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## Spotlight on Que: Brother Orrin Lewis Ellis

By Jeffrey T. Smith

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Brother Orrin Lewis Ellis aka 'O' or '2Q' is a man of God who values family and friends. Brother Ellis is smart, suave, steadfast, supportive, and sincere. He readily accepts others in a non-judgmental manner and his actions are congruent with his speech. Brother Ellis lives the four cardinal principles of Manhood, Scholarship, Perseverance and Uplift and the values will be used as an outline to share a segment of his journey.

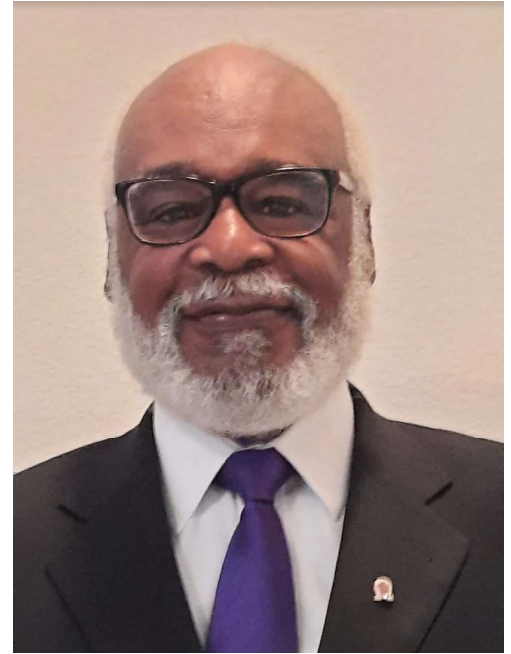
**Manhood:** Brother Ellis was born and raised on the 'South Side' of Chicago, IL. He has one brother, Lieutenant Colonel Retired Chaplain John W. Ellis, III. Brother Ellis remembers the riots of 1968 when Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. was killed and the city was on locked down by the Illinois National Guard with bayonets and tanks. Brother Ellis was 12 and terrified. He also recalls the rise of the Disciples and Blackstone Rangers gangs as a child and how cautious the kids had to be when walking to school or playing outside.

Brother Ellis is married to the lovely Heidi Casteel. There are five children in the family (Dr. Shimika Ellis, Siani Ellis, Omari Ellis, Devon Casteel, and Christopher Casteel) and six grandchildren (Miles Tatum, Mason Tatum, Royce James Casteel, Gavin Casteel, Thaddeus Lewis, and Joseph Walton).

**Scholarship:** Brother Ellis graduated with a Bachelor of Arts degree in Finance and Insurance from Northwest Missouri State University, Maryville, MO, August 1972. He received a scholarship in 1970 from the Alpha Phi Omega Service Fraternity. Ellis was a Resident Assistant at a dorm facility which housed only Omega Lampados.

**Perseverance:** Brother Ellis retired from federal service after 35 years. He served in the Department of Labor, receiving awards for 20, 30 and 35 years. A summary of his professional endeavors, entrepreneurial pursuits, and accomplishments are listed:

- **Claims Adjuster**, Liberty Mutual Insurance Company (1972-1976)
- **Senior Claims Adjuster**, Liberty Mutual Insurance Company (1976-1978)
- **Owner**, AM-Ell Amway Franchise (1976-1980)
- **Claims Supervisor**, Liberty Mutual Insurance Company (1978-1981)
- **Tax Examiner**, Internal Revenue Service (1981-1983)
- **Payroll Clerk**, General Services Administration (1983-1985)
- **Owner**, Ellis Associates, Primerica Franchise (1983-1990)
- **Accounting Technician**, Federal Aviation Administration (1985-1993)
- **Fiscal Officer**, U.S. Department of Labor (DOL) (1993-2014)
- **Appointed Union Steward**, NCFLL Local 1748, Department of Labor (1998-2010)
- **Recipient**, Special Achievement Employee Service Award, Department of Labor (2008)
- **Recipient**, Special Achievement Employee Service Award, Department of Labor (2011)
- **Appointed Union Chief Steward**, NCFLL Local 1748, Department of Labor (2011-2014)
- **Co-Owner**, Ennovative Services, ACN Franchise (2018-present)



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Uplift: Brother Ellis is a member of Cure D'Arms Catholic Church in Denver and he has served as Saturday Services Scripture Lector since 2014. Ellis was previously a member of the St. Louis Catholic Church, Kansas City, MO; he was appointed as the Eucharistic Minister and Services Lector (1991-2004), Pastoral Council (1998-2004), and Finance Council (2006-2013). Ellis was elected as Vice Chairman of the Finance Council (2010-2013). Brother Ellis was an active member with the Knights of Peter Claver for 21 years. He has held several local and regional leadership positions in the organization. Ellis was a member of Kansas City, MO Council #265 (1991-2012) and held the role of Treasurer, Council #265 (1998-2006). He was elected as the Grand Knight of Council #265 (2008-2010) and the Treasurer, Central States District (2010-2014). Brother Ellis is a thespian and he has acted in a few church productions, such as, the lead role of Troy Maxson in the play "Fences" by August Wilson (St. Louis Catholic Church, 2008), the lead role of Joseph in the Christmas Pageant (Cure D'Arms Catholic Church, 2016), and the lead role of Pontius Pilate in the Easter Play Pageant (Cure D'Arms Catholic Church, 2017).

Brother Ellis has served in the community as a member of the Board of Directors, Turner House Community Center, Kansas City, KS (1975-1981), member of Board of Directors, Stratford Homes Homeowners Association (HOA), Kansas City, MO (2006-2014), and elected South East Kansas City Region Representative of Kansas City HOA Neighborhood Advisory Council, Kansas City, MO (2010 & 2012).

In Omega, Brother Ellis is a recipient of the 50 Year Service Award which was given in July 2020 at the 82nd Grand Conclave (Virtual). He was initiated into Omega Psi Phi on December 5, 1970 through the Iota Sigma Chapter, Northeast Missouri State University at Kirksville, MO; he was the 'Deuce' on a line of four and his line name was 'Duck' on the 'Ujama' or 'The Family' line. Brother Ellis' line introduced and influenced Black Greek life and culture on the campus at NW Missouri State. He grew up personally knowing the 29th Grand Basileus Judge Marion Garnett; Ellis' mother worked for Judge Garnett as his Chicago office staff supervisor. Brother Ellis would frequently go to the office and interact with Brother Garnett after school and weekends. In addition, Ellis grew up personally knowing the 2nd Vice Grand Basileus Thomas A. Lassiter. Brother Ellis lived next door in Kansas City to Brother Lassiter growing up and developed a 60 year 'father-son & relationship having dated his oldest daughter and taking her to his Senior Prom. Brother Lassiter was also Ellis' little league baseball coach and became Godfather to his son until Brother Lassiter's passing into Omega Chapter. Brother Ellis' has a record of working earnestly in the fraternity which demonstrates his commitment and comradeship. Here is a synopsis of Brother Ellis' leadership and service:

- Nominated as a Candidate for the office of Eighth District 2nd Vice District Representative (1971)
- **Vice-Basileus**, Beta Upsilon Chapter, Kansas City, MO (1973 & 1974)
- **Chairman**, Social Action Committee, Beta Omega Chapter (1975-1977)
- **Met Founder Brother Edgar A. Love at the 57th Grand Conclave in Atlanta, GA (1976)**
- **Charter Member**, Omicron Xi Chapter, Kansas City, KS (1977)
- **Founding Committee Member** of the Kansas City Metro Omega New Year's Eve Scholarship Ball (2001)
- **Vice Basileus**, Beta Omega Chapter (2004 & 2005)
- **Basileus**, Beta Omega Chapter (2006 & 2008)
- Beta Omega Chapter Delegate, 55 th , 58 th , & 60th Eighth District Meetings
- Beta Omega Chapter Delegate, 74th Grand Conclave, Little Rock, AR (2006)
- **Omega Man of the Year Award**, Beta Omega Chapter (2006)
- **Achievement Week Banquet Host** to the Grand KRS, Charles Bruce and 29th 8th District Representative, Jeffrey T. Smith (2007)
- Recipient, Achievement Week Service Award, Beta Omega Chapter (2011)
- Member, Chi Phi Chapter Audit Committee (2014 & 2016)
- **Chi Phi Chapter Representative** to the Metro Denver PanHellenic Council (2015 & 2016)
- **Chairman**, Publicity & Media Relations, Chi Phi Chapter 90th Anniversary Committee (2017)

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Brother Ellis' aspirations and hopes for Omega Psi Phi and Chi Phi Chapter are for the Brothers to fulfill the precepts and wishes of the Founders; to be in service, to Love mankind and to be a 'Friend' to one another. Ellis continued by stating Brothers should honor the past and build future activities using Manhood, Scholarship, Perseverance and Uplift as a framework.

In closing, Brother Ellis has a passion for music (Jazz, R&B), dancing (Kansas City two-stepping), sports (watching college football and basketball), church activities, fraternity projects, and acting in plays. He espouses the fraternity's motto of 'Friendship is essential to the soul,' greeting strangers along the path of life. May God continue to bless and keep Brother Ellis and his family always.