

Celebration of Life for
Martha (Johnson) Clark

July 21, 1934 - January 1, 2012



Friday, January 6, 2012
7:30 p.m.

CHRIST TEMPLE BAPTIST CHURCH

38 Hopper Street
Paterson, New Jersey

Rev. Gregory C. Turner, Pastor



Reflections of Life

Born on July 21, 1934 in Ellerslie, Georgia, Martha was the youngest of fourteen children born to the late Joshua and Bertha (Passmore) Johnson.

She was raised on a firm foundation of faith in God and grew up in The New Christian Missionary Baptist Church Paterson, New Jersey, where she also attended school and worked productively for twenty-five years before retiring from the Paterson Public Schools' Food Service Department.

At the time of her passing (in Atlanta, Georgia), Martha was a member of Grace Bible Class, Passaic, New Jersey, but she was affiliated with and active in many churches and choirs in the Metropolitan area. However, a few of the most familiar in Passaic County are: Grace Chapel Baptist Church Choir of Paterson, New Jersey, Rev. Weldon McWilliams Sr., Pastor; the choir director of Grace Bible Class for over fifteen years, Passaic, New Jersey; a frequent soloist at Mount Pilgrim Baptist Church Passaic, New Jersey; Community Baptist Church of Love Paterson, New Jersey; Thankful Baptist Church Paterson, New Jersey; Christ Temple Baptist Church Paterson, New Jersey; The Grace of God Church Paterson, New Jersey, where she was instrumental in working with Pastor Milena to help the church grow.

Martha Clark was called home to Glory on Sunday, January 1, 2012. She was predeceased by three daughters: Vanessa, Luzella and Diane.

Martha leaves to cherish fond memories: three children, Gwen West of Atlanta, Georgia; Londell Dixon (Penny) of Paterson, New Jersey; Precious Harmon (Kevin) of Atlanta, Georgia; two extended children: Wytisha Perez (Joseph) of Jersey City, New Jersey; Laketa Johnson (Tyrone) of Clifton, New Jersey. Martha dedicated her life to her sixteen grandchildren and raised most of them: Rodney, Raymond, Little Londell, Antoine, Jacquice, Toryanna, Tamaiyah, Javon, Little Kevin, Jamilah, Alicia, Zenobia, Kevon, Tychonn, Dachonn and Tyanna. Martha was also the great grandmother of fourteen children. She was an adored aunt to many nieces and nephews; and a godmother to a host of god children. Without a doubt, she was the family's matriarch and loved preparing big family meals during the holidays and on special occasions at the "big house." Martha was also a dear, lifelong friend, for over forty years, to many near and far. She will be sorely missed!

As is the case with so many great gospel singers who grew up singing in the church, so was this experience for the renowned Martha Clark. Her entire life was filled with the spiritual power of gospel that only she could sing. And sing she did. Whether performing on stage in such musicals as "Your Arms Are Too Short to Box with God" or "God's Creation," or participating in the Gospel Workshop of America, or singing with the James Cleveland Musical Workshop Seminars, or directing Passaic, New Jersey's Grace Bible Class Choir, Mrs. Clark's

poignant and robust rendition of gospel songs were passionate expressions of worship—exactly what gospel is intended to be! Consequently, Martha was always in very great demand to appear in gospel concerts, Sunday morning and afternoon services, church programs, funerals and even weddings.

Martha's resonant alto voice, inimitable lead and stirring solos distinguished the sound of every one of the countless choirs and ensembles that sought her melodic contributions. She performed throughout the United States—extensively in New York City, including the famed Apollo Theater, and she raised many roof tops in Europe, the Caribbean and Central America. Martha Clark's inspired singing, motivational directing and anointed arrangements also took shape and force in the appropriately named ensemble "Ambassadors for Christ," a gospel group that she founded over thirty years ago. She continued to raise her voice in gospel singing that spiritually moved audiences of all backgrounds, races, and ages, Martha appeared on a weekly radio program that was broadcast from William Paterson University, Wayne, New Jersey. She was also featured on a CD with three other altos and was the recipient of more than an arm's length list of awards, achievements, and citations that are too numerous to mention now. However, three of her most recent local distinctions in June of 2011 include a Certificate of Civic Recognition from the Mayor of the City of Paterson, Jeffrey Jones; a Citation from the New Jersey Senate and General Assembly; and Congressional Recognition from the United States House of Representatives.



Clearly, Martha Clark was devoted to gospel music and its craft, she nurtured her gift as she served God—she was always ready and willing to worship and minister to others through both song and testimony; even during the last three years of her life when her health was failing, she kept her commitments and even accepted invitations to minister through song. Martha found strength, courage and inspiration through songs of God's praise, and these attributes served her especially well during the past ten years when, despite many hospital visits and procedures, she was rarely seen without a smile, a heart full of love or a song of praise to comfort others. She was everybody's sparkling jewel that beautified life. A devoted mother and family member, a dependable friend, Martha was a nurturer and the embodiment of a multitasker. She embraced every one in her family and each of her friends, worked hard at her job, and always looked good, very good functioning in these capacities. She was a model of love, our rock of strength, our treasure of song and our impeccably dressed gem. Now our legacy is eternally placed in her bright gemstone position in the heavenly diadem.

Order of Service

Prelude

Selection Grace Bible Class Choir
Passaic, New Jersey

Scriptures Reading:

Old Testament Minister Mark Wright
Grace Bible Class • Passaic, New Jersey

New Testament Minister Sam McClary
Grace Bible Class • Passaic, New Jersey

Prayer of Comfort Pastor Milena Eason
The Grace of God Church • Paterson, NJ

Selection Coretta Lawrence

Acknowledgments

& Reflections of Life Susan Wells

Remarks Pastors

Selection Grace Bible Class Choir

Message of Comfort Pastor Bernard Durham, Jr.
Grace Bible Class • Passaic, New Jersey

Recessional

Interment
Fair Lawn Memorial Cemetery
Fair Lawn, New Jersey
(please turn on headlights and hazards for cemetery procession.)



The Broken Chain

We little knew that morning that
God was going to call your name.

In life we loved you dearly

In death we do the same.

It broke our hearts to lose you,
you did not go alone;

for part of us went with you,
the day God called you home.

You left us peaceful memories,
your love is still our guide,

and though we cannot see you,
you are always at our side.

Our family chain is broken
and nothing seems the same,
but as God calls us one by one,
the chain will link again.

~Submitted by the Family~

Acknowledgement

The family wishes to sincerely thank each and everyone for their acts of love, kindness and sympathy shown to them during this time of bereavement. May the Lord richly bless each of you.

Special thanks to Pastor Dr. Gregory Turner and the Christ Temple Baptist Church Family and Pastor Bernard Durham, Jr. and the Grace Bible Class Church Family.

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