



Ruth Whitley

August 11, 1929 - August 4, 2024

Mrs. Ruth Whitley made her transition on August 4, 2024. Please take a moment to leave comforting words for her family. Her memorial service will be livestreamed here on the Kemp Funeral Home website starting at 2:30 pm (est). The link for the service will not go live until Saturday, August 17th at 2:30pm (est)

Go to kempfuneralhome.com

Click on her tribute picture

Scroll down on the tribute wall and you will see "Kemp Funeral Home created a tribute" or on your mobile device go to photos and videos.

Click the play button and you will be redirected to Zoom and you can wait for the host to let you in.

If you have any questions regarding the instructions on the day of service please give us a call.

Ruth Thompson Whitley, daughter of Cornelia Woods and Reverend George Thompson, was born August 11, 1929 in Detroit, Michigan. She departed this life on Sunday, August 04, 2024 at Beaumont Hospital in Royal Oak, Michigan. She was the last of four children: Earl, Grady and Majestice. Her siblings preceded her in death.

Ruth was raised in Detroit and educated in the Detroit public schools. She had a passion for learning, reading, Black History and current affairs. She held a rich library of New York bestsellers and autobiography of famous personalities. She loved scriptures and spent quality in the word and prayers. Of a quiet demeanor, but possessed of a strong, independent and resilient spirit. She was loving and compassionate, providing sustained support to many charity organizations including St. Jude and the Red Cross. She was a lover of animals, especially dogs and cats. She cared with great devotion for her dog, Sherifa.

As a teenager, during WWII, while her brother Grady served in the army, Ruth was a member of the American Junior Red Cross. In addition, she completed a preparatory course at the Detroit Conservatory of Music. After finishing high school, she worked at the Northville Regional Psychiatric Hospital as a Nurse's Aide. She received commendation from Mayor Coleman Young for thirty-one years of distinguished service and outstanding contribution to the mental health community. "Your years of dedicated service and professionalism provide an excellent example..." She took great pride in her work. Ruth helped her father in the family store on Ohio Street.

Sister Whitley confessed a faith and a hope in Christ at an early age and was baptized as a teenager and united with New Mount Vernon Baptist Church under the pastorate of Reverend Philips and later under her father the late Rev George Lee Thompson. Later in her life, she maintained membership with St. James Baptist Church during the pastorate of Reverend Charles H. Nicks, Jr. She worshipped at the Macedonia Baptist Church, Bethesda, Maryland. She was devoted to the virtual ministry at Macedonia Baptist Church during the covid period.

In 1954, she was joined in holy matrimony to Troy Whitley. She was a very

loyal and devoted wife. Her husband died in 2011.

Ruth was very proud of her native Dublin, Georgia. One of the highlights of her life was attending the Buckeye family reunion in Dublin where she was introduced to a deeper understanding of the noble history of her family. She was committed to reuniting with her Georgia family.

As a child Ruth visited Dublin with her parents. She fondly remembers her grandfather, affectionately called Papa Woods, placing her on his shoulders and helping her pick figs from the family garden. In 2018, Ruth visited Dublin, Georgia for the last time to attend a family reunion. She had the opportunity to visit Buckeye Baptist Church, the institution built by her ancestors and sit in the very pews built by her grandpa Woods and her relatives. We visited the family burial ground, next to the church where generations of family members were laid to rest. Ruth returned home with a sample of the red clay of Georgia that she treasured.

Ruth was particularly devoted to her aunts who fled the barbarism of white violence in the south to forge new opportunities through the Great Negro Migration headed to the industrial north, Detroit - Bessie Wood Chapman, Mamie Wood Bradshaw, Alzeida Wood Walker, Adleane Wood, Willie Ann Wood Kemp and her brother Daniel Wood. She adored her aunt Beatrice Wood Water who was a beautiful pianist.

One of the highlights of her life was her travels in West Africa where she visited Ghana, the Gambia and Senegal and for the first time experienced a level of freedom that she treasured for the rest of her life. She visited Gore Island, in Senegal - the last place that many African-Americans touched African soil before being kidnapped to the Americas.

She had distinct and elegant taste for clothing – particularly African dresses and expensive perfumes. She loved cooking for family and loved shrimp and grits, fried green tomatoes and sweet potato pie.

She was very generous and giving, especially to her great nephew, Olusina and great niece, Folasade on whom she lavished much love and attention. She lived to make them happy and was their greatest advocate. She proudly escorted them to Kiddie College at Marygrove College every summer when then stayed in Detroit during their summer vacation with their grandma. Nearly every wall in her house contains a picture of Sina and Sade. She encouraged them throughout their college education and later graduate school. She attended every graduation and family event as the elder of the family bestowing her blessings and love upon “her Sina and Sade.”

She leaves to cherish her memories many nieces and nephews, including Mary and James Jefferson of Dublin, Georgia, Linda Thompson Barnes of New York, Veronica Thompson of Florida, Drs. Marsha and Segun Adebayo of Bethesda, Maryland, Cornell Thompson of Tennessee, Ronald and Elizabeth Thompson-Bey of Detroit; Teresa Chapman and Darryl Short of Detroit; Deborah Dailey of Detroit and her daughters Kara of Virginia and Karla Robertson of Florida, great nephew Olusina Adebayo, great niece, Folasade Adebayo, a host of cousins, relatives and friends.

The family will deeply miss her wisdom and laughter but rejoices in the belief and blessed hope that she now rests with the Lord.

Cemetery Details

Woodlawn Cemetery

19975 Woodward Avenue
Detroit, MI 48203

Previous Events

Family/Friends Time

AUG 17. 2:30 PM - 3:00 PM (est)

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

Memorial Service

AUG 17. 3:00 PM (est)

Kemp Funeral Home & Cremation Services
24585 Evergreen Rd
Southfield, MI 48075
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Tribute Wall



“ *Kemp Funeral Home & Cremation Services created a Tribute Video in memory of Ruth Whitley*



Kemp Funeral Home & Cremation Services - August 17, 2024 at 02:26 PM

ER

“ *May her memory be a blessing to all who love her.*

Elizabeth Rosenberg - August 17, 2024 at 02:44 PM

RW

“ *Roderick Walton lit a candle in memory of Ruth Whitley*



Roderick Walton - August 17, 2024 at 01:36 PM

CE

*A very caring person with a lovely smile. Rest in Pease with the LORD.
Co worker Celia Hill*

Celiahill - August 17, 2024 at 04:46 PM

MM

“ Remembering Mrs. Whitley aka Grandma. She chose my mom as her daughter and became my sweet Grandma that showed up for all of my life events. She was such a class act with a kind heart that impacted so many lives. Sending prayers to family and friends. Rest well Grandma, you good and faithful servant. ~Michelle Walton Mock~

Michelle Mock - August 17, 2024 at 11:21 AM

RW

Rest peacefully Mrs. Whitley (grandma)! ❤️

Roderick Walton

Roderick Walton - August 17, 2024 at 01:36 PM

CH

Rest in peace with the Lord.

Celia Hill - August 17, 2024 at 04:58 PM

AF

“ Ayoola and Funlayo purchased the Full Of Love Bouquet for the family of Ruth Whitley.



Ayoola and Funlayo - August 16, 2024 at 11:08 PM

EF

“ Elemo Family purchased the Divine Peace Bouquet for the family of Ruth Whitley.



Elemo Family - August 16, 2024 at 01:02 PM

EF

“ Elemo Family planted a [Memorial Tree](/store/Product.aspx?ProductId=4518) in honor of Ruth Whitley.

Elemo Family - August 16, 2024 at 01:02 PM

DW

“ Earths' loss Heaven's gain. I thank God for allowing our paths to cross as co-workers and friends.

Thank you Mrs. Whitley for being a true friend, a confidant, a mother figure, a spiritual supporter & much more. You will be missed but never forgotten. This is not good by but see you later. R.I.H. my friend. Love you!

Family, fortunately, you are never alone in dealing with grief & loss, God is right there with you in the darkest of hours.

“Blessed are they that mourn for they shall be comforted”. Mat. 5:4 KJV

We love you!

Blessings & Prayers, Acie & Dorothy Walton



Dorothy Walton - August 16, 2024 at 11:26 AM

PB

“ Pam Ransom and Herb Bennett purchased the Country Basket Blooms for the family of Ruth Whitley.



Pam Ransom and Herb Bennett - August 15, 2024 at 08:37 PM

PB

“ Pam Ransom and Herb Bennett planted a [Memorial Tree](/store/Product.aspx?ProductId=4518) in honor of Ruth Whitley.

Pam Ransom and Herb Bennett - August 15, 2024 at 08:37 PM

OA

“ I had met Aunty Ruth in graduating pictures of Olusina and Folashade long before I met her physically in May 2019. I attended Bro Segun's 37 years retirement celebration. Aunty Ruth was there. Awake before the family rouses, by at 8am, she would keep me company in the kitchen. She loved to chat about God, life in her younger years and my artistic blessings. She was such an encourager and a delight to converse with. She shared some secret tips for living healthier, stronger and longer too! I remember her as being very independent and as fit as a 50 year old then! She was like a mother to my brother and his family and endeared herself to all who came to their home. A very lovely and cherished lady has answered the call of our Lord. May the rich legacy of her life, the fond memories shared and her being an exceptional role model continue to bless us all. May we all be comforted knowing that she is with our Lord. Rest on peacefully and eternally, Aunty Ruth, in our Lord Jesus Christ's name. Amen.

Love from Sola and Chima Anyanwu[UK]

OLUSOLA SOPHIA ANYANWU - August 15, 2024 at 12:45 PM

OS

“ Olusola S. purchased the Full Of Love Bouquet for the family of Ruth Whitley.



Olusola S. - August 15, 2024 at 11:59 AM