



Monika D. Thomas-Rhodes

January 21, 1962 - September 12, 2020

Minister Monika “Denny” Thomas-Rhodes, age 58, transitioned peacefully on Saturday, September 12, 2020 in her home in Chester, PA surrounded by family. Monika was born on January 21, 1962 to the late Howard Gilpin Sr. and Zoan Thomas- El in Camden, NJ and was later raised by her grandparents James and Ethel Thomas-El.

Monika was educated in the New Jersey school system. She attended St. Gregory’s Catholic School in Magnolia, NJ and received her high school diploma from Paul VI High School in Hadden Township, NJ. Her love for the Arts began at a young age; prompting her to attend dance classes at The Sydney School of Dance in Camden, NJ and Lawnside Performing Arts in Lawnside, NJ. Upon graduation from high school, Monika became a volunteer for the Lawnside Fire Company, where served as an emergency medical technician. Her impeccable skill as a performing artist prompted her to attend Rutgers University where she studied Performing Arts and was later accepted into the Alvin Ailey American Dance Theatre in New York City. The world-class diversified dance instruction Monika received at Alvin Ailey American Dance Theatre, opened the door for her to star in countless theatrical productions and birthed her passion to serve others as a Performing Arts instructor.

When Monika came to Chester, Pennsylvania, she not only fell in love with the city, but she also met the love of her life, the late James Rhodes Jr. Monika and James married on May 6, 1989. From their union came James Rhodes III, Shakira Milbourne, Christianeeq (Chrissy) Rhodes and Moriah Rhodes.

Over the last 30 years, Monika has demonstrated her love for the Lord, passion for dance, performing arts, community activism and leadership in the City of Chester through her involvement in the Theatrical and Performing Arts Training Program (TAPAT) for Chester youth, as a teacher and youth advocate through Delaware County Intermediate Unit (DCIU) and the Deshong African Interpretive Dance Troupe at the historic Deshong Museum in Chester, Pennsylvania. She also served as a dance instructor at Thomas M. Thomas Church, J-Lewis Crozer Library, St. Daniels Church and countless other facilities

in Chester, Pennsylvania and Delaware County, Pennsylvania. Additionally, she completed the Chester Upland Practical Nursing Program and volunteered her time by conducting dance and creative arts workshops and offering instruction to enhance self-image, self-esteem and foster love of oneself and community, for Chester youth. She was a Workshop Facilitator and a Licensed Zumba® Instructor, where she taught Zumba Gold to adults and seniors and choreographed many solo pieces for those who wanted private dance instruction and later became the Founder and Executive Director of PRIME.AMC (Pride In ME And My Community), UTTA (Unity Thru The Arts), Committed Vessels United Dance Ministries, I AM MIRACLE WELL!™ and the Rhodes to Change Foundation™

Monika became an Ordained Minister and Servant Dance Ministry Leader, through her home church, Life in Christ Cathedral of Faith in Chester, Pennsylvania. (Bishop Dickie L. and Tina L. Robbins, Pastors) Since that time, Monika became a stronger advocate for underserved communities and remained very passionate about empowering the lives of others and strengthening communities and families through her work. Monika is best known for her dedication to family, faith and community, through her affectionate smile and words of positivity; performing her signature dance piece “What about the Children?” by her favorite gospel artist Yolanda Adams, who she got to open for when Yolanda Adams came to Chester to perform at the Riverfront Ramble, and calling up everyone and letting them know that her favorite musical, “The Wiz,” was on TV. She knew every word and of course she knew every choreography piece! Her favorite song from the soundtrack was “Brand New Day!” and with Monika, every day was certainly a Brand New Day!

Monika is preceded in death by her devoted husband of 31 years, James Rhodes Jr, Maternal Grandparents who raised her, James and Ethel Thomas-El and Special “Blood Sister” Victoria Clark. Monika leaves to cherish her memory; her children: James Rhodes, III; Shakira Milbourne (Shakina) Christianeeq (Chrissy) Rhodes and Moriah Rhodes, Grand-Princes: Jameil, Jabree, Jaiden and Jamari; Mother: Zoan Thomas-El, Sisters: Janica Halligar (Dave), V. Kathy Spaulding, Brothers: Kevin Farrington, Warren Bethea; Blood Sister: Brenda Franklin, Close Friends: Staci Miller, Deneen Grobes, Bernadette Morgan and Teresa Washington, Mother-In-Love: Molly Rhodes, Fathers-in-Love: Henry Davis (Eula); Brother-In-Love, Kenneth Imani (Ellen); Sisters-In-Love: Patricia Wagner (Jose) and Bernadette (George); Stage Parents Junious and Sonjia Stanton, God-Children Veron Thomas, Shavida Kilson, Fushia Kilson, Tammy Barber Victoria Barber, Isabella Barber, Isaac Owens, Ordained God-Children:Tiffany Flamer, Alisa Dennis, Marisa Dean, A Host of God-Given Children, Aunts, Uncles, Nieces, Nephews, Cousins, Family , Friends and her Community!

Monika ALWAYS believed that if each ONE reaches ONE and that ONE reaches ONE and so on....then that ONE can make a difference and change the lives of MANY.

To God Be The Glory for all He has done and is doing!

“Praise Him with the timbrel and DANCE” Psalm 150:4

Previous Events

Visitation

SEP **25**. 9:00 AM - 11:00 AM (ET)

Life in Christ Ministries
3012 W. 3rd Street
Chester, PA 19013

Tribute Wall



“ *Monika D. Thomas-Rhodes*

October 07, 2023 at 11:34 AM



“ *Monika D. Thomas-Rhodes*

October 04, 2023 at 12:55 PM



“ *Beautiful in Blue was purchased for the family of Monika D. Thomas-Rhodes.*



September 24, 2020 at 12:42 PM