



## Delessie Summerville

December 24, 1933 - July 17, 2025

### Delessie Willis Summerville: A Life of Love, Service, and Song

Delessie Willis Summerville, a woman whose life radiated warmth, faith, and a deep commitment to serving others, passed away peacefully on Thursday, July 17, 2025, in Farmington Hills, Michigan. Born on December 24, 1933, in Yazoo City, Mississippi, she was 91 years young.

Born to the late Reverend John B. Willis, Sr. and Alberta Walker Willis, Delessie was nurtured in a loving Christian home that would shape her entire life's journey. Her spiritual foundation was laid at St. Peter Missionary Baptist Church in Mississippi, where she was baptized at the tender age of ten by her father. In 1946, when Delessie was thirteen, her family traveled to Detroit, Michigan, where they joined Mt. Vernon MBC and began a new chapter of their lives.

Delessie graduated cum laude from Miller High School and earned a scholarship to Wayne State University, where she studied education. She later returned to earn a certificate in administration of a child care center.

As the devoted wife of the late Tommie Lewis Summerville, Sr., Delessie found her greatest joy in family life. Their union was blessed with three children: Wendell Gerrard, Evelyn Louise, and T.L., and she lovingly embraced her stepson, Lynn Patrick, as her own. With her nurturing spirit, she poured her heart into creating a happy and supportive home where the family would gather around the kitchen table for homework, cards and board games (especially Scrabble), or crowd into their den to watch family shows. Her

home became the cherished hub for Thanksgiving and Christmas holiday dinners.

Throughout their marriage, Delessie supported her husband in all aspects of life. She maintained an immaculate home and graciously accompanied him to various community and business banquets, including annual NAACP and Cotillion Club dinners. She worked alongside Tommie in his business endeavors, supporting his convenience stores, directing the Summerland Day Care and Little Village, and serving as Office Manager for Manhood, Inc., a nonprofit organization dedicated to helping boys become men.

Music flowed through Delessie's life as a defining feature of her ministry. Beginning as pianist for the Junior Choir at age 10, she served as choir director and pianist at various churches, including Christian Liberty MBC and Carter Metropolitan CME. At Carter, she progressed from member of the Ester Davis Gospel Choir to pianist and director, also directing the Carterliers Youth Choir and the Elijah Davis Contemporary Young Adult Choir. She organized and led the Missionary Singers, a highly sought-after women's quartet. Her commitment to faith extended far beyond music into dedicated service within the church community. She served as Youth Sunday School teacher, Youth Department Director and Chairperson for the Committee on Membership and Evangelism. She also held membership on the Stewardess Board, the P.R. Jamison Club, the John W. Gilbert Missionary Circle, and the Local and District Missionary Society. With characteristic grace, she led teams in preparing for major church events such as the Rainbow Tea, Women's Day and Harvest Festival. She received the Ester Award in 1991, the Spirit of Detroit Award, and Congressional Recognition.

Delessie lived by her motto: "Have I helped anybody?" Her legacy lives on in her children, brother the Reverend Charles E. Willis, Sr., sister-in-love Katie Summerville, granddaughters Cierra, Kautesha, Johari, Imani, and Olivia, grandson Everett, great grandson Kaleb and countless others whose lives she touched.



# Previous Events

## Visitation

JUL 31. 4:00 PM - 7:00 PM (ET)

Kemp Funeral Home & Cremation Services  
24585 Evergreen Rd  
Southfield, MI 48075  
(248) 702-5367  
info@kempfh.com  
<https://www.kempfuneralhome.com>

## Family Hour

AUG 1. 10:00 AM - 11:00 AM (ET)

Hope United Methodist Church  
26275 Northwestern Highway  
Southfield, MI 48076

## Celebration of Life

AUG 1. 11:00 AM (ET)

Hope United Methodist Church  
26275 Northwestern Highway  
Southfield, MI 48076

# Tribute Wall



“ *Kemp Funeral Home & Cremation Services created a Livestream Funeral Service in memory of Delessie Summerville*



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**Kemp Funeral Home & Cremation Services** - July 30, 2025 at 11:50 AM

HG

“ *Dear Wendell Summerville,*

*Please accept my heartfelt condolences for your loss. My thoughts and prayers are with you and your loved ones during this incredibly difficult time.*

*May you find strength in the love that surrounds you, and comfort in the memories you hold dear. Losing someone close is never easy, and I hope you're able to lean on family and friends for support and healing.*

*Wishing you peace, comfort, and resilience in the days ahead.*

*With deepest sympathy,*

*Harminderpaul Grover*

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**Harninderpaul Grover** - August 01, 2025 at 07:06 AM

JE

“ Jimmy and Kawanne Evans purchased the Beautiful in Blue for the family of Delessie Summerville.



Jimmy and Kawanne Evans - July 31, 2025 at 01:10 PM

GM

“ Glynnis K. Morris purchased the Enchanted Cottage for the family of Delessie Summerville.



Glynnis K. Morris - July 30, 2025 at 08:23 PM

RH

“ Robert H. planted a [Memorial Tree](/store/Product.aspx?ProductId=4518) in honor of Delessie Summerville.

Robert H. - July 30, 2025 at 04:19 PM



“ Enchanted Cottage was purchased for the family of Delessie Summerville.



July 30, 2025 at 09:01 AM



“ A [Memorial Tree](/store/Product.aspx?ProductId=4518) was planted in honor of Delessie Summerville.

July 30, 2025 at 09:01 AM



“ Peaceful White Lilies Basket was purchased for the family of Delessie Summerville.



July 29, 2025 at 06:08 PM



“ A [Memorial Tree](/store/Product.aspx?ProductId=4518) was planted in honor of Delessie Summerville.

July 29, 2025 at 06:08 PM



“ Arrive in Style was purchased for the family of Delessie Summerville.



July 28, 2025 at 01:24 PM



“ A [Memorial Tree](/store/Product.aspx?ProductId=4518) was planted in honor of Delessie Summerville.

July 28, 2025 at 01:24 PM



“ Beautiful in Blue was purchased for the family of Delessie Summerville.



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July 28, 2025 at 08:52 AM



“ A [Memorial Tree](/store/Product.aspx?ProductId=4518) was planted in honor of Delessie Summerville.

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July 28, 2025 at 08:52 AM



“ Simply Elegant Spathiphyllum was purchased for the family of Delessie Summerville.



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July 22, 2025 at 01:46 PM



“ Leona and Alva Emanuel purchased the Simply Elegant Spathiphyllum for the family of Delessie Summerville.



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**Leona and Alva Emanuel** - July 21, 2025 at 08:21 PM