



# People & Places

## Sims family honors daughter's legacy with talent showcase

BY CAITLIN BOLAND  
ccarpenter@mcduffieprogress.com

The Sims family, formerly of Thomson, is planning to hold the first annual ORIONa Talent Showcase on March 11.

The showcase will benefit the Orion Sims Fine Arts Memorial Fund, established in 2016. The fund is a tribute to the memory of Orion "Ori" Jada Sims.

The showcase will be open to all ages, and it will take place at 304 Greenway Street in Thomson. Tickets are \$10, and the price includes admission, entry into raffles and a \$5 donation to the fine arts scholarship fund. The doors will open at 5:30 p.m.

Oriona Sims' mother, Dr. Latisha Sims, said Orion was a selfless, artistic young lady who knew how to find the beauty in everything. Ori Sims passed unexpectedly at the age of 15 on July 25, 2014.

"Ori was an ideal student with many innate artistic abilities," Sims said. "She was an upcoming sophomore in high school whose passion for music led to participation in the school choir and concert band. Ori learned to play various musical instruments: viola, trumpet, euphonium and piano (self-taught)."

Sims add that her daughter's fondness for performing arts was demonstrated in show stopping performances where she acted, sang, danced and completed gymnastics routines. Orion Sims was a mem-

ber of the winter guard at her high school, twirling flags and rifles to choreographed routines. Oriona Sims also sewed, painted, took digital photos and studied videography.

"Besides being imaginatively talented, Ori's smile, jokes and noble character confirmed her heart of gold," Sims said. "Her peaceful spirit spoke volumes to everyone who knew her. Ori's 15 years on earth were spent being an angel to her family. She was her ma's right-hand-woman, she was truly daddy's little girl, her sister's confidant and her brother's keeper. Ori had a knack for making everyone feel special and loved."

Sims said keeping her daughter's legacy alive was a main driver for establishing the memorial fund.

"Our daughter's unique mind and sincere passion for the arts led us in the direction of celebrating talent," Sims said. "Supplementary, as an educator, I am cognizant the arts are often first to be cut when it comes to district budgets. My husband and I believe the arts offer an exclusive experience of the creative mind; therefore, we wanted to provide an avenue for individuals to express their gifts. We celebrate Ori's life by remembering how she touched our lives. Through this memorial fund, we honor Ori's character and fervent pursuits in fine arts."

The scholarship offers a one-time award to a graduating high school senior who intends on pursuing a fine arts degree, includ-

*"Continuing Ori's legacy means we are honoring her life...her creativity, her ambitions, her character. By showcasing talents, Ori's beacon of light shines forever,"*

*Dr. Latisha Sims, Orion's mother*

ing visual arts, performing arts, music or design.

"The award is given with hope to fuel passions for fine arts to aid in further development of creative and artistic expression," Sims said.

The scholarship, worth \$500, will be given to students who are enrolled as full-time students for the current academic year. Requirements to apply are:

- Applicant must be a high school senior who attends a public high school.
- Applicant must be a U.S. citizen.
- Applicant must have a cumulative GPA of at least a 3.0 on a 4.0 scale through the last semester of their high school senior year.
- Applicant must attend an accredited four-year college or university as a full-time student for the upcoming Fall Semester.

A selection committee will choose recipients based on academic history, educational goals and career ambitions. Applications can be submitted after the completion of the applicant's senior year of high school, but they must be postmarked by March 12 of the applicant's gradua-

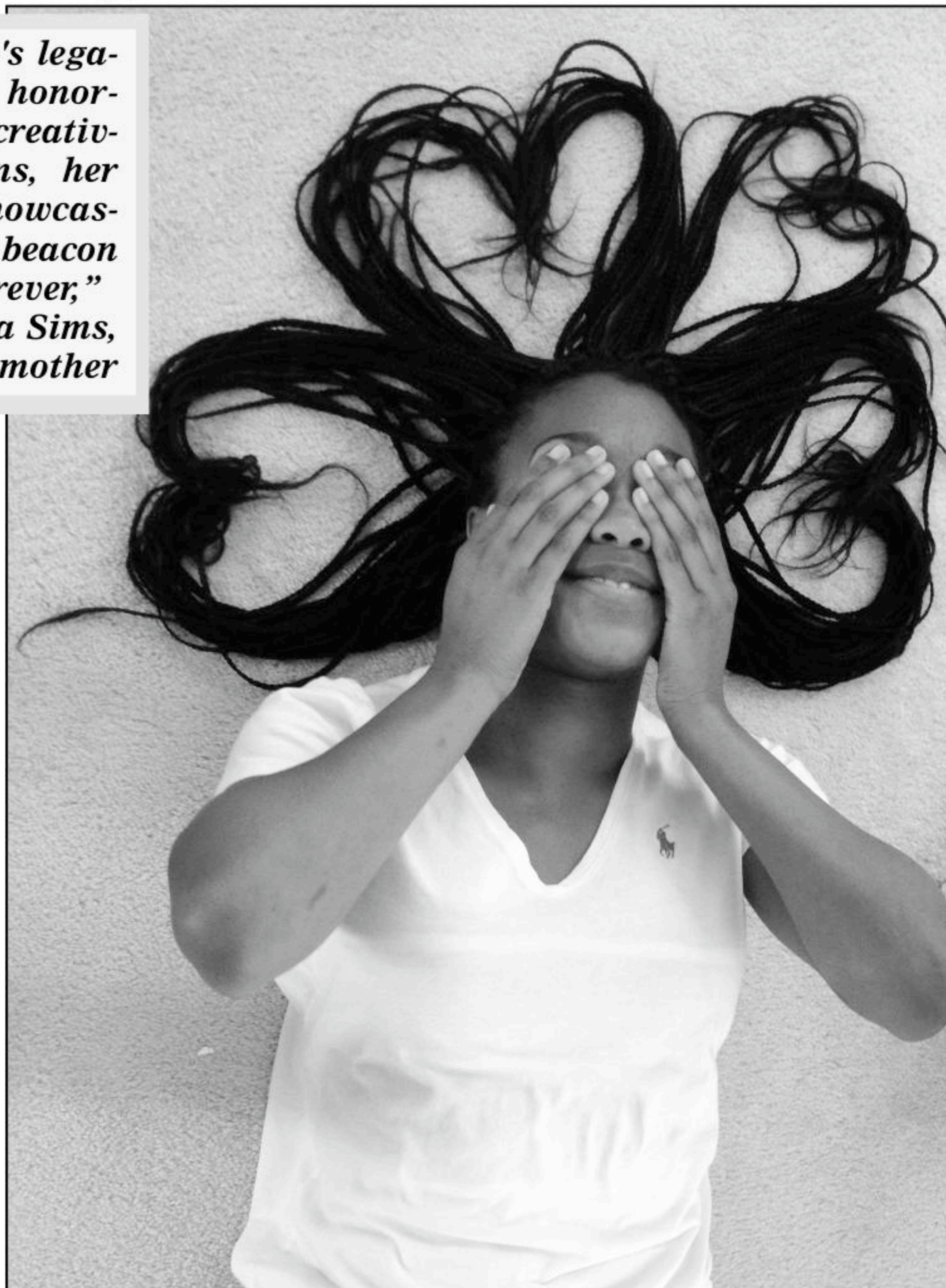


Photo courtesy of Latisha Sims

The late Oriona Sims is shown showcasing the creative side of her personality.

tion year. All completed applicants will be notified via email of committee decisions.

For more information contact Latisha Sims, oriona.fund@gmail.com.

Donations can be made by mail to the memorial fund through Charity

Smith. The address is: Orion Sims Fine Arts Memorial Fund, CharitySmith Nonprofit Foundation, 13100 Filly Lane Truckee, CA 96161

Donations can also be made online at [http://charitysmith.org/memorial-funds/oriona-](http://charitysmith.org/memorial-funds/oriona-sims/)

sims/. All donations are tax deductible.

"Continuing Ori's legacy means we are honoring her life...her creativity, her ambitions, her character," Sims said. "By showcasing talents, Ori's beacon of light shines forever."



Photo courtesy of Latisha Sims

Sims is shown at a monument in Washington, D.C.



Photo courtesy of Latisha Sims

Oriona Sims is shown with her father, mother, little brother and older sister.