

# LeMoyne-Owen COLLEGE

**LEADERSHIP. OPPORTUNITY. CHANGE.**

**July 2, 2018** – Dr. Annie Marie Garraway read the best-selling novel “Hidden Figures: The American Dream and the Untold Story of the Black Women Mathematicians Who Helped Win the Space Race” by Margot Lee Shetterly.

She saw the 2016 blockbuster movie “Hidden Figures” – starring Taraji P. Henson as Katherine G. Johnson, Octavia Spencer as Dorothy Vaughan and Janelle Monáe as Mary Jackson – based on the novel.

The movie and book inspired her to donate \$25,000 of her own money to create an endowed scholarship fund at LeMoyne-Owen College, named after the college math teacher who helped launch her toward a successful career as a mathematician.

The real-life Johnson, Vaughn and Jackson were among a group of African-American female mathematicians at NASA, who served as the brains behind the United States’ race to overtake Russia in the “Space Race.”

The women were known as “human computers,” and Johnson, Vaughn and Jackson swiftly rose through the ranks of NASA because of their math skills.

In a recent telephone interview from her home in Worthington, Ohio, just north of Columbus, Dr. Garraway, a graduate of Booker T. Washington High School, said the novel and movie made her think fondly about the her math instructor, Juanita Turner, during her freshman year at S. A.



Dr. Annie Marie Garraway

Owen Junior College in 1957-58 . Dr. Garraway’s father Levi Watkins Sr. was Owen’s first president. Owen merged with LeMoyne College in 1968.

**She said Mrs. Turner’s full-time job was teaching math at Manassas High School, but she also taught college algebra at Owen.**

**“She recognized I had a talent for math. She had me stay after class to do more math exercises. She did this even though she had spent a full work day at Manassas,” Dr. Garraway said.**

**Dr. Garraway moved away from Memphis after her freshman year at Owen and never saw Mrs. Turner, a LeMoyne College alumna, again.**

**“As a result of her working with me, I never had trouble with math,” she said.**

**Dr. Garraway transferred from Owen to Northwestern University in Evanston, Ill. She went on to earn a Ph.D. in mathematics and had a successful career at AT&T Bell Labs and Lucent Technologies.**

**In a letter to Brenda Gaines-Ollie, LeMoyne-Owen’s vice president for Institutional Advancement, Dr. Garraway said, “I wish to donate \$25,000 to create an endowed scholarship fund in Mrs. Turner’s memory, and also for the scholarship fund to be open to accepting contributions from others. And, I wish for the dispersements from the fund to benefit math majors at LeMoyne-Owen College.”**

**She said in the interview she hopes the money “encourages students to consider math” as a major and career.**

**“Seeing the movie and reading the book made me think that she (Mrs. Turner) saw hidden figures in me,” Dr. Garraway said.**

**She hopes the scholarship will bring out the hidden figures in LeMoyne-Owen students.**

**Mrs. Turner died on Dec. 3, 1980. She was 64. Her funeral noted that she attended Grant Elementary School, “where she was the youngest winner of the citywide spelling contest (for African-American students) in 1927.”**

**She received a master’s of science degree in mathematics from the University of Illinois at Urbana.**

**The program said that in “her later years” Mrs. Turner was “elevated to the position of Secondary Mathematics Instructional Consultant of the Southwest Area of Memphis City Schools.**

**She was an active member of St. John Baptist Church on Vance Avenue, serving on several church committees.**

**Mrs. Turner’s funeral program noted that “A teacher touches infinity; we never know where her influence stops.”**

**Jerome Wright**

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