

CELEBRATING THE LIFE OF

A portrait of Katherine Beatrice Thompson Payne, an elderly woman with short, dark, curly hair, smiling warmly. She is wearing a vibrant red turtleneck sweater and large hoop earrings. The background is a soft-focus field of pink and white roses.

*Katherine Beatrice Thompson Payne*

*Sunrise*  
*October 9, 1935*

*Sunset*  
*June 21, 2019*

# *Obituary*

Katherine Beatrice Thompson Payne (“Kae”) was born in Elizabeth N.J. on October 9, 1935. Kae was the second of three children born through the union of William Archie Thompson and Mildred Davis Thompson, and was a special present to her family having been born on her father’s birthday. She grew up as a member of the Union Baptist Church in Elizabeth, N.J., where her great uncle, Rev. Joseph Bailey, was the first minister in 1891. Kae transitioned to heaven on Friday evening, June 21, 2019 with her children, grandchildren and other close family members by her side.

During her youth, Kae was involved in many activities such as tennis, horseback riding, roller skating and, of course, dance. She attended Elizabeth public schools and graduated from Battin High School in 1954. Kae went on to attend New Jersey State Teachers College (now known as Kean College) where she earned her degree in education. She was a member of the Alpha Kappa Alpha Sorority. She also modeled, participated in many beauty contests earning several awards, and studied dance and theater, performing in several off Broadway shows.

Kae gave birth to her first child Richard D. Thompson, and then met and married William D. Payne (“Bill Payne”) of Newark, N.J. in 1957. They lived in Newark, N.J. and from their union four children were born: Eric A. Payne, Lisa K. Payne, the late Gina R. Payne-Scott and Kristi R. Payne. They moved to Boyden Avenue in Maplewood to raise their children in a home that came to be known as a common place for gatherings of family and friends.

During her children’s early years, Kae taught English and History in both the Newark and Passaic, New Jersey school systems. Partly in effort to provide a safe haven and sense of culture and pride for children in Newark, Kae and her sister Patricia Joyner founded the Thompson Dance Studio in 1966 where they offered professional dance instruction in ballet, pointe, modern dance, modern jazz, African dance and tap. They started the dance studio at the Leaguers Building on Clinton Avenue in Newark, moving as they expanded to the widely known locations on Bergen Street and then on Lyons Avenue. The Thompson Dance Studio successfully educated and trained hundreds of dancers through 11 years in operation, exposing students in the urban area to not only their teaching, but also to dance classes conducted by a wide variety of professional dancers from New York. The Thompson Dance Studio was renowned in the Newark area not only for its quality dance instruction, but also for its annual dance production and elaborate performances at Symphony Hall in Newark.

After closing her Dance Studio, Kae began her career in broadcast journalism as a host, producer and news writer on various television assignments, including a bi-weekly talk show called “Information Exchange” on Suburban Cablevision TV 3, and a weekly talk show called “New Jersey Press Conference” on Channel 47. Her career as a radio host was launched after she responded to a friend’s request to fill in as a guest host on-air on WLIB Radio in New York in 1980. Kae soon became the host of her own WLIB talk radio show called “Urban Notebook” and later “Kae Thompson Payne Live” where she became well known for bringing her wit, wisdom and compassion to cover controversial stories that impacted the black community such as Tawana Brawley, Eleanor Bumpurs, Yusef Hawkins, the Central Park Five, and the Crown Heights riots. Some highlights of her career as a radio host include her interviews with Rosa Parks, Nelson Mandela upon his trip to the U.S. following release from jail in

South Africa, Jessie Jackson during his Presidential bid, and Johnny Cochran after the O.J. Simpson case. She enjoyed a robust 25-year career in radio and built a significant and loyal following.

After her WLIB tenure ended, Kae shifted focus, combining her teaching experience with her tv and radio production knowledge to create and conduct a program with the Newark Public Schools that taught teachers and students how to produce a television show. Pairing down to a part-time schedule, Kae was able to spend more time with her long-time partner Gus Henningburg traveling, boating, enjoying tennis and spending time with family and friends.

Over recent years, Kae Thompson Payne returned to radio in a weekly podcast called “Kae Thompson Live.” She held her last show discussing current issues with her son Eric Payne and close friends on Wednesday, June 19, 2019. She is survived by her loving and devoted children Eric, Lisa and Kristi Payne, son-in-law Brian Scott, 12 adoring grandchildren Briana, Dallas and Gabriel Scott, Kaya, Jonah and Lucah Benitez, Dalandra Young, Story, Richard and Tijuana Thompson, Bianca Thompson Owen, and Shanta Anderson, nieces and nephews Mark Thompson, Suzanne Anahata Chao, Anthony Joyner, Brandon Joyner-Wortman, Congressman Donald Payne Jr., Wanda and Nicole Payne, Lauren Stanley Rajab, and George, Craig and Larry Stanley, first cousins Millie Blue and Robert Vandervere, and a host of great-grandchildren, cousins, other relatives and special friends. She will live forever in our hearts and memories. Rest in peace Mommy.



*Thursday, June 27, 2019 - 11:00 a.m.*

# Messiah Baptist Church

13-17 Oak Street  
East Orange, New Jersey

## *Order of Service*

Musical Prelude

Invocation .....Rev. Dana P. Owens

Obituary (read silently)

Hymn of Comfort.....“Blessed Assurance”

Scripture Reading

Old Testament .....Kaya & Jonah Benitez

New Testament.....Dalandra Young & Story Thompson

Prayer of Comfort.....Rev. Dana P. Owens

Poem.....Briana, Dallas & Gabriel Scott

Selection.....“Precious Lord”

Tributes.....Wayne Gilman

Ann Trip

Donna Wilson

William Payne

Eric Payne

Acknowledgements.....Craig Stanley

Selection.....“Amazing Grace”

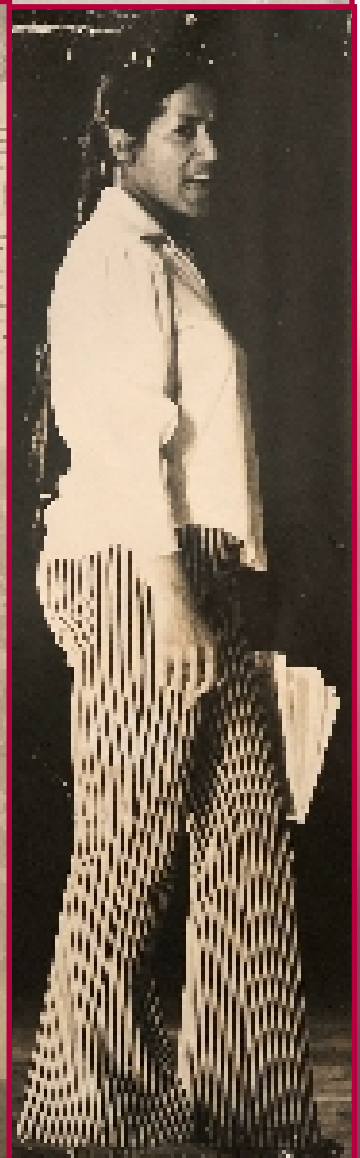
Eulogy.....Rev. Dana P. Owens

Recessional.....Revelations/Wade in the Water

**Interment**  
*Glendale Cemetery  
Bloomfield, New Jersey*

*Following the interment, family and friends are invited back  
to the Church for a repast*

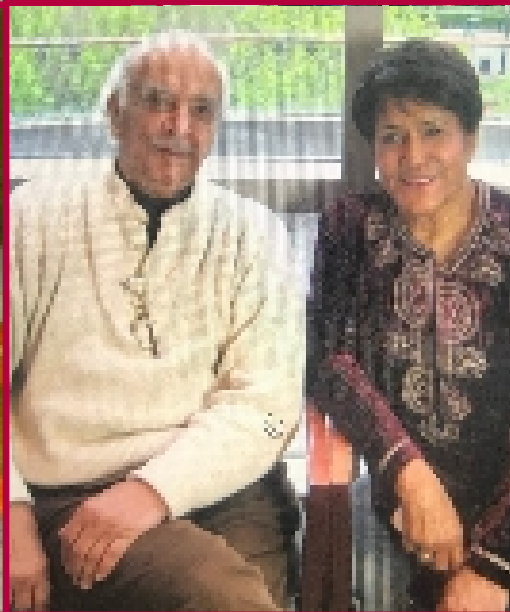
# *Forever In Our Hearts*

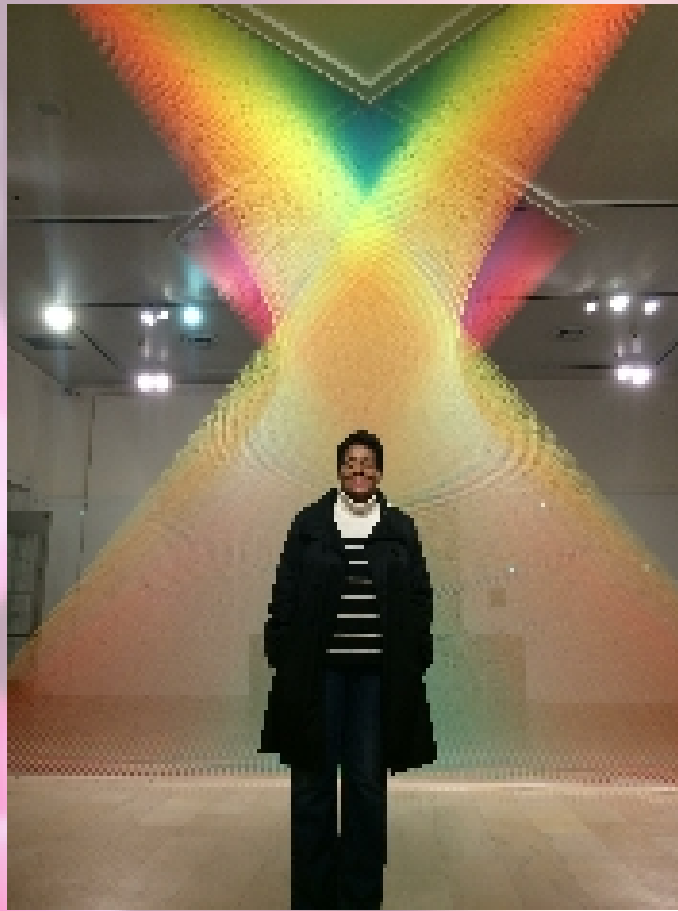


# *Precious Memories*



# Precious Memories





## *Do Not Stand At My Grave And Weep*

Do not stand at my grave and weep,  
I am not there, I do not sleep.  
I am in a thousand winds that blow,  
I am the softly falling snow.  
I am the gentle showers of rain,  
I am the fields of ripening grain.  
I am in the morning hush,  
I am in the graceful rush  
Of beautiful birds in circling flight,  
I am the starshine of the night.  
I am in the flowers that bloom,  
I am in a quiet room.  
I am in the birds that sing,  
I am in each lovely thing.  
Do not stand at my grave and cry,  
I am not there. I do not die.

By Mary Elizabeth Frye

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