

KICKIN' IT

Gerald Levert's memory is kept alive by his dad, Eddie Levert, Sr., via book and CD

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Although it was a somber gathering for record business eagles, it was but another day in the life of **Eddie Levert, Sr.** and a look at how he's coping with the untimely death of his son, **Gerald Levert**, in November 2006, at the unthinkable age of 40.

How does a father deal with a son leaving him behind? When you look at your children you always assume that you will pre-decease them and when fate turns the table around, there's no explanation – you just put it in God's hands.

Time might heal wounds but memories linger on and Eddie, who's a founding member and one-third of the still grooving and highly successful trio **The O'Jays**, has lots of cherished memories of his son whose powerful and soulful voice was considered by many to be a carbon copy of his father's voice as can be heard *In My Songs*, his last recorded studio album prior to his death.

To keep his son's memory alive, Atlantic Records released a soul-stirring collection of songs by the remarkable father-son duo titled *Something to Talk About* simultaneously with the release of a book they penned together with **Lyah Leflore** aptly titled "I Got Your Back: Father and Son Keep it Real About Love, Fatherhood and Friendship." Ironically, both releases took place on Father's Day.

Hosted by **Sylvia Rhone**, **Andre Harrell**, **Vaughn Harper**, **Lenny Greene** and **Marie Brown**, the cocktail reception honoring the legendary father and son duo's book and CD was held on Monday, June 4 at The River Room, Riverbank State Park in Harlem and attended by the who's who of the radio, record and publishing industry with a couple of society types thrown in for good measure.

Guests shared with each other their best Eddie and Gerald moments and read aloud some of the revelations in the book which show the intimate relationship the father and son shared including a reality glimpse into their lives, passion and their musical legacy. "I Got Your Back" Father and Son Keep it Real About Love, Fatherhood and Friendship" published by Harlem Moon, June 2007, \$18.95, gets inside the special and rare father-son bond that these two R&B legends shared.

In this up close and personal look into their lives, Eddie and Gerald put their hearts and souls on the line and talk about their failures, concerns, fears, and triumphs as father and son. With a powerful message of reconciliation for broken families, Eddie and Gerald explore the themes of father-



Gerald Levert's son Lemicah Levert, Eddie Levert, Steve Harvey, Lyah Beth Leflore, Marie Brown, Jeff Burns



Kevin Liles, Eddie Levert



Sylvia Rhone, Tom Hoover



Eddie Levert, Hal & Debi Jackson



Sandy Hoover



Dedra Tate, Sylvia Rhone, Jeannine Tate



Charles Warfield, Steve Harvey



John Brown, Sylvia Rhone



Vaughn Harper



Bo Legged Lou, Eddie Levert, Paul Anthony



Lemicah Levert, Eddie Levert, Vinny Brown

hood, male bonding and male-female relationships. The book includes moving tributes from Eddie, **Patti LaBelle**, **Steve**

Harvey and others, as well as treasured family photographs. Guests left the party feeling a lot better than they did upon ar-

rival after Eddie, who's celebrating over forty years as a major staple in soul music, assured them that he and his family were

doing well as he autographed books and album covers for the multitude of invited guests all the while flashing his signature hearty smile.

(Photos: Kenthephotographer/Ronnie Wright)