



Bertha Lee Oliver

February 22, 1925 - April 12, 2020

Bertha Lee Oliver was born February 22, 1925. She was one of 14 children born to the union of Fayette and Mary Mason. It was a time period known as the Roaring Twenties in our country. This period was also known as The Jazz Age, a time when, for some there was a prosperous economy and the 19th Amendment was passed granting women a legal right to vote. However, Black people endured struggles during this time as it was also known as The Segregation Era. Few Southern Blacks were registered to vote as a result of intimidation, violence and discrimination.

During these struggles and obstacles, Bertha's father, Fayette Mason from Lexington, Mississippi found solace in God. As a minister in the Church of God in Christ (C.O.G.I.C) and a prosperous farmer, he and his wife Mary Mason raised Bertha and her 13 siblings, all of which preceded her in death, to be hardworking and God-fearing. She remembers her mother as a devout prayer warrior who called upon the Lord while walking through the house on a regular basis. As a child, Bertha attended Saints Industrial Literary School, a private school founded by the Church of God in Christ.

Bertha socialized with her many siblings and friends from school. She was known as a hard worker who helped her parents take care of the many responsibilities that came with living on a farm, which included cooking, cleaning and outdoor work. Bertha's friendly, yet plain spoken demeanor drew many to her. She made friends easily and thrived in social settings.

As a teenager Bertha met Colby Oliver, Sr., the love of her life, at a church service. A few years later, Colby completed trade school but was drafted to the army shortly after graduating. After completing high school, Bertha traveled to Chicago and found employment at R.R. Donnelly with her sister, Mattie. After serving in World War II, Colby found employment at Wolverine Packing Company in Detroit, Michigan.

Bertha & Colby were married in Chicago, Illinois on April 24, 1948. After marriage, Colby and Bertha relocated to Detroit. A year after they were married, she gave birth to their first child, Carthel and the following year she had a daughter, Veronica. Several years later she had her youngest child, Colby Jr. As Bertha settled into family life in Detroit, she decided to raise her children with a strong Christian foundation emphasizing prayer and a commitment to church attendance, especially Sunday School. She also made sure that all

her children were involved in extra-curricular activities including music lessons, Boy Scouts, Girl Scouts and various sports. Her children described her as a firm disciplinarian and she also emphasized academic excellence in her home. All three of her children excelled academically and became successful adults.

Bertha's spirit of generosity often extended beyond her own home as she invited her grandchildren, nieces, and nephews for extended visits. During their formative years, Bertha's children remember the aroma of delicious soul food that permeated their home as she took delight in making Sunday dinners for her family and close friends. In her spare time, she found joy in shopping at Eastern Market for vegetables, which she saved for the winter months. Her family also enjoyed driving to Chicago to visit relatives on a regular basis in the summer months.

After her children grew up, Bertha found joy in working as a cook for The University of Detroit. She enjoyed serving the students and shared her love for the culinary arts with them. She also found more time to get involved in her church, Second Grace United Methodist Church. She served in groups such as the Methodist Youth Fellowship, as well as the United Methodist Women.

In her later years, Bertha retired and opened her home to her grandchildren, the next generation of her family. She had a special and unique bond with each of her grandchildren. They remember her sound wisdom, baked cakes, pies and homemade rolls, as well as fun-filled summer road trips. Her family served as a source of support for her when Colby, Sr., her husband of 47 years, became ill and passed away in 1995. However, Bertha continued to be a source of support for her grandchildren even after they grew up and started families of their own.

Bertha's legacy will forever be her focus on God and family, and this can be exemplified in the "Sunday dinner" tradition that she and Colby Sr. started. She extended her love for cooking beyond her immediate family as she embraced the families of her in-laws and most of them lovingly referred to her as Mama or Grandma. She is known for always saying, "Family is everything." Her love for family and God was a reflection of how she treated all who encountered her.

She was blessed to have several caregivers who assisted her in her final years. Their dedication and faithfulness were truly a blessing. Some of these devoted caregivers include Lisa Moore, Seleana Boyd, Sandra Washington, Trina Thornton, Vivian Bryant, Linda Fiaona Quaicoe and Janet Ambonsah.

Bertha is survived by her three children, Carthel (Patricia) Oliver, Veronica (Kenneth Sr.) Powers, and Colby Jr. (Pamela) Oliver. James Mason, nephew raised as a brother with her siblings; Her eight grandchildren, Kenneth Jr. (Lesley), Verneece (Nana Kwame), Keith & Tiffany; Kevin (Pandarinath), Corey (Marci), Craig (Nikoe Danyal), Chalana & Mike; and Colvin & Ebony. Her eleven great grandchildren include Colby John, Corey Matthew, Kisea, Nana Kwame, Jr., Daniel, Nyja, Kevin Jr., Gabrielle, Bryce and Braiden

(twins), Keith David; and a host of children, who affectionately referred to her as "Grandma" or "Great Grandma"; and many nieces, nephews and other relatives and close friends.

Cemetery

Woodlawn Cemetery

19975 Woodward Avenue
Detroit, MI, 48203

Events

APR **Visitation** 02:00PM - 04:00PM

26

Kemp Funeral Home & Cremation Services
24585 Evergreen Road, Southfield, MI, US, 48075

APR **Funeral Service**

27

Private Service
MI, US

Comments



“ A webcast video has been added.



Kemp Funeral Home & Cremation Services - April 27, 2020 at 09:35 AM



“ My condolences to the Oliver family. My prayers are with you!

Alisha Martin - April 27, 2020 at 09:58 AM



“ Sorry for your loss.

Curtis Smith - April 27, 2020 at 10:20 AM



“ Our sincere prayers and condolences to the Oliver family. May God continue to be your refuge and strength now and always. Bless you all. Love, Ronnie Newby & Family, Lydia Teasley & Family.

Lydia Teasley - April 27, 2020 at 10:23 AM



“ Sending my prayers and condolences to the Oliver Family.

Olivia Cato

Olivia Cato - April 27, 2020 at 10:24 AM



“ God is with you!

Barbara Anthony

Barbara Anthony - April 27, 2020 at 10:55 AM



“ From the Martin family, We send our deepest sympathy and condolences to the Oliver family we will continue as always to love you all.

Sammy Martin - April 27, 2020 at 11:03 AM



“ Love and miss you all! Rest in Paradise Grandma Oliver, miss you!

Michelle - April 27, 2020 at 11:07 AM



“ My Deepest Prayers to the Oliver Family.

From the Moody Family!

Tanya Moody - April 27, 2020 at 11:07 AM



“

Gertrude Mason

Gertrude Mason - April 27, 2020 at 12:07 PM



“ My sincerest condolences to the Oliver Family. Love being sent to Corey and Marci.

Michele Jackson

Michele Jackson - April 27, 2020 at 02:46 PM



“ Prayers for the Oliver family. May God be with you all. I have very fond memories of spending time with Vernece and Grandma Oliver. She was truly a Godly woman. Love you all.

Maya - April 27, 2020 at 09:02 PM



“ Our prayers are lifted up for the Oliver Family. Thank you for sharing your beloved mom. A humble-kind lady. May her soul rest in peace. Be comforted. Rev. Bea Alghali and family.

Rev. Beatrice Alghali - April 29, 2020 at 02:23 PM



“ To my cousin: Who I have such fund memories of as a child. When my mother Rosie Lee Jones (her first cousin} and my siblings would visit Aunt Letty Singleton. Rest in Peace cousin Bertha. RIP. Much love and prayers for the family. As said in the Church of God in Christ "Until we meet again"



Coumba (Sharron) Brooks - April 30, 2020 at 02:03 PM



“ Dear Oliver Family,
I have known your family since the old days of Second Grace. In more recent years, I enjoyed seeing Mrs. Oliver when I would attend with my mom. She was always sweet, kind, and loving. I extend heartfelt condolences to your family and may God grant you comfort, strength, and peace. Love, Susan Howze



Susan Howze - April 28, 2020 at 08:35 AM



“ To the Oliver family, we the Greenwood family from Second Grace send our prayers to the family.

Mildred Pitts

Mildred - April 28, 2020 at 10:11 AM



“ Dear Veronica,
It is with great sadness that I offer my condolences for the loss of mum. I was deeply moved by the devotion you and your family showed during the period of her final illness. Your concern was an indication of love and I know she appreciated your involvement.
Mum was a wonderful person and I'm lucky to have been her caregiver in the last days of her life. Know that I'm keeping you in my thoughts and prayers and I hope your fond memories of her will give you comfort as you grieve this loss.
Much love,Linda

Linda Fiona Quaicoe - April 27, 2020 at 06:02 PM



“ In our deepest sympathy for your loss, we express our love for you. We are praying for comfort for your entire family during your time of sorrow. With love, Juanita Stewart and Gina Brazil



Gina Brazil - April 27, 2020 at 04:30 PM



“ To the family,
My heart is heavy and my sorrow runs deep. No words can express how I feel, so forgive me if I don't express it properly. My family Ernest. Gamal. Amenia, Azree, and Kamilah want you all to know that we are with you and we are praying for you. We always think we have more time to visit and spend time together, but that may not be GOD plan. So I want to say here and now that we LOVE all of you and PLEASE stay safe.

Love Venus

Venus Commander - April 27, 2020 at 02:20 PM



“ Carthel, Veronica, and Colby Jr : My condolences to you and to the extended Oliver Family. I have so many beautiful memories to reflect back on over the years with Mr & Mrs Oliver and the family that I will cherish. Carthel your eulogy and reflection of your Mom and Dad was beautiful. My love to everyone. Kathy (Newby) Kime.

Kathy (Newby) Kime - April 27, 2020 at 11:14 AM



“ Carthel, Veronica,& Colby Jr.,
Your mom touched my life in so many ways. Long ago I stopped considering myself her caregiver and thought of her as my family. There are endless memories that we will always share. Have peace in knowing that she is cooking and singing with the angels. We love and miss her but she has no more pain!! Hugs and prayers to the entire family.

Lisa Moore

Lisa Moore - April 27, 2020 at 11:10 AM



“ Bertha Lee Oliver, was like a grandmother to me, she exemplified the purest Agape Love of Jesus Christ. My deepest condolences are extended to the immediate and distant family during this arduous time of bereavement. May the Love of God and the sweet communion of the Holy Spirit, keep you and guide you during this journey.

Love Emell D. Monlyn

Emell Monlyn - April 27, 2020 at 11:03 AM



“ Dear Veronica you have my deepest sympathy on the loss of your sweet mother.
Your friend Helen Thomas

Helen Thomas - April 27, 2020 at 10:45 AM



“ Mrs. Oliver was one of the Second Grace United Methodist Church members who worshiped at the church building on Tireman and Begole in Detroit. I was a child and recalled her to be a woman of kind and gentle strength. There are not many older members of that era left. My condolences to her family and friends who will miss her.
Carolyn Stewart Williams and Clamah Stewart

Carolyn Stewart Williams - April 27, 2020 at 10:41 AM



“ Our Deepest Condolences to Carthel, Veronica and Colby Jr. Their are not enough words to say how beautiful your Mother was in life. She reach out to many people, May her memories always be thought of and always surround the family joy to up keep the family traditions of love, joy, peace and happiness. God will be with you all and strengthen you all through this difficult time.

Ronnie and Lydia

Ronnie Newby - April 27, 2020 at 09:48 AM



“ Our thoughts and prayers are with you and your family at this time.

The Moore Family

Lewis Moore Sr - April 27, 2020 at 09:37 AM



“ 1 file added to the tribute wall



Colvin Oliver - April 27, 2020 at 09:26 AM



“ My thoughts and prayers are with you and your family. My your memories bring you peace.

Alisha Martin



Alisha Martin - April 27, 2020 at 09:26 AM



“ Mrs. Oliver never missed an occasion to remind me that I was a good Sunday School Student as a Little Girl. She was The Sweetest. My Condolences to Her Entire Family. Peace of God to You all during this time. Love Always, C. Wellman

Cheryl Wellman - April 27, 2020 at 08:54 AM



“ Our thoughts, prayers and hopes for your comfort are with you. May your memories bring you peace.

Gordon and Ida 4/27/20



Gordon Marshall - April 27, 2020 at 08:32 AM



“ My thoughts and prayers are with you all this morning family. I love you

Melanie Armstrong - April 27, 2020 at 09:13 AM



“ Hey cousins, I sent this message last week to my cousins Verneece, Ken Jr., and Corey when I heard about Mrs. Oliver but wanted to share it w/ the rest of the family. So sorry to hear about the loss of your grandmother who was a great beacon for the family. She was a great woman and lived a prosperous, long life full of grace and dignity. I'm glad to have known her. Praying for you and your respective families. Hope you guys are doing ok and staying safe in these uncertain and unsettling times. Sending “virtual” hugs. Love you all. Nell

Darnell Kaigler - April 27, 2020 at 06:21 AM



“ 3 files added to the tribute wall



Toya - April 26, 2020 at 09:58 PM



“ OMG. This is beautiful Toya!

Carthel - April 27, 2020 at 11:48 AM



“ To The Oliver Family, there will never be words to replace anyone we love so much when they are so deeply missed. Just reflect on the energy, love and kindness they projected! They will forever live in our hearts and we will carry their spirit with us forever and always...and with time, comfort will come to you and bring you the peace to carry on with everlasting memories.
Love, Altherias & Earl Dixon



Altherias & Earl Dixon - April 26, 2020 at 09:42 PM



“ Colby, Carthel, and Veronica. You have my love and prayers. So sorry for your loss in Cousin Bertha. She was a jewel. I loved her sparkling personality. She was a wonderful example of womanhood. As far back as I can remember there was a cousin Bertha Lee. Love you all.

Saundra - April 26, 2020 at 09:24 PM



“ 1 file added to the album Memories Album



Norman Wright - April 26, 2020 at 07:55 PM



“ Aunt Bertha's birthday party.Fun times for her family.

Norman Wright - April 26, 2020 at 07:58 PM



“ 5 files added to the tribute wall



Chalana Oliver - April 26, 2020 at 03:21 PM



“ 3 files added to the tribute wall



Chalana Oliver - April 26, 2020 at 03:10 PM



“ Coleman Billingslea sent a virtual gift in memory of Bertha Lee Oliver



Coleman Billingslea - April 26, 2020 at 02:07 PM



“ Coleman Billingslea lit a candle in memory of Bertha Lee Oliver



Coleman Billingslea - April 26, 2020 at 02:05 PM



“ 2 files added to the album The Billingslea's and the Oliver's



Coleman Billingslea - April 26, 2020 at 01:47 PM



“ 2 files added to the album Memories Album



Coleman Billingslea - April 26, 2020 at 01:34 PM



“ Full Of Love Bouquet was purchased for the family of Bertha Lee Oliver.



April 26, 2020 at 11:41 AM



“ 1 file added to the tribute wall



Vernece Boateng - April 26, 2020 at 03:12 AM



“ 2 files added to the album Four Generations



Vernece Boateng - April 26, 2020 at 02:54 AM



“ 1 file added to the tribute wall



Vernece Boateng - April 26, 2020 at 02:52 AM



“ 1 file added to the tribute wall



Verneece Boateng - April 26, 2020 at 02:52 AM



“ 1 file added to the tribute wall



Verneece Boateng - April 26, 2020 at 02:51 AM



“ 1 file added to the tribute wall



Verneece Boateng - April 26, 2020 at 02:50 AM



“ 1 file added to the tribute wall



Verneece Boateng - April 26, 2020 at 02:49 AM



“ 6 files added to the tribute wall



Corey Oliver - April 26, 2020 at 12:07 AM



“ Simply Elegant Spathiphyllum was purchased for the family of Bertha Lee Oliver.



April 26, 2020 at 12:00 AM



“ 1 file added to the album 95th Birthday



Verneece Boateng - April 25, 2020 at 11:32 PM



“ 1 file added to the album Memories Album



Verneece Boateng - April 25, 2020 at 11:30 PM



“ 2 files added to the album Thanksgiving 2019



Vernece Boateng - April 25, 2020 at 11:29 PM



“ 1 file added to the album Memories Album



Vernece Boateng - April 25, 2020 at 07:10 PM



“ 1 file added to the tribute wall



Gloria Jackson - April 25, 2020 at 05:50 PM



“ 1 file added to the album Memories Album



Vernece Boateng - April 25, 2020 at 05:45 PM



“ 1 file added to the album Memories Album



Verneece Boateng - April 25, 2020 at 05:45 PM



“ 1 file added to the album Memories Album



Verneece Boateng - April 25, 2020 at 05:45 PM



“ 1 file added to the album Memories Album



Verneece Boateng - April 25, 2020 at 05:44 PM



“ 1 file added to the album Memories Album



Verneece Boateng - April 25, 2020 at 05:44 PM



“ 1 file added to the album Memories Album



Vernece Boateng - April 25, 2020 at 05:43 PM



“ 1 file added to the album Memories Album



Vernece Boateng - April 25, 2020 at 05:43 PM



“ 1 file added to the album Memories Album



Vernece Boateng - April 25, 2020 at 05:39 PM



“ Beautiful!

Corey Oliver - April 26, 2020 at 01:09 PM



“ 1 file added to the album Memories Album



Verneece Boateng - April 25, 2020 at 05:38 PM



“ Our sincere condolence to the Oliver family.
With heart felt love we are praying for your
Strength. God is with you and His grace and mercy covers you both day and. Night.
Walk
In Faith and believe God's power to keep you.
Much love,
John & Barbara

Barbara Anthony - April 25, 2020 at 05:07 PM



“ Simply Elegant Spathiphyllum was purchased for the family of Bertha Lee Oliver.



April 25, 2020 at 03:51 PM



“ 1 file added to the album Memories Album



Verneece Boateng - April 25, 2020 at 02:57 PM



“ 1 file added to the album Memories Album



Verneece Boateng - April 25, 2020 at 02:55 PM



“ 1 file added to the tribute wall



Verneece Boateng - April 25, 2020 at 02:51 PM



“ 1 file added to the album Memories Album



Paul and Grace Boateng - April 25, 2020 at 01:43 PM



“ I met Grandma Oliver in August 2004 when we first visited my son, Nana Kwame and daughter-in-law Verneece (aka Neece), in the USA. Upon our arrival, Neece took us to visit her Grandma where we met this wonderful woman who opened her doors warmly to us, and insisted that we dine with her before leaving. Together with her children, grandchildren and great-grandchildren, we will remember for her excellent cooking and different home made dishes.

Grandma Oliver took our son, Nana Kwame, as her own grandson when he first arrived from Germany and did everything to ensure he felt at home and apart of the family. Again when my youngest son, Opoku, arrived for a short visit in the USA, Grandma also accommodated him in her apartment and lavished on him with her proverbial warm hospitality.

Indeed throughout the years, Grandma Oliver has been a great pillar of support to the Boateng family and for that, we shall forever be grateful. Since we arrived in the USA three years ago, Grandma has never ceased to make us feel at home, even when we were away from home.

Grandma, by your death you have created a deep vacuum in our hearts which will be very difficult to fill.

Rest In Peace Till We Meet Again.

Love,

Paul and Grace Boateng (and Entire Boateng Family)
Accra, Ghana (West Africa)

Paul and Grace Boateng - April 25, 2020 at 01:35 PM



“ Simply Elegant Spathiphyllum was purchased for the family of Bertha Lee Oliver.



April 25, 2020 at 11:49 AM



“ May the Peace and Mercy of Almighty God Allah be with each one of you at this time. I pray that Allah is pleased with our beloved mother, grandmother sister, friend ect.. I am eternally grateful for being Blessed to have known this precious Soul! She was a very strong willed, faithful, focused and determined individual. My first meeting with her was through my neice Pamela's husband (Colby). I remember very vividly when I met Colby, his well mannered behavior let me know instantly that he was from a very good family. Through the years of knowing Mrs. Bertha and her family; all of the above words and sentiments have proven to be the TRUTH. Lastly, I pray that Allah will Comfort, Strengthen, Console and give each one of you lasting Peace.
Love, Lula (Wendell)



Lula W. Muhammad - April 25, 2020 at 11:37 AM



“ Mrs. Oliver always had a loving and kind spirit. I remember when I was in high school and would travel to Detroit with family to visit my sister Pat and Carthel one of the highlights of being there during warm months was to visit Mrs.Olivers so I could set on her front porch and eat her great tasting food. She made great pies and I loved it when she would cut me a piece. Between her sweet, kind and gentle voice and the delicious pie you just knew there was a lot of love. I never turned down a second slice. To all of the family God bless you. Her tribute speaks for itself. God gave her everlasting grace, dignity and beauty and her spirit carries it back home to him.
Amen
With love
Peggy Cooper, Murrieta, CA

Peggy Cooper - April 25, 2020 at 10:13 AM



“ Full Of Love Bouquet was purchased for the family of Bertha Lee Oliver.



April 24, 2020 at 09:49 PM



“ Peaceful White Lilies Basket was purchased for the family of Bertha Lee Oliver.



April 24, 2020 at 09:27 PM



“ Arrive in Style was purchased for the family of Bertha Lee Oliver.



April 24, 2020 at 09:25 PM



“ Sentiments of Serenity Spray was purchased for the family of Bertha Lee Oliver.



April 24, 2020 at 08:57 PM



“ Days of Sunshine Bouquet was purchased for the family of Bertha Lee Oliver.



April 24, 2020 at 04:48 PM



“ Emerald Garden Basket was purchased for the family of Bertha Lee Oliver.



April 24, 2020 at 04:22 PM



“ Simply Elegant Spathiphyllum was purchased for the family of Bertha Lee Oliver.



April 24, 2020 at 04:21 PM



“ We send our prayers to the Oliver family, with Love. May God Bless you and Comfort the family. Your Brothers and Sister from The Pride of the East Grand Lodge and Smooth Ashler lodge #13.



Brother J. Whiting... - April 24, 2020 at 04:10 PM



“ Please know that you all are in my thoughts and prayers during this difficult time in the loss of your loved one....Ms. Oliver.

May God Bless and Comfort you all.

Debra Ragland



D. Ragland - April 24, 2020 at 02:19 PM



“ Medium Dish Garden was purchased for the family of Bertha Lee Oliver.



April 24, 2020 at 02:02 PM



“ Colby&Pam purchased the Graceful Wreath for the family of Bertha Lee Oliver.



Colby&Pam - April 24, 2020 at 01:34 PM



“ Chalana and Colvin Oliver purchased the Touching Tribute Spray for the family of Bertha Lee Oliver.



Chalana and Colvin Oliver - April 24, 2020 at 01:21 PM



“ Corey-
We are very sorry to hear of your Grandmother's passing. May she rest in the Lord's Peace. You and your family are in our thoughts and prayers.
John & Sherry Mercurio

John Mercurio - April 24, 2020 at 09:10 AM



“ To the Oliver family,

My brother Ron and I loved our Aunt Bertha as if she was a second mom to us. We will always cherish the loving memories of being around her, her husband Uncle Colby, and their three children. We were very close. May Aunt Bertha rest in peace for a job well done. She will stay in our hearts forever. Continued thoughts and prayers for the family, and to others who were close to her.

Love always,

Mike and Ron Bishop.

Michael Bishop - April 24, 2020 at 11:36 PM



“ Red Rose Reverence Casket Spray was purchased for the family of Bertha Lee Oliver.



April 23, 2020 at 10:49 PM