

Celebration of *Life*



Nellie R.
O'Neal

October 7, 1943 – July 16, 2026

Saturday, July 25, 2026 - 11:00am

Garrett Family Mortuary
1668 John F. Kennedy Blvd. • Jersey City, NJ 07305

Obituary

In Loving Memory of Nellie Ruth O'Neal October 7, 1943 – July 16, 2026

With hearts full of love and gratitude, we celebrate the life of Nellie Ruth O'Neal, who departed this life on July 16, 2026, at Jersey City Medical Center. Born on October 7, 1943, in Washington, Georgia, Nellie lived a life rich in love, laughter, good food, and unforgettable memories.

Nellie was one of those rare people everyone seemed to know—and if you met her, you probably never forgot her.

Throughout her life, she held many jobs, but two stand out in the memories of those who knew her. If you grew up around Jackson Avenue (now Martin Luther King Drive) in Jersey City, chances are you remember seeing her at Champs Variety Store. Many neighborhood kids fondly joke that the penny candy always carried the taste of her perfume. Later, at Pathmark on Route 440, Nellie became something of a local celebrity. Customers affectionately called her “The Chicken Lady,” and many insisted they would only buy fried chicken if Nellie was the one frying it. She had a gift for making people feel loved and at home.

Home was where Nellie's heart truly lived. She found joy in planting flowers, trying her luck with Pick-It and lottery tickets, and filling her home with the aroma of home-cooked meals like fried chicken, collard greens, cabbage, fried okra, and fried green tomatoes—you get the point. Whether you were family, a friend, or someone who simply stopped by, you almost certainly left her home with a full stomach, a full heart, and, more often than not, tears of laughter.

She loved listening to Otis Redding, but she also had a playful side that surprised many. She could just as easily turn up “Where My Dogs At?” by DMX and enjoy every beat with a smile.

Nellie was witty, quick with a joke, and, in her younger years, always beautifully dressed. She was never one to tolerate foolishness. She was loving yet strong, kind yet fearless. She protected those she loved with the heart of a true mama bear, always standing firmly beside her children and grandchildren. Her greatest joy was spoiling her grandchildren and watching her family grow.

Depending on when you knew her, she may have been “Miss Nellie” from Champs, “The Chicken Lady” from Pathmark, “Mrs. O'Neal” to neighbors, “Aunt Nellie” to countless nieces and nephews, or simply Ma or Na-Na. No matter what you called her, people consistently described her the same way: loving, funny, cool, and someone who genuinely cared about others.

Nellie was preceded in death by her beloved husband, Joe L. O'Neal; her daughter-in-law, Lenora Brunson-O'Neal; her mother, Lula Mae Reid; her siblings, George Reid, Barbara Reid, Patricia Dunn, and Lehester Reid; and her siblings-in-law, Joyce O'Neal and Nelson O'Neal.

She leaves to cherish her memory her loving children: Kevin O'Neal of Jersey City, New Jersey; Bernadette O'Neal of Jersey City, New Jersey; Kourtney

O'Neal of Temple, Georgia; and Keisha O'Neal of Plano, Texas. She also leaves behind her cherished grandchildren: Marquis Moses, Nakia Roberson, Kourtney Evans, Khadija O'Neal, and Brooklyn Thomas; her adored great-grandchildren: Heavenly Stockling, Ariana Johnson, Akil Johnson, Josiah Moses, and Cali Moses; her sisters-in-law, Louise O'Neal and Leatha Flagler; along with a host of loving nieces, nephews, extended family members, and lifelong friends who will forever treasure her memory.

Although our hearts are heavy, we find comfort in remembering Nellie exactly as she lived—with laughter, good food, music playing in the background, flowers blooming outside, and plenty of love to go around.

Her life reminds us that sometimes the greatest legacy isn't found in grand accomplishments but in the countless lives touched by a warm meal, a quick laugh, a fierce hug, and unconditional love.

She will be deeply missed, lovingly remembered, and forever celebrated.

“If you leave here today smiling, laughing, or craving fried chicken, then you’ve remembered Nellie exactly the way she’d want to be remembered.”

Order of Service

Processional

Selection

Scripture Readings

Prayer

Selection

Acknowledgements

Remarks

Obituary

Selection

Eulogy

Final Viewing

Recessional

Interment

Bayview Cemetery
Jersey City, New Jersey

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.

To laugh, to love, to work or play.
Tasks left undone must stay that way,
I found that peace at the close of day.

If my parting has left a void,
Then fill it up with remembered joy.
A friendship shared, a laugh, a kiss,
Oh, yes these things I too will miss.
Be not burdened with times of sorrow,
I wish you the sunshine of tomorrow.

My life's been full, I savored 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 set me free!

-author unknown

Acknowledgements

*The family wishes to express their sincere thanks and appreciation
for the many acts of kindness, comforting words, and prayers
shown during our time of bereavement.*



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"Where Dignity and Service Become an Everlasting Memory"