The Howard's have the distinction of sharing their pastoral anniversary and wedding anniversary in the same year. Reverend Howard celebrated his 40th Pastoral Anniversary in May.

By JAMES W. WADE III
Staff Reporter

The members of the Historic Greater Friendship Baptist Church took time to honor their pastor Rev. Dr. Larry Howard and his first lady Gwendolyn Howard during a 40 year anniversary celebration with a formal reception at the church.

The reception was the brain child of Valerie Benson and had an array of great memories of the 40 years. Music was provided by one of the nation's best violinist Obie Shelton and songs by Benita Ewing included a great rendition of "At Last" one of Mrs. Howard's favorite songs. It was great to have Ewing assisted by the one and only Earl McElrath on the keys, old school at its best.

“The Howards have been a great blessing to me. No matter the ups and downs, I needed the guidance from them,” said McElrath.

While dining, everyone was treated to a fantastic slide of pictures showing a small portion of the Howard’s life through the 40 years presented by long time member Emily Lightly.

On August 26, 1972, Pastor Larry W. Howard and Gwendolyn A. Ezekiel exchanged wedding vows at theBurnetteBaptistChurchinDetroit,Michiganwhere they were active members. It was a wonderful time of celebration. Members of Greater Friendship Baptist Church chartered two busses and carpooled to share in this special event.

The couple recalls the excitement of becoming newlyweds just three months after Reverend Howard became the pastor of Greater Friendship. God was adding new chapters to their lives, but some things remain the same.

The day after a wonderful wedding and formal reception, they found themselves in morning worship at their beloved Burnette Baptist Church. They remember the applause and shouts of cheer when they were introduced to the congregation by their pastor, the late Reverend James A. Caldwell.

The following week, the Howard’s packed their meager belongings and moved to Cleveland to establish their new home. They were met by a welcoming committee who hosted another reception exclusively for the members of Greater Friendship.

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The Howard’s advice to newlyweds is to “Make Christ the center of your marriages and your union will always be blessed.”