

*Home Going Service  
In Blessed Memory of*

A portrait of Rita Olive Martin, a Black woman with short dark hair, smiling. She is wearing a red, sequined, short-sleeved top. The background is a soft green gradient. The portrait is framed by a large, stylized red rose and green leaves at the bottom of the page.

*Rita Olive Martin*

September 27, 1946 - January 21, 2011

Service

Friday, January 28, 2011 - 11:00 a.m.

**CALVARY BAPTIST CHURCH**

66 So. Grove Street • East Orange, New Jersey

*Rev. Joseph Oniyama, Pastor  
Rev. Devon Dawson, Officiating*

## *The Obituary*

The truth of it all is that none of us want to be assembled here under these circumstances. Each of us has for a moment. We halted our busy lives between, work, church, and yes obligations to gather to pay our respects. This part of life, the cycle of death is something that though we must confront, we often try to forget. We tuck it behind the frustrations of paying rent, ranting about co-workers, the price of gas, and yes the job we just cant stand. Each of us tries to forget the reality of the day. But we are here today. **Rita O. Martin**, our mother was a quiet and extraordinary woman. To see her on a glance you would not think that she was a determined force. Born in Guyana September 27, 1946, the oldest of about eight children to Florence and William Martin, she had to overcome tremendous challenges even before the age of thirteen. At a young age she had to face the loss of her father. As the oldest, it was her duty, and some may say burden, to drop out of school and help her mother raise her siblings. Her stories often when she recounted her past tells of a bright young girl with promise and a future which would have to be put aside because family came first.

In her twenties, her child, my brother was born. Seven years later she had me. She was a single woman of with two children in a third world country.

In her thirties she made a decision that would forever change the course of everyone's life. I know that my mother was indeed a private person, but I don't think that she would mind me telling this story. She had a chance to come to America. No this is not the Eddie Murphy version. However, there was a devastating choice that she would have to make. She had to leave her children behind. At the time there was only one family who could take care of us well – the Paris family. I remember sitting in the back yard as I watched her one day a child of five engaged in a power play with this family. It was later told to me that this family would accept one but not both of her children. Given the choice between myself being raised in an abandoned rail road track and a middle class family, Ms. Martin stood her ground. What might have been days of a back and forth she choose not to give up until both of her children were left in good homes with a caring and loving family. Ms. Martin won that battle but an important challenge awaited.

While we went through our lives, got grades, she was in America laying the foundation. “it was hard,” she often said when she recounted those years. She was in a new country, with less than \$100 in her pocket. She found a job as a babysitter for a Maplewood family, was sponsored and got her own one bedroom apartment. Later she would come back for us. Mark may have know on that Christmas morning that it was her when she returned, but I was utterly clueless. Who was this woman hugging me? Why was she crying? In time I knew, and in time I grew to appreciate the sacrifices that she made to ensure that morning would happen. A year later we would join her in America. I remember Audwin ensuring that we got on that plane, my first plane ride to come to America. And no I did not see Eddie and Arcinio along the way. We arrived on Saturday, July the fourth, and as a testament to her Sunday we were both in church tithing my first nickel to the church.

It is a testament to her that we both grew up in the church and have accepted God in our lives. She was always a woman of faith. It was her abiding faith in God that guided her steps and her Judgment through the years. With my mother family came first. It was the guiding force of her decisions. She went back to school, got her G.E.D. and her assistant nursing license to be able to provide a better life for myself and my brother. With that license she was worked at places like Bristol Manner, Pleasantview, and Daughters of Israel. Indeed, Ms. Martin was one of the strongest women I knew. She would for years work the 7 a.m. – 3 p.m. shift at one job and then rush to the other for years to do the 3 p.m. – 11 a.m. And God help her if there was overtime. A few times she was known to do two days straight. I guess I can tell the secret, she would take a eight hour “bathroom break.” On her own in 1988 she was able to purchase her first new car, moved us out of a drug infested neighborhood the next year to Montclair, buy her second car, and in time buy her own home.

In the span of thirty years, my mother was not only able to lay a foundation for myself and my brother but to chart a future. From a third world country she made choices that though difficult at the time would be difficult would produce a better life for her children. It is a testament to her that my brother is an officer and I am a teacher. Our greatest gift was that she loved us tremendously. It is her love, her joy, her sacrifice that we are truly honored to have had for these years. We will all miss her, deeply, dearly, but we will also cherish the fact that we had one heck of a amazing mother!

# *Order of Service*

**ORGAN PRELUDE**

**PROCESSIONAL**

**HYMN**

"Blessed Assurance"

**HOLY SCRIPTURE**

Old Testament

New Testament

**PRAYER OF COMFORT**

**SELECTION**

**CONDOLENCES/ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS**

**OBITUARY**

**Remarks/Acknowledgements**

**Selection**

**EULOGY**

Rev. Devon Dawson

Pastor, All Nations Apostolic Church

Jamaica, New York

**COMMITAL**

**BENEDICTION**

**RECESSIONAL**

**Interment**

Rosedale Cemetery

Orange, New Jersey

*A repast will take place after  
the burial in the fellowship hall.*

## *I'M FREE*

Don't grieve for me for now I'm free.  
I'm following the path God laid for me.  
I took His hand when I heard Him call.  
I turned my back and left it all.  
I could not stay another day,  
I found that peace at the close of day.  
If my parting has left a void,  
Then fill it with remembered joy,  
A friendship shared, a laugh, a kiss,  
Ah yes, these things too I will miss.  
Be not burdened with times of sorrow,  
I wish you the sunshine of tomorrow.  
My life's been full, I've favored much,  
Good friends, good times, a loved one's touch  
Perhaps my time seemed all too brief,  
Don't lengthen it now with undue grief.  
Lift up your heart and share with me,  
God wanted me now, He has set me free!

### *Acknowledgement*

The family acknowledges with deep appreciation all acts of kindness extended to us during this time of bereavement.

May God bless you for all your thoughtfulness.

Professional Services Entrusted To



**CUSHNIE-HOUSTON**

*Funeral Home*

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**DIRECTOR**

JOHN B. HOUSTON, EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR  
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