



In Loving Memory of



Thelma Byrd

Sunrise
December 18, 1916

Sunset
November 24, 2018


Service

Monday, December 3, 2018 - 11:00 a.m.

Mt. Calvary Baptist Church

235 Seymour Avenue, Newark, New Jersey

Rev. Branch, Officiating



Obituary



Thelma Ophelia Byrd (nee, Norman) was born to David and Isabella Norman on December 18, 1916. Born and raised in Creswell, North Carolina, Thelma was the youngest of fourteen children, seven boys and seven girls. She grew up in the church, namely St. John Baptist Church, where she sang in the choir and played the organ for the younger children. In 1934, upon graduation

from high school, Thelma left the place she so lovingly called home and moved to Baltimore, Maryland, where many of her older siblings resided. A year later she left Baltimore and settled in Newark, New Jersey.

Thelma soon found employment working in dress factory and also as a domestic in the place she now called home. It was in Newark where she met her loving husband, the late William Henry Byrd, who worked as a Customs Officer for the Federal Government in the Port of Newark. In 1947, Thelma became, and remained, a faithful member of Mount Calvary Missionary Baptist Church, under the tutelage of Reverend J. Wendell Mapson, until his retirement, who then passed on the torch to Reverend Ralph Branch. While Mount Calvary served as Thelma's sole place of worship, it also provided her the opportunity to join and actively participate in many clubs, including the Lillian Edmond Club (1956). In 1994 she became a Deaconess, which brought her a source of much pride and happiness.

Thelma, lovingly known as daughter, wife, mom, sister, grandma, auntie, niece, cousin, congregant, and friend, was known for her kind heart, her quick wit, and "for telling it like it is". She was not one to mince words and would not hesitate to tell you exactly what was on her mind; a trait she passed on to quite a few of her grandchildren. Her words were neither harsh nor cold, they were simply honest, which left the recipient of her truth a little wiser and appreciative, opposed to being offended.

Thelma's caring and supportive demeanor transcended over into her

warm and welcoming home, which was known as the gathering place for friends and family. Her home was open to all to celebrate special occasions or simply to provide a temporary stay to those in transition. Thelma's hospitality was sincere and heartfelt, whether you were a lifelong family member or friend or a new acquaintance. In her home there were no strangers or guests, everyone was made to feel right at home.

Her life centered on life's simple pleasures, so Thelma also found much joy and comfort in the company of her late siblings and her beloved Maltese, Tinkerbelle. In addition, everyone knew to never interrupt her when she was watching her favorite soap opera, "The Young and the Restless". She mastered the art of infusing her love for baking into her amazing cakes and it was not uncommon for people to vie for the last piece. She also enjoyed sharing stories and jokes, and her laugh was truly infectious; it will surely be missed.

Almost two years ago, Thelma joyously celebrated her centennial birthday (100 years) surrounded by family, her church family, and friends. She was elated when she later received a letter of recognition from President and Mrs. Barack Obama for this noteworthy milestone. She was just under a month shy of her 102nd birthday. Being who she was, Thelma would want us to rejoice in her glory, celebrate her life, and embrace the impact she had on all of us. She would want her proud heritage and strong family history shared with every grand, great-grand, and great-great grand and charge each and every one of them to carry on and honor her legacy, their legacy, with ongoing knowledge, conversation, grace, and pride.

Thelma's legacy continues with and through her four adoring children; Joan Gibson, Joseph Williams (Ida), the late Barbara Williams, and the late Gerald Byrd. She was also affectionately known as "Grandma" to 12 grandchildren; the late Derrick Norman, Karen Climpson (Malik), the late LaVell Norman, Richard Norman (Keisha), Trent Norman (Tammy), the late Edwin Gibson, Terrence Knox (Kathryn), Kevin Larkins (Melody), Shelly Larkins, Yusef Hassan Wheeler (Sandra), Ravi Williams (Peace), and Razi Miles (Mia). She was blessed to welcome over 40 great-grandchildren and several great-great grandchildren to the Norman family tree. While she was pre-deceased by her husband, William, and all of her thirteen siblings, she is survived by an abundance of nieces, nephews, cousins, in-laws, and friends.

Order of Service

Processional

Selection

Scripture Reading
Old Testament
New Testament

Prayer of Comfort

Selection

Remarks
(Two minutes each please)

Acknowledgements

Obituary

Selection

Eulogy
Rev. Branch

Recessional

INTERMENT

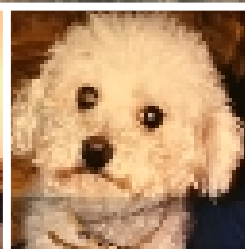
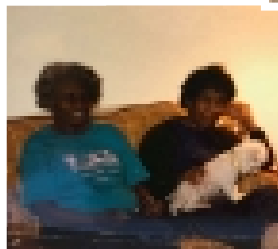
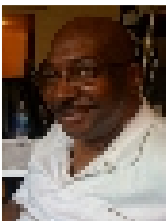
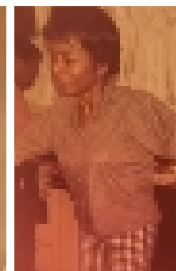
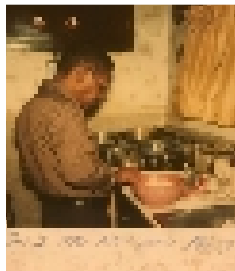
Evergreen Cemetery
Hillside, New Jersey

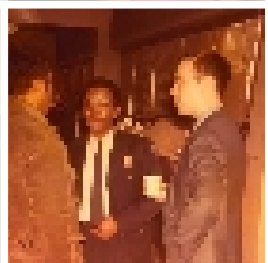
THE WHITE HOUSE
WASHINGTON

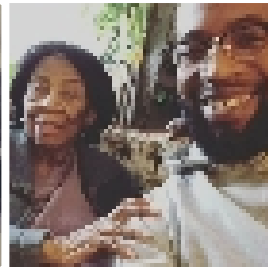
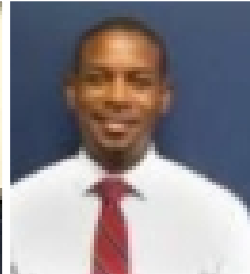
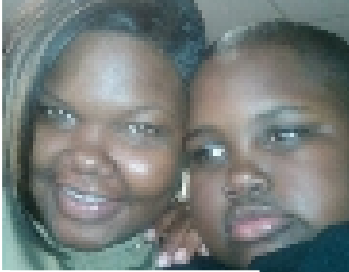
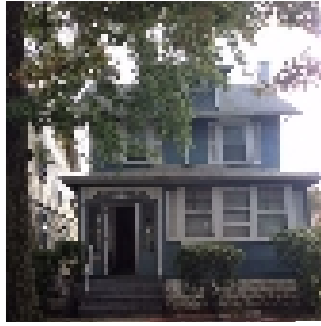
We are pleased to join your family and friends in wishing you a happy 70th birthday. As you celebrate this extraordinary milestone, we hope you reflect on the many memories you have made over the past century. Your generation has shown the courage to persevere through depression and war, and the vision to broaden our liberties through changing times. We are grateful for your contributions to the American story, and we wish you all the best for the coming year.

Sincerely,

 Michelle Obama







When Tomorrow Starts Without Me

When tomorrow starts without me, and I'm not there to see if the sun should rise and find your eyes, all filled with tears for me. I wish so much you wouldn't cry, the way you did today, while thinking of the many things, we didn't get to say. I know how much you love me, as much as I love you, and each time that you think of me, I know you'll miss me too. But when tomorrow starts without me, please try to understand that an angel came and called my name, and took me by the hand and said, "my place was ready, in heaven far above and that I'd have to leave behind, all those I dearly love." But when I walked through heaven's gates, I felt so much at home. When God looked down and smiled at me, from His great golden throne. He said "This is eternity, and all I've promised you." Today for life on earth is past, but here it starts anew. I promise no tomorrow, for today will always last. And since each day's the same way, there's no longing for the past. So when tomorrow starts without me, don't think we're far apart. For every time you think of me, I'm right here in your heart.

-Author unknown



Acknowledgement

The family of **Thelma Byrd** wishes to extend our sincere gratitude for all acts of kindness and sympathy shown to us at our time of bereavement. God bless you all for your thoughtfulness and concern.

Professional Services Provided By

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