



## Leona H. Taylor

January 27, 1932 - December 24, 2024

Leona Helen Smith-Taylor, the “Baby Daughter” of the family, was born on Wednesday, January 27, 1932, to the late William and Stella Smith at the then Chester Hospital.

Leona was a lifelong resident of Chester and was educated in the Chester Public schools. She was raised within a strong Christian family and her spirit exuded a profound sense of awe, respect and reverence for God who is all powerful and loving. She began her religious pilgrimage at an early age and joined Murphy AME Church. She remained there for many years before making the decision to join her family at Providence Baptist Church. She was an active member and served in many ministries.

The onset of Leona’s employment years began in the 50’s. She was a Crossing Guard for the city of Chester stationed at 9th and Tilghman Streets. Her children’s childhood friends would jokingly call her, “Leona the Cop Lady” because of the style hat and uniform she donned. There were only two guards, at that time, who patrolled a 4-block radius in that area. The other guard, the late Yvonne Carrington and her best friend, became her daughter’s sister-in-law years later. They were well-known, loved and respected by the children. Then, in the 60’s, for a brief stint, she worked at the Ship and Shore Factory in Upland, PA. During the 70’s, Leona and her husband became entrepreneurs. They owned three businesses. A restaurant named “Lee and

Goody's Fish and Chips and Wings and Things" and two bars - "The Family Circle" and "The Wine Cellar". After years of ownership Leona's husband also wanted to join his family at Providence. However, he knew the decision he had to bring about was to sacrifice and close the latter two establishments and figuratively "take down" the signposts. The former of the two was closed a while earlier. In the 90's, during Leona's last years of employment, she served as a Bi-Lingual Teacher's Assistant in the Chester Upland School District until her retirement. She loved working with the students as was reciprocated by them.

Leona married her childhood sweetheart, the late James B. Taylor. From this union they were blessed with five daughters, and children they raised from birth and adopted.

Queen, Gamas, Little Leona, Lee, Lola, Mom-Mom, Momma Lee, Ms. Leona, Deaconess/Ms. Taylor. An immeasurable list of the many terms of endearment she was affectionately called and/or known by. She was well thought of and embraced all of her family members and her children's friends as though they were her own. She even welcomed relatives and friends that her children shared college years with into her home to spend weekends or days at a time with them. Her infectious smile warmed your heart and made one feel welcome. Leona was a kind, caring, lovable, and awesome woman of God.

A high point during her children's high school years was basketball season. When the Chester High School Basketball team earned their rights to the finals in Harrisburg, PA, Leona made it possible for many of the students to travel there to support the team. She chartered a fleet of buses that would be lined up and down Lloyd Street from 10th to 7th Streets. "The good old days". When football season occurred, Leona loved sitting out on her porch to listen to the noises and for the excitement to unfold... the cheers from the crowd during the games, the smell of Chrysanthemums in the air during

Homecoming, and subsequently graduation. There were horns honking, students gaily cheering, and the sight of graduation gowns flailing and balloons blowing in the wind. Some of them could be seen holding on tightly to their caps while hollering outside the car windows. Others celebrated while standing up through the sunroof of the car as though it was their personal float in a parade. She enjoyed it all! At times she would even commentate a live broadcast via “telephone” to a family member or friend. She created a vicarious experience for that particular person on the other end and they most likely listened intently. One could imagine what the receiver was saying. Perhaps such words or phrases as, “What?”, “Did they?”, “Stop Leona, you’re kidding me”. Other times she was probably having a “tête à tête” on the phone with her sister “Ibby” or best friend. Two things Leona took great pleasure in, “talking” on the telephone and “eating” good food. Even when she “moved on up(down) to the Smyrna side”, her dialogue and updates via the telephone were still maintained.

Leona’s list of leisurely pursuits included traveling, entertaining company, going to family cook-outs, parties “especially when she was the honoree” participating in the activities at the Senior Citizen Center, and dancing. In the most recent years, she had to start using a “third leg”. Even though Leona knew she wasn’t physically able, she would still be seen standing or holding on to the table at an event patting her feet when the DJ began playing his compilation of music. And, at times, was trying to “bust a two or three-step move”. She also enjoyed being a member in the “Red Hatters”, one of her favorite social clubs.

Who’s that LADY??? Leona loved complementing her Sunday attire with a hat. She was one of the few members who did. When entering the sanctuary, she could be seen sitting on the left side, almost toward the front, with a wide brim hat on tilted to the right side. The people behind her probably couldn’t

see in front of them but they never said a word or let her know it was a distraction. Or, maybe they said, "That lady has on a gorgeous hat."

Leona and her husband, Mr. Goody, were generous partners and apportioned what they had with family members and friends or one in need. That was their wheelhouse. They would give their last dollar without hesitation. When an individual asked for help "Mr. Goody" would say, "Lee, give (and he would say the name) \$50 or, whatever the amount". And she did it. Did the person know whether or not it might have been their last? NO, and there was no confrontation or discussion afterwards about that which had transpired. They were a dynamic duo team... "Mr. and Mrs. Goody", a name bestowed upon them by family members and friends. Their munificent mindset coursed right down, figuratively, into the "veins" of their children. They would always make sure that family and friends genuinely felt welcomed in their home during dinner, at a party or even an outside event. With the siblings it was not who had the most. Their father would tell them, "That which is expedient, is lawful." Share with each other that which you have. Leona, being the Matriarch of the family, was the intangible glue that kept the family intact. She would say, "Don't go about burning any bridges, especially with a person you want to sever the ties with. You might find yourself under that person's authority or need their help". She also prompted us to treat others the way you want to be treated and mend the broken fence and forgive your friend you thought wronged or misunderstood you. No one is perfect. In her children's eyes she was the "quintessential" mother, and there were no other like her.

Our mother wasn't feeling well and consequently was taken to the hospital. Despite her age, the operation performed by the doctor's should not have resulted with dire complications. However, the trauma had already happened the evening prior to the day for surgery. After the operation, we were summoned to ICU by one of the nurses and our mother was hooked up to a ventilator. Though in disbelief, we were still hopeful and did not let our faith in God waiver. After weeks of treatment and the need to take her off the

machine, time wise, her first words were, "I want something to eat". Her grandson, Pastor AJ, smiled and responded, "She does like to eat." Our mother started showing indications of making progress and being more responsive. Our round-the-clock vigils were to alert the nurses or doctors, when not around, if we detected anything visibly wrong with her vital signs or breathing. The week before Christmas we forged ahead and began making plans in great anticipation of bringing our mother home. Sending her to a Nursing Home was not an option. The unexpected outcome was incomprehensible, but no one can never match God's timing. Therefore, we believe and accept, that our mother's untimely passing which occurred on Christmas Eve, December 24, 2024, was God's will. Her baby daughter, Krissy, would declare at such a time, "God is fair, and He makes no mistakes". "Leona fought a good fight, she finished her course, and she kept the faith..." Still, the void is extremely painful.

Therefore, we, as a family, bow in humble submission to the will of our Sovereign God. Our mother, metaphorically, passed the torch on to her oldest daughter, Marsha, who is now the "Sistriarch" of the family.

Leona leaves to cherish her memory and preserve her legacy: her children from birth, raised from birth, and adopted; Marsha Taylor-Robertson of Smyrna, DE; Dietra Carroll, Karen Stillis, Gretchen Womack and Gina Saunders all of Chester, PA; Mark Morris of Washington, DC; and Warner Brooks(Pela) of Chester, PA; sister, Olivia Carter of Newark, DE; 6 grandchildren, 15 great-grandchildren; extended family daughter Pamela Johnson; 3 "special" friends; Valerie Harris, Rilla Sterling and Helen Rainey; many other relatives and friends.

Leona was preceded in death by her parents, William and Stella Smith; husband, James B. "Goody" Taylor; daughter, Kristin "Krissy" Collier; sons-in-law, Rahmaan "Ronald" Womack, and Leroy Stillis, Jr.; grandson, Rahmaan S.

Womack, Jr.(wife, Dashawna Womack, survivor); son-in-law, Horace Collier, Jr.; granddaughter, Juakita Hyman; son-in-law, Raymond I, Carroll, Jr. respectively and 7 siblings. One sibling who was her “Bosom Buddy”, will not be named, in respect of the surviving sibling and those deceased.

Lovingly submitted,  
The Family  
“To God be the Glory”

# Cemetery Details

## Haven Memorial Cemetery

2500 Concord Road  
Chester Township, PA 19013

# Previous Events

## Visitation

JAN 18. 8:00 AM - 10:00 AM (ET)

St. Luke Community Christian Church  
317 Central Avenue  
Chester, PA 19013  
(610) 876-5197

## Service

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# Tribute Wall

RW

“ I looked forward to seeing Mrs Taylor's pretty face and smile every morning on my way to school when I was a child as she helped us across the street at 9th and Tilghman Streets. She was always beloved in the community and I appreciate her service. Sending love, hugs, and praying God's comfort. My condolences to the Taylor family.

Sincerely,  
Robbin Maness Washington

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**Robbin L Washington** - January 18, 2025 at 10:13 AM

CJ

“ Carol S Jones lit a candle in memory of Leona H. Taylor



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**Carol S jones** - January 16, 2025 at 10:00 PM



“ Gladys Clements lit a candle in memory of Leona H. Taylor



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**Gladys Clements** - January 16, 2025 at 04:21 PM

JL

“*"Momma Lee", An icon for love, family, leadership and strength in our community. We love you. Our deepest condolences to the entire family, God bless you. (Former Mayor) John A Linder.and family.*

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**John Linder** - January 16, 2025 at 09:00 AM