank you for proofreading this book and your valuable input.

Phyllis Hill, editor, Thank you for your professional review of this book. I appreciate your recommendations, insightfulness, time, and compassion.

Tonya Lawrence, Thank you for typing and proofreading this book.

My Family, Thank you for our oral histories and retelling them as well as giving supporting documentations.

\*\*\*\*\*

## ***INTRODUCTION***

This book is an analysis of caregiving in my family. From slavery to an unorthodox escape to freedom to live in the current day, you will follow the history of several family members and explore the concept of caregiving as it applies to us. The history of this family was obtained from the oral history of family members and friends, obituaries of family members, collections of photographs, church records, legal documentation, and The Southern Illinois University “*A Pictorial History of The African American Community of Carbondale, Illinois: In Unity There Is Strength*” (Schiller, 1999).

You will soon meet some of the family members: Jane Singleton and George Sumner, Eddie, Mildred...but for now, let us leave the reader with a few thoughts on caregiving.

The caregiving dynamics that occur in families filters into our personal relationships, jobs, education system, and religious and political practices. It is interwoven into the fabric of our lives from generation to generation.

Caregiving is a profound issue confronting many segments of society: small towns, rural areas, urban cities, local, regional, national, and international governments, females and males, the young, teenagers, adults, the old, and the very old. A philosophical question for the citizens of society today: Could we exist, thrive, and survive without caregivers and caregiving?

I implore you, the reader, to reflect on and connect to your own families, neighbors, and your community at large. What is the fabric of a society without caregiving and caregivers?

\*\*\*\*\*

## ***ABOUT THE AUTHOR***

### ***MARVA S. KEYS, MSN, RN***

Marva Shegog Keys, author, is the mother of three grown children (Michael, Roderick, and Pamela). Mrs. Keys received her Bachelor of Science Degree in Nursing from Saint Louis University, St. Louis, Missouri and a Master of Science Degree in Nursing from the University of Missouri, Columbia, Missouri.

As a young graduate in nursing, I was professionally employed in a medical surgical unit at university and local hospitals, at the Public Health Department in Alexandria, Virginia, as an adjunct professor in Nursing at Broward County School of Nursing in Broward County, Florida, at the University of Wisconsin School of Nursing in Madison, Wisconsin, and at the Pace University School of Nursing in Bedford, New York. I was a nursing consultant at field Home-Holy Comforter, a long term care health facility in Cortlandt Manor, New York. I was responsible for staff wide

training and adherence to New York State Standards of Practices for Long Term Care.

My family has been uprooted more than once, most recently due to professional career journeys. The most recent time, the family moved from the Midwest to the East Coast of the United States of America. The Dean at the University of Wisconsin School of Nursing had offered a fully paid scholarship to complete my PhD in nursing, but the unthinkable occurred. I was involved in an almost fatal accident along with my six-year-old son and a five-week-old baby. Our recovery included multiple surgeries and excellent medical interventions over the next two years. The latest move came with unforeseen circumstances: relocation, part-time school, a family member diagnosed with Alzheimer's disease, and redirection.

As an entrepreneur, Mrs. Keys successfully founded and operated a not-for-profit (501C 3) Adult Day Center for frail and impaired seniors in northern Westchester County for 22 years. This senior center was a National Project Site for Social Adult Day Services and was sponsored by the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation. The board of directors had

ultimate role and responsibilities as governing bodies as well as fiscal oversight. Mrs. Keys was a liaison with Aging and Developmental Service Agencies and volunteers. She supervised consultants: an attorney, an accountant, a podiatrist, musicians, staff, and therapists. The seniors and their families' needs were expressed at presentations on Adult Day Services at conferences, at public hearings, to Westchester County Legislators, and to the Westchester County Development Community Block Grant Public Hearing.

The Westchester Coalition of Social Adult Day Services had a membership of eleven (11) Adult Day Centers in Westchester County that complied with NY State and Office of Aging Standard of Practice for Social Model Adult Day Programs. Mrs. Keys was an original co-founder with other colleagues. It is through this close interaction and love for seniors and their families that she shares her knowledge through *Caregiving: Sacrifices and Sharing*.

\*\*\*\*\*

**HOW CAN I BE A GOOD  
CAREGIVER?  
AN AFRICAN AMERICAN  
PERSPECTIVE**

What is Caregiving? The word caregiving depicts an image of personal involvement with another individual that is unable to care for himself or herself. The individual may be aged, ill or disabled. Frequently, the role of caregiver extends beyond the care receiver; often including older or younger family members of the care receiver: wives, husbands, lovers, siblings, grandchildren, uncles, aunts. It also may include friends, neighbors, and non-related individuals, such as paid home health aids, group home care workers or professionals.

The word sacrifice means surrender or giving something up for the sake of something else (Random House, 1996). There are three conditions for sacrifices to occur in caregiving: (1) Surrendering ourselves to the situation, (2) Identifying with the care receiver, (3) Denying self, including suffering for the sake of a loved one.

My focus is an analysis of caregiving in my family, which I suggest, relates to similar issues in many families. I have shared helpful information on caregiving in this book that you can apply to your own lives.

It is my intention to write a series of books on caregiving. I invite you to visit my website for more information and hyperlinks at [www.attitudeofcaring.com](http://www.attitudeofcaring.com)

## **STEWARD**

God has entrusted women around the world as the perpetuators of civilization through the birthing process, as “on-going” caregivers. Women are stewards. So, what is a steward? According to Random House Compact Unabridged Dictionary (Random House, 1996), a steward is “one who actively directs affairs: manager.” An example: “one appointed to supervise the provision and distribution of food and drink in an institution.” There is another definition of steward we would like to share with you: “the conducting, supervising, or managing of something; especially the careful and responsible management of something entrusted to one’s

care, that is your mother, father, grandparents, children, and others.” We are the stewards of our family and loved ones.

Women are the primary caregivers as well as men. They are stewards. They manage and supervise care to those entrusted to them. They perform many roles. They are unpaid, overstressed, unappreciated and yet they persevere in caregiving. In some societies, women have experienced tremendous challenges. They are poorly educated, they receive poor health care, and they perform hard labor in addition to birthing, rearing and sustaining children and families. They are oppressed and exploited by human predators. Yet under amazing conditions, women continue to provide caregiving to their children, parents, grandparents, and extended family members around the world. It is an attitude of caring that women possess; and they continue to exercise their rights as perpetuator and protector of civilization. Collectively speaking, caregiving is more than a job. It is our God given assignment, and requires love, obligations, supervision, management, problem-solving skills, conflict resolution, wisdom, patience, and definitely perseverance.

## **JOB DESCRIPTION**

The caregiver's job description is vast and exhaustive and many times mixed with joy, excitement, and achievements. There are many duties, obligations, deadlines, appointments, and interfamily discussions. Plans must be developed and implemented. Sometimes, the outcomes are as expected and at other times, everything is in disarray. There are many trials and tribulations; just when you think you are finished with a task, something happens and you must start all over again. This is an unpaid monetary position, but rewarding in many ways. There is laughter, joy, reflections and frustrations. Providing long-term caregiving can expose one to exhaustion, stress, and depression. These important words should ring in your ear and we suggest that you never forget them: respite (taking time for yourselves), adaptation, and flexibility. These will help you survive.

## **SHARING**

There is another caregiving phenomenon that we have observed among family members over many decades of

providing caregiving consultations, assessments, recommendations, and referrals. Some siblings or family members have expressed “feelings” that the other family members are not doing their “fair share” in caring for the family member with need (for example: mom or dad). These feelings best fit the category of selfishness, with some examples being: “they leave me with all the responsibilities; because they say they are too busy,” and “we’re too far away to help.” One sibling may promise to take mom or dad for the summer, but they want all the parent’s assets transferred to them. The outcome from the above type of situation is usually anger and hostility. Frequently, the current caregiver has been caring for the family member for a long time without a lot of sharing of caregiving.

Another real example related to me: A mom’s daughter who resided in Texas agreed to care for her mother over the summer. The daughter was in the workforce, employed Monday through Friday departing her home at 7:00 o’clock in the morning and returning at 7:00 o’clock in the evening. The mom had dementia, and needed close supervision. Instead,

she was left at home alone for 12 hours each day in a strange environment.

\*\*\*\*\*

## Caregiving 101 – You Need to Know

### What You Need to Do/Think About as a Caregiver:

- Preplan for modification of your plan if circumstances suddenly change.
- Take a deep breath.
- Implement new plans based upon preplanned strategies.
- Let's go there – What do you do if you don't feel other family members are carrying their weight?
- Communicate with the family members involved in a non-accusatory manner. Please keep this scripture in mind “a soft word(s) turneth away wrath”, (Proverbs 15:1)
- Find out what happened and ask, “What can we do as a team to resolve the issue(s)?”
- If you are assuming the role of primary caregiver, other family members may be hesitant to get involved directly.
- A lack of participation by family members may indicate disagreement with the care given. Solution: More communication regarding the issues and hopefully resolution(s) and equal sacrifice of responsibilities.
- **If you enjoyed this sample, continue reading. Buy Now at <http://www.dlitempress.com>**