

JOHNNIE L. & THELMA L. MOUNING

59 Totoket Road · North Branford, CT 06471-1030

December 15, 1994

Dear Family and Friends:

Johnnie and Thelma are blessed to be able to record the 25th edition of *The Mouning's Saga*. Last winter was a severe one for them here in New England, with lots of snow. They have been in New England, now for 35 years. It has been 15 years longer than they were in North Carolina. Johnnie and Thelma have learned to enjoy the snowy season and look forward to the spring. After the income tax deadline, comes Spring, time to prune the fruit trees, till and plant the vegetable garden, cultivate the flowers and clean the yard.

Their spring vacation began April 25 through May 8, 1994. They started on Cape Cod, at Falmouth MA., on a getaway that Jeff and Linda were nice enough to provide for them. They enjoyed the much needed rest for that long weekend. They continue to Boston where they went shopping, had lunch and unsuccessfully attempted to contact friends that were out to conferences. They returned home for a few days to complete some chores around the house.

On the road again, heading south to New Jersey, they visited Thelma's youngest sister Mr. & Mrs. Arthur Day and family. After spending Saturday night, they attended Sunday service, had dinner and continue south to Washington, D.C. There they visited Thelma's sister Catherine Langley and Johnnie's cousin Alice Louise Jones. While in Washington, they toured: The Smithsonian, National Geography, Arlington Cemetery, The Holocaust Memorial, Jefferson and Washington Monuments and many other historical sites. They must go back there someday to visit the White House and the Capital Building.

Johnnie and Thelma returned home in time for Mother's Day and celebrated

Thelma's mother, Mrs. Lenora Lofton's, 78th birthday. It was an enjoyable time to be together with family and friends for a happy occasion. Memorial Day brought The Mouning family and friends together at the grave site of Johnnie's father, Deacon John Lacy Mouning, who lived from November 22, 1913 through September 2, 1990. They held a memorial stone laying service in remembrance of a loving father, husband, friend of many, and a great soldier of the Lord. They pause to remember the passing of family and friends. Johnnie lost his brother-in-law, his sister Sarah's husband, Deacon Danney L. Gibbs, who lived from February 15, 1943 through January 5, 1994. Death is always a surprise.

News update, Son #1: Marvin is doing very well. He moved into a very lovely apartment in Spring Glen, on Whitney Avenue closer to his job. He takes great pride in his work, at Whitney Manor and enjoys being Chef Mouning. He has been very helpful to Johnnie around the house, digging up and replacing the rain gutter, dry well, a new mail box and painting. Marvin was a real blessing to Mom and Dad over the years.

Son #2 Gregory (Gregoire) the actor and computer person, enjoys his work as a User Specialist at Yale MIS Center. He interacts with customers helping them fix their computer problems both software and hardware. He keeps very busy with his acting Portraying "Driving Miss Daisy" Jack Arabas, a slave, and Frederick Douglas, a Statesman, in a one man show performed entitled "Two for Freedom". This piece speaks out against racial resentment and injustice that our country has experienced. He preformed at Johnnie and Thelma's church, during Black History month and takes it to many schools through out Connecticut and New York. Gregoire has a manager and booking agency that keeps him acting three to four times a week. Gregoire is working hard and making a contribution by addressing some of the moral, social and political problems that exist in society today.

Son #3: Jeffrey, Linda and Marcus are a blessing to have them live a mile up the road from Mom and Dad. Jeff often stops in on his way to and from work to keep in touch. Linda is enjoying her work at Yale and keeping their lovely home beautiful. Marcus is growing up so fast he had his 9th birthday on July 21. He comes by to help

Grandpa with some chores such as: collecting eggs, cleaning the garden, raking grass, leaves and bringing in fire wood for the winter. He does a very good job. Hockey is his favorite sport, he is on the ice at 5:00 A.M., and participates in many games across Connecticut and New Jersey. Marcus is in the fourth grade and remembered to invite Grandma and Grandpa to "Grandparent's Day" at school.

Son #4: Kenneth and Rose-Marie are having an exciting year, they are expecting they're first born before this year is out or early in 1995. They are enjoying their work, church, and new home in Bloomfield, Conn. Between their jobs and functions at the church, and KenRose Enterprises--they're desktop publishing and consulting business, they are very busy. Yet Ken attends school at night to earn his Master's degree. On June 25, 1994, Ken and Rose had their house warming party with about a hundred of their family and friends attending.

On July 21, 1994, Thelma bent over to put on her stockings and fractured her 9th rib. She was laid up a few days, but their upcoming vacation speeded up her healing, and four weeks later she was ready for South America. Johnnie was taking a crash course in Spanish by tape, in preparation for their up coming trip.

August 24, through Sept. 8, 1994, took Johnnie and Thelma to the continent of South America, where they celebrated their 37th Anniversary. They visited Brazil, Argentina, Chile and Peru. They arrived in Rio De Janeiro on the 25th at 10:45 A.M.. It was a wonderful flight, about 9:30 A.M. the steward sang Happy Anniversary to them and presented Thelma with a bouquet of roses. On the 26th, they spent their anniversary touring Rio, riding the exciting Cog railway up the mountain to see The Corcouado 90 foot statue of Christ. Then they took the cable car ride to Sugarloaf mountain Summit where they enjoyed a beautiful sunset, and an unusual starry night view of Rio. The evening was concluded with a fine dinner at Sheraton Rio Hotel Towers. At dinner the waitress sang Happy Anniversary in Spanish, and brought a cake to celebrate with them.

Johnnie and Thelma flew to Iguassa Falls, Brazil, the pilot took them over the

Falls and tipped the wing to give them an area view of the falls. They toured the magnificent horseshoe 2.5 miles of down pouring water into a 250 foot basin. The 2-mile hike down to the base of the falls and out was spectacular, observing different kinds of wild life. They spent the night of August 27, 1994, in the Cataratos Hotel overlooking Igrassa Falls. Dinner was an open buffet Spanish style, and served in a Hacienda with live Latin music by candlelight. Thelma commented to Johnnie, that this setting should be the celebration of their anniversary. The next day they flew back to Rio about two and a half hours from Iguassa Falls, and spent that Sunday evening 27th, at Sheraton Rio Hotel Towers.

The Viajes Ecuador Tour (VET) guide did an excellent job, transporting them to and from the airport, and arranging their day tours around the city and surrounding areas. Johnnie and Thelma felt safe in Rio De Janeiro although they were warned of crime in the city. They meet people that had been robbed.

On Monday, August 28, 1994 they arrived in Buenos Aires, Argentina, about three hours from Rio. They were met by their friends Dr. & Mrs. Jose and Raquel Delfino and children. How pleasant and refreshing it was to greet their English speaking friends; who transported them to a very nice apartment that had been especially prepared just for Johnnie and Thelma. The apartment was stocked with all the food and supplies they needed. Leaving their baggage at the apartment, Jose, Thelma and Johnnie took a bus downtown and started the sightseeing walking tour. They saw the President's Pink House, Metropolitan, Cathedral, San Martin's Mausoleum, The Widest street in the world, they walked across it and got stuck in the middle of traffic racing beside them. The street is named the 9th of July. They visited historic San Telmo and many beautiful old churches throughout the city. They walked from about 1:30 P.M. until 7:00 P.M., then concluded the evening by meeting Raquel and the children at a popular restaurant having a Latin American, Argentine, style barbecue. Leaving dinner by taxi to the apartment where Thelma and Johnnie had no trouble sleeping through the night.

Tuesday, August 30, 1994, Thelma and Johnnie had a leisure day shopping and

individual sightseeing and they took a bus tour of Buenos Aires. They saw Colon Opera House, Famous Cemetery, The Obelisk, Government building. They enjoyed dinner at Raquel's mother Mrs. Hebe Cora Pacheco de Perez's home. She and Raquel prepared a meal fit for a King. The atmosphere and warm hospitality were superb. Although Thelma and Johnnie did not speak much Spanish, they communicated very well. They walked back to the apartment and bedded down for the night.

On Wednesday, August 31, Jose, Raquel and the children took Johnnie and Thelma to meet his family in Mercedes, about 100 miles from Buenos Aires, Mr. & Mrs. Heribaldo & Zilda Delfino Jose's parents; Carlos Maria Delfino, his brother and Mr. & Mrs. Alberto & Maria Beatriz Bagnera, Jose's brother-in-law and his sister. Mr. Heribaldo prepared a delicious cuisine, Argentinean country style barbecue, folklore in the traditions of the Gaucho that lasted all day. Thelma and Johnnie were blessed much to be in the company of this great family. They returned to the apartment refreshed themselves and visited Jose's lab. The lab is very well out fitted with modern equipment, supplies and materials from the floor to the ceiling. Jose and his team work hard night and day in a nice facility collecting and analyzing data to be turned into paper that add their contribution to the Scientific Community. They went back to the apartment bedded down, about 3:30 A.M. The annual storm named St. Rosa came, it sounded like she was coming in with the tin roof. The hail, rain, lighten and thunder lasted about an hour. St. Rosa is like Old Faithful, in Yellowstone National Park, Wyoming, always on schedule August 30-31 every year. Buenos Aires is a very large active, expensive multicultural city. Thanks to Jose and his family for making it possible for Thelma and Johnnie to enjoy 4 days and three nights in this grand old City.

On Thursday, September 1, 1994, with regretful felling Johnnie and Thelma left Jose and Raquel at the airport. They flew over The Andes. It was a clear day and what a magnificent view from 35,000 feet altitude, snow peaked mountains, clear blue lakes into Santiago, Chile. They spent 4 days and 3 nights in the beautiful Tupohu Hotel. VET transported them and took them on a tour of the city. Santiago is the Latino Cultural Capital, which takes one back to the 16th century. It has lots of shopping stores with plenty of everything and anything that you wanted. Johnnie and Thelma

took night walks in the park. There they saw families walking in the park, holding hands, hugging and kissing, along with their children. It was nice to see families together. One person told them that he went to a restaurant and the restaurant would not serve him because he was alone, in other words they serve families only.

Their flight out of Santiago, Chile, was at 9:30 P.M. Sunday evening. They arrived in Lima, Peru at 11:59 P.M. Johnnie and Thelma's transportation by VET was always on time and very professional in transporting them around, and taken care of their baggage, checking their tickets, and paying their air taxes. They got to bed about 2:00 A.M., and were up at 4:30 A.M. to fly out at 6:10 A.M. to Cuzco, Peru. They arrived in Cuzco at 7:15 A.M. on Monday, September 5, 1994, transported to Royal Inka II Hotel, where they slept for 3 hours to give their bodies time to adjust to the high altitude, about 11,400 feet above sea level. Walking was slow until they equilibrated. That afternoon was spent touring Cuzco and the surrounding area.

On Tuesday, September 6, 1994, they left Cuzco early morning 6:00 A.M. on a bus and train ride down to Machu Picchu (The Lost City of the Incas). The train zigzagged its way up through the lush Urubamba Valley. Then the coach for the last ascent to the sacred refuge perched high above a steep valley coated in thick tropical jungle. They toured the ruins of Towers, Temple, a Mausoleum, a prison and ceremonial baths. After the sightseeing, a buffet lunch was prepared at the Machu Picchu Inn, before returning to Cuzco, for a good night rest.

Wednesday, September 7, 1994, arrived back in Lima, Peru, at 11:40 A.M., flight to Jose Antonio Hotel. They rested a couple of hours and VET gave them a tour of the city. They visited the 11th Century San Francisco Monastery with its unique Cloisters, the Government Palace and the Cathedral, in the Plaza de Aromas. Later Johnnie and Thelma took an individual tour and shopped in the Floral area then back to the hotel to rest before the flight back home. Wednesday, September 7, 1994, 11:00 P.M., boarded a flight bound for Miami, FL; arrived in Miami at 5:45 A.M. daylight savings time. Thursday, September 8, 1994, 7:30 A.M. boarded another flight bound for JFK; arrived at 10:20 A.M., and boarded Conn. Limousine at 11:00 and arrived in New Haven about

1:30 P.M. Gregory, their son, was waiting to greet and take them home. Johnnie and Thelma send great appreciation and accommodation to all of their friends and acquaintances that they met on this trip of a life time.

They had a few days of rest and soon returned to their schedule at Yale, where they work. Lots of exciting things are happening and they are enjoying the new Bass Building. New faculty members, new students; and what a joy to have The Chief (FMR) active and as sharp as ever in the lab at the work bench. With the Chief retiring from teaching a couple of years ago, Johnnie now holds the dubious distinguished position of being the longest employee in the department, although he is not the oldest. They hosted an oyster picnic, from The Richards' farm, which ended up as a washing, shucking, cooking and eating feast.

Johnnie and Thelma worked with the JCC Conference which was as rewarding as usual, being held every October when the foliage is so beautiful. This year marked the 18th year that the Mouning's and Johnson's have been actively involved with JCC. They hosted many other functions this year such as; The Church Diaconate Board, The Abundant Life Group that celebrated their Christmas party and the Pastor's Birthday and Anniversary. They, along with a choir and team from Christ Chapel, visited Johnnie's brother Dr. John W. Mouning church's to celebrate the Assistant Pastor's 12th Anniversary. Many of the team still remember the occasion. They accepted the opportunity to share in Thelma's High School Alumni Fund Raising. It is always a delight to be a part of a positive influence in our community.

This year has been full of activities for the Mouning's, but they enjoy sharing and caring. May this edition of The Mouning Saga, inspire and encourage you to share your gifts and talents with others that do not have. We pray you will have a blessed, safe and healthy Holiday and all year long.

Merry Christmas
Love,
The Mouning's