

*My African American Roots, My American Dreams*  
*By D. Johnson, 2015*

In my family, there is only a small amount of history of which I am aware, but this history--as little as it may be--is very influential to my life.

My grandmother has been alive for a good 70+ years now, and her life as an entrepreneur is very inspiring. She opened up her restaurant, the Orange Mound Grill, in Orange Mound. For years people have been eating her delicious soul food, and as time moves on her legacy with the business will live in her children, her grandchildren, and her great-grandchildren.

What does this have to do with my dreams? My grandmother's entrepreneurship has inspired me to push for my dreams to be an artist. Currently, my major at Tennessee State University is commercial music technology, and I get better and better every day with my craft as I maneuver through the learning curves that this institute has built over the years. My plan is to create my "own" music label and bring aspiring young and gifted artist from Memphis who have a totally different sound from what Memphis usually has to offer. Artists of the caliber that I envision tend to make more meaningful music, rather than yelling derogatory terms and using profane language profusely.

As I push day by day for my American Dream to become a reality, I think about how hard my grandmother worked to become the amazing chef she is today, and also how hard she worked to keep her business running for more than 50 years. Her drive and determination push me to work hard for my dreams to become a reality. I believe that in time if I continue to work hard and persevere like she has, I will reach my goal, and live my "own" American Dream.