

*In Loving Memory of*  
*Helaina Townsel-Williams*

**SUNRISE: January 16, 1957**

**SUNSET: November 23, 2021**



**Friday, December 3, 2021 - 10AM**

**Chambers Memorial Baptist Church**  
**219 E. 123rd Street, New York, NY 10035**

# Obituary

**Helaina Elizabeth Townsel-Williams** was born on January 16, 1957 to Helen Bayne and Foster Townsel. She grew up in Cambria Heights, Queens, New York with her mother, father, and older sister, Michelle (Midgie) Robina Townsel.

Helaina attend elementary school at P.S. 147, and junior high school at I.S. 192 (6th and 7th grade) and Redeemer Lutheran School of Bayside (8th grade). She went on to graduate from Andrew Jackson High School, which was just across the street from her family home, and then attended York College where she majored in office administration.

She worked as an Executive Assistant at Blue Cross Blue Shield for twenty-two years. It was during this time that she worked in Tower One of the World Trade Center and became a survivor of the 9/11 attacks. Helaina went on to work as a Customer Care Representative at NYC 311 for twelve years, and most recently as a Unit Clerk at St. Albans VA Medical Center where she was known as one of the best clinic aides.

She met her husband James (Junebug) Williams when they were teenagers. They dated briefly before going their separate ways, and then reconnected eleven years later in a chance encounter on a subway station platform at 42nd Street. Her husband James always recounts the story with joy and gratitude: "I looked up the escalator and saw her. I lost her and found my baby again." They remained together ever since and married on April 17, 1989.

Helaina was an excellent dancer who performed with beauty, power, and grace. She particularly loved African Dance as it exposed her to culture and gave her great happiness and joy. She danced with Kevin Rainey; Forces of Nature, led by Abdel Salaam; and LaRocque Bey School of Dance and Theater, led by Jerome Hunter, among others. She also performed at highly regarded festivals and venues such as BAM Dance Africa, the African American Day Parade in Harlem, and Aaron Davis Hall at City College. She was beloved by the African Dance community.

Helaina was a deeply devoted wife, mother and friend. She took care of her mother, she adored her children and grandchildren, and she was known among her friends as the glue that kept them all connected. She was an excellent cook, she loved fashion, she lived for great music, and she also had a lovely singing voice. Helaina always maintained a calm demeanor and energy, she was very genuine, and she had a heart of gold.

Helaina made her transition on November 23, 2021. She leaves to mourn: her husband, James Williams; her children, Itia, James Jr., Jamel, and Tenearrah; her grandchildren, (Aniyah - deceased), Jared, Jaylen, Jacob, Aneesa, William, and Stormazia; her cousins; and a host of other family and friends.

Helaina greatly impacted the lives and the hearts of those who loved her. She will be deeply missed.

# *Order of Service*

**Processional**

**Original Poem:**

Written and recited by James B. Williams, Jr.

**Scripture Reading (Old Testament):**

Jeremiah 31: 3, 13 and 33

**Scripture Reading (New Testament):**

2 Corinthians 5:15-19

**Expressions of Love**

**Reading of the Obituary**

**Eulogy**

**Song**

**Recessional**



**INTERMENT:**

Pinelawn Memorial Park  
Farmingdale, New York



## *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

## *Acknowledgement*

*The family acknowledges with deep appreciation all acts of kindness extended to them during this bereavement hour. May God bless you for all your thoughtfulness and concern.*

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