

*Celebration Of Life*



*Alma Dolores Roan Clay*

*Sunrise*  
*June 10, 1938*

*Sunset*  
*October 18, 2012*

*Service*

*Wednesday, October 24, 2012 - 11 O'clock, a.m.*

*Bethel Baptist Church*

*229 Wallace Street*

*Orange, NJ 07050*

*Pastor Verenander L. Hughes (MTS), Officiating*



*Mother. Mentor. Servant. Advocate. Encourager. Warrior. Nourishing Soul.*

## **Her Testimony**

### **Foundation**

Born on June 10, 1938 in Orange, NJ to the late Arthur and Sarah (Folston) Roan, **Alma** was the youngest of four children. She attended the Orange Public Schools and was raised in a home filled with love, faith, and commitment to service. **Alma** accepted Christ as her Savior at an early age and rededicated her life to His will in later years, enjoying a life of joy, and pursuit of opportunities for the betterment of all.

### **Journey**

After marrying Henry Clay & raising seven children, **Alma** began her career as a keypunch operator for AT&T in New York. Later, she was hired as secretary to the municipal board of the New Jersey Division of Alcoholic Beverage Control and then as Supervisor of Recreation for the City of Orange Township. **Alma** enjoyed a nearly 30-year-career with the City of Orange, flourishing as President of Orange Municipal Employees Benevolent Association, member of the Orange Municipal Alliance, finally retiring from the City in 2000. **Alma** also became an Executive Committee member with the Oranges & Maplewood NAACP, holding the post of Membership Chair and Secretary for the past ten years. At Bethel Baptist Church, **Alma** was a tireless participant, serving on the Women's Ministry, and as President of the Senior Choir, and did not hesitate to assist where needed. **Alma** was most recently a resident of East Orange, and is former President of the Gaia Park View Tenant Association.

### **Legacy**

After retirement, **Alma** continued to answer the call to service. Because of her genuine concern for the well-being of children, Alma was awarded a grant from the U.S. Department of Justice, and founded the Bethel Safe Haven program in 2004. A free after school program, children received academic enrichment, cultural exposure, and spiritual education. Through **Alma's** efforts, graduates of BSH have become successful adults, and volunteered as mentors. The Holy Spirit also led **Alma** to found the Feed the Sheep Ministry, which provides food and clothing once a month at Bethel Baptist Church. For her unyielding civic advocacy, **Alma** was honored by First in Orange Inc., American Institute for Public Service, New Jersey State Conference NAACP, and myriad of other organizations blessed by her participation.

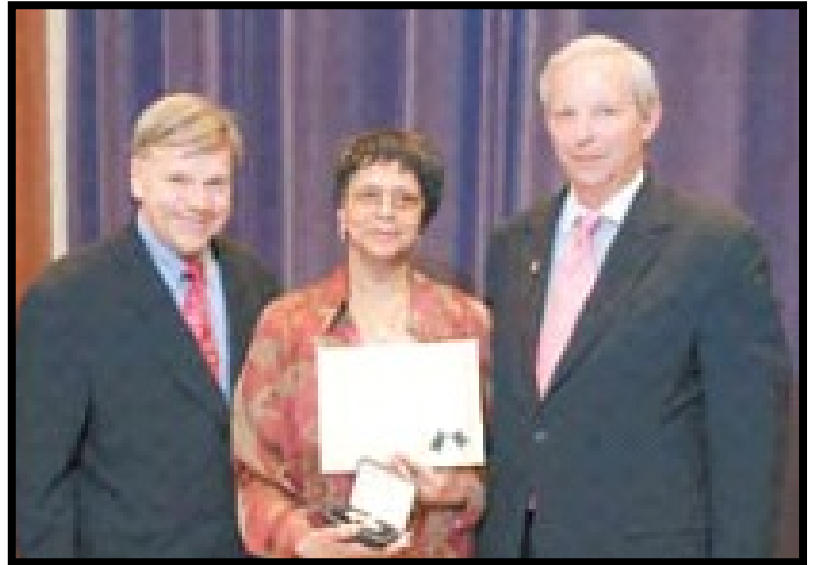
### **Reward**

After a courageous battle with cancer, **Alma** entered peacefully into eternal rest on October 18, 2012 at the East Orange Hospital, surrounded by her children. Predeceased by her Husband Henry Clay, Son Kevin Roan, Sister Anna Harrison, and Brother Arthur "Ben" Roan, **Alma** is survived by her Children: Regina Wellens, Carlton "Zapp", Gloria "Meesha", Curtis, Gregory "Muta" (Marla), and Michael Clay; Sister Jewell Smith, Sister-in-law Jacqueline Roan; Grandchildren: Davion, Carlton, Gregory, Kevin, and A'Aliyah; Great-grandchildren: Davion, Niyah, Dejuan, Geyon, and Geyah, Great-great-grandson DaJaire; and a host of nieces, nephews, cousins, and friends.

**2007 New Jersey State Jefferson Awards**  
**Sponsored by the American Institute For Public Service**  
*Nominated by Jewell Smith*



Medalist Alma D. Clay with Nominator  
(and Sister) Jewell Smith



Medalist Alma D. Clay with George Arwady  
(Publisher of the Star-Ledger) & Sam Beard  
(Co-Founder of Jefferson Awards)

Alma Clay retired in Orange, New Jersey with a dream. During her employment, her heart and thoughts were with the children. She was a former welfare recipient and remembered how hard it was to find daycare for her seven children as she worked toward improving her life. So what else would her dream be, but to organize a free after school program in the fellowship hall of her church for the community? The program was not just babysitting, but offers a full range of services, such as tutoring and lectures needed for young people. She not only helps the children, but she assists the parents in many ways; sometimes just by inviting them to church. She operates this program on a wing and a prayer. Alma solicits donations anywhere she can, often using her own monies for snacks and supplies. When she received a donation in December, she took the children to New Jersey Performing Arts Center to introduce most to a culture they had never experienced. “Bethel Safe Haven”, as she named her program, is truly making a difference in the Township of Orange. Her thought is:

***“If I can save one child from the streets, it’s worth everything I do.”***

**Pallbearers (Sons & Grandsons)**

- Carlton Clay
- Curtis Clay
- Gregory Clay
- Michael Clay
- Davion Clay
- Gregory Polhill

**May The Works I've Done Speak For Me**

(Arranged by Keith "Wonderboy" Johnson)

May the works I've done speak for me.  
May the works I've done speak for me.  
When I'm resting in my grave,  
There's nothing more to be said;  
May the works I've done  
Let it speak for me.

May the life I live speak for me.  
May the life I live speak for me.  
When I'm resting in my grave,  
There's nothing more to be said;  
May the life I live  
Let it speak for me.

The works I've done, sometimes it seems so small,  
It seems like I've done nothing at all.  
Lord I'm leaning and depending on You,  
If I do right You're gonna see me through;  
May the works I've done,  
Let it speak for me.

***Acknowledgement***

The family of **Alma D. Clay** sincerely appreciates every kindness and expression of love shown in prayer, thought, word, and deed. May God Bless You.

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*Order of Service*

**PROCESSIONAL** .....Clergy & Family

**PRAYER OF COMFORT** .....Rev. Verenander Hughes

***SCRIPTURE READING***

Old Testament - Psalm 37: 3-6

New Testament – Philippians 4: 7-9

**HYMN**..... “Blessed Assurance” .....Congregation

**SELECTION**..... “What About The Children?” .....Dominique Williams

**REMARKS** .....Dr. Gloria Boseman

**TRIBUTE** .....Carlton Clay

***ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS & OBITUARY***

**SELECTION**..... “If I Could Help Somebody” .....Kay Reid

**EULOGY** .....Rev. Verenander Hughes

**RECESSIONAL** .....Clergy & Family



**Interment**  
Rosedale Cemetery  
Orange, New Jersey







May 7, 2010 Star-Ledger Feature  
**“Mother’s Day: What Love Can Do”**

Separated from her husband and finding herself the caregiver to seven children, Alma D. Clay was living on welfare and in public housing in Orange when she decided that she had to show her kids a better life.

"I was the custodial parent," explains the 71-year-old Clay, who was responsible for their financial support. "I wanted to get off the welfare rolls, so I went back to school and got my GED."

She was about 30 when that happened and she credits God and her return to her spirituality for helping her to turn her life around. "There was a better way and he showed me," she says.

Clay, who now lives in East Orange, became a keypunch operator for AT&T in New York and later met the right people to help her get what turned out to be a nearly 30-year-career with the city of Orange — first as a secretary to the municipal board of the New Jersey Division of Alcoholic Beverage Control and then as supervisor of recreation. She retired from the city in 1999.

Her oldest child died in 1990, just 20 days short of his 35th birthday. But she says she sees all of her children who still live in New Jersey at least once a week. They go to their family church together — Bethel Baptist on Wallace Street in Orange.

Clay, who has six grandchildren, two great-grandchildren and two great-great-grandchildren, also keeps in regular contact with her children who live outside the Garden State (one is in California, another in Atlanta).

"As mothers, we have to remember that our children are loaned to us and we have to rely on God’s guidance to do the best we can," she says. At Bethel, she is program director of the church’s Safe Haven program, which provides a place for young children to go after school. She also helps the needy through the women’s ministry.

"They’re all precious and they’re all important. I make sure that even children who aren’t mine realize that."

— *Lisa Irizarry*