

Homegoing Celebration

PROCESSIONAL Clergy and Family led by
Rev. Dr. Patrick D. Clayborn, *Senior Pastor, Bethel A.M.E. Church*
Rev. Dr. Sheri Smith Clayborn, *Elder and First Lady, Bethel A.M.E. Church*

Rev. Dr. Jo Ann Browning, *Presiding
Co-Pastor, Ebenezer A.M.E. Church*

OPENING HYMN "Lift Him Up"

PRAYER
Bishop Anne Henning Byfield, *Retired, President of the Council of Bishops*
Mrs. Irene M. Daniels, *Episcopal Supervisor, President Supervisors Council*
Rev. Betsy Williams, *Global Intercessor*

SCRIPTURE
Old Testament – Isaiah 41:8-10 Rev. Dr. Toni Belin Ingram
Presiding A.M.E. Elder of Augusta North District
New Testament – 2 Corinthians 4:7-12 Dr. Salima Marriott
Sister Friend, Former Maryland House Delegate

SELECTION Bethel A.M.E. Community Choir

REFLECTIONS
Connectional Officer – Dr. Deborah Taylor-King, *President, Women's Missionary Society*
Akosua Visions Ministry – Jacqueline DeBose
Siblings – Elise Williams and Rev. Quintalyn Williams Phillips
Grandchildren – Naomi R. Bryant
Children – Rev. Dr. Thema Simone Bryant, *Elder, First A.M.E. Church*

ARTISTIC TRIBUTE Akosua Visions Dance Ministry

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS Zephia Bryant, MEd
Bryant Educational Leadership Group

OBITUARY READ IN SILENCE Dontae Winslow, *Composer*

SERMONIC SELECTION Rev. Carolyn Elizabeth Irvin Brailsford
Episcopal Supervisor, A.M.E. Church 20th District

EULOGY Bishop Vashti Murphy McKenzie
President, National Council of Churches of Christ

RECESSIONAL Clergy and Family

INTERMENT

King Memorial Park
8710 Dogwood Road | Windsor Mill, Maryland
(Immediately following Service)

HONORARY PALLBEARERS

Brother Joseph Green
Rev. Dr. Grainger Browning
Rev. Dr. Ray Hammond
Rev. Ronnie Nsubuga
Elder Leroy Lewis
Rev. Donald Phillips

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The family gratefully acknowledges the many kind and beautiful expressions of sympathy and love shown during its hour of bereavement.

Special thanks to:

Rev. Dr. Patrick D. Clayborn & Rev. Dr. Sheri Smith Clayborn
The Bethel A.M.E. Church Family
Johns Hopkins Hospital Medical Team
Vicky Lightner
Brother Joseph Green
Rev. JoAnn Montague
Sister Helen Hutchinson

*Children were the joy and motivation of Reverend Dr. Cecelia Bryant's ministry.
She mentored and equipped youth all around the globe. In lieu of flowers, please donate
to the Reverend Dr. Cecelia Williams Bryant Primary School in Liberia, West Africa.*



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IN LOVING MEMORY OF



The Rev. Dr. Cecelia WILLIAMS BRYANT

October 31, 1946 - September 26, 2024

SATURDAY, OCTOBER 5, 2024

Wake: 10:00 a.m. Funeral: 11:00 a.m.

BETHEL A.M.E. CHURCH | 1300 DRUID HILL AVENUE | BALTIMORE, MARYLAND

O B I T U A R Y

THE REV. DR. CECELIA WILLIAMS BRYANT in her earthly life was a radiant outpouring of God's own regal, majestic, and divine Queen Mother Spirit, a glorious gifting and global summoning to an African people and the world over for generations. She lived poetically, imaginatively, prophetically, faithfully, lovingly, and audaciously in response to the liberatory calling and vision she received from the Most High early in life, and to which the multitudes who know her by many names bear witness as her greatest beneficiaries and legacy bearers, first among them, her beloved family. As we gather to praise God for the gift of her precious life, the God who knit her together in her mother's womb, we remember her by her many names and assignments. We also remember the people who made her and first called her beloved. She was her Ancestors' prayers, a treasured granddaughter and daughter, a precious niece, a sister to her siblings, a revered wife and the love of her Beloved's life, a forever cherished mother, a grand and proud Nana, an irreplaceable Godmother, and a life and light bringer, visionary builder, spirit doula, soul seer, mighty advocate, spirit-filled author, prophetic intercessor, Rev. C, Aunt C, Mother Bryant, and more. We bear witness to the opening and unfolding of Spirit, for as she lived and grew the freedom dreams of her Ancestors, together with God, her legacy summons us now to love, dance, and live daringly "on Earth as it is in heaven."

Born on October 31, 1946, to Pauline Williams, an AME Zion stewardess, and Booker T. Williams, a World War II veteran, in Yonkers, New York, Cecilia was the second of ten children. Early in life, Cecilia dreamed of transforming the world to the Glory of God. At a time when Black freedom and women's movements were gaining new momentum in contemporary struggles for liberation and justice, God gave Cecilia a vision and calling as a young child. After encountering the Holy Spirit, who told her she would travel the world and be a blessing to others, she moved faithfully, answering and responding to God's vision and calling on her life, beginning with her studies. An avid learner, reader, writer, and orator, Cecilia first began her studies at Elizabeth Seaton Junior College, where she obtained an associate's degree. This was the beginning of a rich academic career that led her to earning degrees at Boston University (Bachelor of Arts in Political Science), Howard University (Master of Divinity), and The United Theological Seminary (Doctorate of Ministry). Each degree equipped her to better fulfill her lifelong mission.

While studying at Boston University, Cecilia met the love of her life, John Bryant, a determined seminary student, minister, and activist. John was first smitten with Cecilia's beauty and brilliance, and at a glance, knew there was something different about her confidence, grace, and poise. She was regal and wise beyond her years. In turn, Cecilia saw in John a strong, brave, and driven leader. They married in 1969, and with a shared vision for liberating people of African descent, launched a 55-year-long adventure of love, faith, and happiness. Their covenant marriage resulted in the births of a precocious son, Jamal-Harrison, and a poised daughter, Thema Simone. A devoted wife and nurturing mother, Cecilia led her family with love, spirituality, Black culture, and a dedication to service and education.

As a missionary and ordained elder, she founded a Women's Center at Bethel AME Church in Baltimore, introduced an associate's degree program, and established a grant to grow church community gardens in an effort to counteract food deserts in the Fourth Episcopal District. Most recently after hosting a national prayer conference, she founded "Teen Altar," an online program to teach youth about the power of prayer.

In 1988, when John was elected to the role of Bishop, the Bryant family answered a divine calling to live and serve in Liberia and throughout the 14th District of West Africa. There, in the bustling villages, Cecilia quickly became known as Mother Bryant. She supported the local women, built a school for children, and was instrumental with her husband in establishing many new AME churches in West Africa, as well as investing in the AME College in Liberia. Her genuine love for humanity enabled her to connect deeply with people across language, class, and creed. This was her superpower.

In the coming years in her role as the Women's Empowerment Leader, she traveled throughout Africa, Asia, the Caribbean, Europe, the Middle East, North America, and South America. In every place she planted her feet, she left an indelible mark. Today, there are AME churches in India, orphanages in Lesotho, schools in Côte d'Ivoire, and a host of other sustainable projects throughout the world that Rev. Dr. Bryant helped to found. She has been a powerful voice—quick to challenge injustice in any form—for advocacy and liberation worldwide, including the African diaspora and beyond. An Early Childhood Development Center in Seattle, Washington has been named in her honor. In recognition of a lifetime of community service, she also received the prestigious Volunteer Service Award from the 44th United States President Barack Obama.

Rev. Dr. Bryant had a way with words. When she preached, the rich raspiness of her voice thundered throughout the air. Her entire body and spirit would serve as conduits for the message. She might break into song or dance, if that's how the spirit moved her. She was a prophetic preacher and also a prolific writer, who penned several books, including *Kiamsha: A Spiritual Discipline for African American Women*, *I Dance with God: A Cojourney in Prayer*, *"Come To Me": Prayings of the Soul*, *Letters of Light for First Ladies*, *Forty Day: Tongues of Fire and Prophetic Transformation*, and *Kujua: A Spirituality of the Hidden Way*. Her written words, original and poetic, could dance off the page, much like her sermons and prayers, painting celestial tapestries that pulled the reader into a deeper connection with God and themselves.

Her final ministry, in alignment with her 77th birthday, was the 77 days of intercessory prayer she offered online for a Global Ceasefire. She left her earthly body on September 26, 2024, journeying to Glory on High, where she lives, intercedes, dances, ministers, and loves—eternally free. The unending and unbound power of her legacy, a global ministry, prayer, written word, preaching, and calling as a Beloved and faithful vessel in heart, mind, body, soul, and Spirit continues. The fruit of her ministry lives, declaring God's audacious vision for a people, walking the talk in Spirit, and watching God work miracles within and all around.

A Queen Mother for Generations, her legacy continues, beginning with her beloved husband, The Right Reverend John Richard Bryant, the 106th Consecrated Bishop of the African Methodist Episcopal Church; son, The Rev. Dr. Jamal-Harrison Bryant, who currently pastors New Birth Missionary Baptist Church in Atlanta; daughter, The Rev. Dr. Thema Simone Bryant, author, minister, licensed psychologist, sacred artist, and the 2023 President of the American Psychological Association; godson, Micah Wright, educator, coach, and doctoral student; her beloved grands, Topaz, Naomi, Grace, Ife, Adore, Angel, and Ayo; and her godchildren, Siani and Jonathan. She is blessed with soulful siblings, Celestine, Paula, May, Debbie, Booker T., Katrina, Quinnie, and Elise, as well as her sister in love Cynthia, and a host of cousins, nieces, nephews, and mentees.

She danced with God and was preceded into GLORY by her parents Pauline Lucas Williams and Booker T. Williams and brother Roy Williams.

She sang with angels. She cried with the brokenhearted. She prayed with the lost. The fruit of her hands was bountiful. The reach of her testimony was vast. Daily, she approached the throne of God on behalf of her family, strangers, the country, and the entire planet. You may not have known it, but daily, Reverend Bryant was praying for YOU and interceding intergalactically into the heavens on YOUR behalf. Her very life was evidence of the beauty God can make of a willing heart. We rejoice and give thanks for her triumphant life.

WELL DONE, Thy good and faithful servant.

WELL DONE, Daughter of the Most High.

WELL DONE.

