

**Stuck for a baby name?**  
*Selecting the baby's name can be steeped in tradition or based on a fad. The decision can honor a loved one or create a new path.*

**What are the trends?**  
The Social Security Administration tracks baby names. When you go to <http://www.ssa.gov/OACT/babynames/> you'll discover the most popular names in America by state, by year, and over time.

**Share your favorite tip or MAHALI<sup>TM</sup> story**  
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## WHAT'S IN A NAME?

Liimu McGill

Baby naming is a ritual that all new parents experience with excitement and trepidation. The author shares how she got *her* name.



I was born in 1970, during the height of the hippie era. Perhaps that partially explains why my father had already given himself an African name (Macharia, which means “eternal friend”) and my mother an African name (Ayisha, which means “life”). With a new baby on the way, it’s no wonder he wanted to give that last-born child an African name, as well. At that time, there were no books of African baby names sold in the local bookstore, no Internet on which to search.

However, we are an enterprising family and not ones to be thwarted in our efforts. My sister, Gabrielle, then ten years old, took it upon herself to write “Action Line,” a recurring section of our local newspaper that would find answers to any questions raised by readers. She wrote a letter inquiring whether anyone had put together such a list. Someone had and from it, my parents selected my first name, Liimu, which means “tenderly beloved” (which I am) and my middle name, Afua, which means “born on Friday” (which I was).

Thirty-five years later, my father has long since passed on and my mother once more goes by her given name of Patricia Ann. In me, however, the heart of the hippie era and the soul of my parents live on, as anyone knows who knows the story of my name.