



M IN LOVING
emory
OF
WILLA MAE TAYLOR
“WILL”

Sunrise
January 30, 1938

Sunset
April 20, 2026

Obituary

Willa Mae (Primus) Taylor was born in Estill, South Carolina on January 30th, 1938. She was the oldest child of Willie and Alverta Primus (nee Johnson). Their family unit consisted of three boys, Albert, Harold, and David – and two girls Willa Mae, and Iona.

The family migrated to Paterson, New Jersey in 1945. The Primus family were long time members of Solid Rock Baptist Church on Spring St. in Paterson.

At age 17, while working for the Paterson Board of Recreation she met Donovan Albert Taylor Jr. on the playgrounds. Two years later, on January 26th, 1957, they were married. From this union three children were born, Renee, Alvera, and Donovan III. They were married for 43 years. He was a retired safety engineer and a Paterson Housing commissioner.

Willa Mae Taylor has been part of the Paterson community for much more than half a century, almost 80 years. She was educated in Paterson elementary schools, and Central High School in Paterson, NJ. Willa Mae was an undergraduate of Fairleigh Dickinson University with a B.S. degree in Elementary Education K-8, a graduate of William Paterson College with a master's degree in Administration and supervision K-12, and completed course work for her PHD at Teacher's College at Columbia University NYC, in Family and Community Education.

Willa Mae became a teacher and educator in Paterson Public Schools #10, and #21. She served as Principal at School #28, Norman S. Weir, and School # 19. She counted her career in education as a glorious time to be involved, because she enjoyed teaching our children, working with the teachers, parents and the community.

Willa Mae has served as the facilitator for candidates' forums, church roundtables, and several guest speaker spots for the NAACP. She was in demand asked to host or MC several local political and church events. She had been trained as an organizer, Girl Scout leader, Boy Scout Master, Sunday school teacher and voter registration leader for the League of Women voters. She has participated in demonstrations for civil rights, children and rights of all people in this community and others. As an Elder and Deacon at United Presbyterian Church she tried to remain involved (until her health declined).

She was a Legacy Life Member of NCNW (Nation Council of Negro Women), Life member of the NAACP, former board member of the Paterson YWCA, Paterson UEZ (Urban Enterprise Zoning) Advisory Board Commissioner. She ran and was publicly elected twice to the Paterson Board of Education where she was also elected president. She often had to address the mayor and city council on school programs and funding issues. She was also the Treasurer of the local AARP Paterson branch #15.

She was preceded in death by her husband, Donovan Albert (Odom) Taylor Jr. in August 2000 and her daughter, Renee who passed through this life in December 2025

Willa Mae leaves to cherish wonderful memories two children, Alvera and Donovan III; twelve grandchildren, Michael Council Jr., Michael Peterson II, Rashonda and Tara Cannon, Sarah Taylor, Anthony and Marissa Smith, Muhammed Ishmael, Layla, Musa, Haleema and Saleem Shaheed; eleven great-grandchildren, Aleyah, Julian, Anthony Jr., Eric Jr., Kaylee Marie, Cameron, Josiah, Ka'lee, Jordan, Amariah, Gianna, and one great-great grandchild, Milan. Willa Mae also leaves behind her loving brother, Albert Primus who is the sole surviving member of their immediate Primus family; nieces and nephews, Sherry, Pamela, Alfray, La'Tonya, Uriah, Sibel, and a host of close cousins, other relatives, friends and her United Presbyterian Church family who loved her dearly.

Saturday, May 2, 2026 - 2:00 p.m.

United Presbyterian Church

375 Van Houten Street, Paterson, New Jersey

Rev. Danny Mitchell, Officiating

Micheline Moody- Stevens, Liturgist

Rex Hill, Organist

Order of Service

Processional

Selection

Scripture Readings

Old Testament

New Testament

Prayer of Comfort

Selection

Remarks

Acknowledgements & Obituary

Selection

Words of Comfort

Rev. Danny Mitchell

Recessional

Final Disposition

Cedar Lawn Crematory

200 McLean Blvd.

Paterson, New Jersey

I K now

I know you are hurting because I went away
But I will see you again up in heaven some day
God called me home because my job was done
Now I am at peace watching over everyone
When your tears begin to fall down your face
Just remember that I am in a better place
One day soon we will meet again
Up in heaven I'll be waiting to see you again

Written by, Shannell G. Griggs

Acknowledgment

The family wishes to thank all of you for your prayers, messages of comfort and the many other acts of kindness shown during our hour of bereavement.

May God continue to bless you in a very special way.

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