

## Brief Description of Lecture

# The Ditchdigger's Daughter: “The Power of a Dream”

From the tenements of East Harlem to the footlights of the Apollo Theatre to the halls of an Ivy League medical school, Dr. Thornton's family story is that of a modern Horatio Alger saga. Dr. Thornton is the author of *“The Ditchdigger's Daughters”*, a national bestseller, which has never been out of print since it was first published in 1995, made into an award-winning movie, condensed in The Readers Digest and featured on “The Oprah Winfrey Show”.

Dr. Thornton will deliver a motivational lecture of how, her father, Donald Thornton, a poor and uneducated black laborer, a child of the Great Depression, overcame incredible obstacles to give his daughters a better life. By age twenty-seven he had five children to raise—all girls, and no boys. He dug ditches for a living while his wife, Itasker, cleaned houses. Together, they formulated a dream: that all their daughters would be doctors. Fortuitously, his daughters formed a traveling band, *“The Thornton Sisters”*, which achieved not only musical success on the “college circuit” from 1963 to 1976, but earned them college tuition money as well. Dr. Thornton tells the true story about a black family of all girls that transcends race, color and gender to rekindle our belief in the American spirit and the human will to succeed despite adversity.