

In Loving Memory of



Marie Cunningham

Sunrise
June 7, 1919

Sunset
June 16, 2015

Service

Tuesday, June 23, 2015 - 11:00 a.m.

ST. JAMES A.M.E CHURCH

588 Martin Luther King Blvd.

Newark, New Jersey 07102

Obituary

Marie Cunningham departed this life and was sent home on the wings of angels on the early morning of Tuesday, June 16, 2015 at the Gilchrist Hospice located in Columbia, Maryland. Marie was born in Rock Hill, South Carolina to the late parents of Azlee and Will (Pete) Hinton on June 7, 1919. Born to the parents of sharecroppers she was the eldest of eight siblings and had to leave grade school at an early age in order to help support the family by working the fields. Although she desired to attend school, her father felt she could make better use of her time working the fields picking cotton and caring for her siblings. Marie's determination allowed her to later return to school, continuing on to College.

During her breaks, she would stay with relatives in Newark, N.J. while working part time jobs to earn enough money so she could return home to finish school. While attending College she played on the Women's Varsity Basketball Team and won the Atlantic Conference. Her interest in this sport always remained and two of her most favorite players were the New York Knicks Jeremy Lin and Oklahoma City Thunder's Kevin Durant. She completed her AA degree from Friendship Jr. College in South Carolina.

Marie met Lawrence Cunningham, a US Army soldier while attending Friendship who she dated for seven and a half years and later married in 1948. In 1950, their first daughter, Vivian Odessa Cunningham was born. They later moved to Newark, N.J. in 1952 where their four other children Larry Oliver, Dwight Theodore, Rose Maria and Brian Philip Cunningham were born.

For many years Marie was a stay at home mom. She delayed her immediate desire to teach in lieu of nurturing her children and giving them the best opportunity to succeed in life. As the matriarch she was also a creative artistic person. Marie enjoyed sewing, knitting, crocheting and painting. When her daughters were young girls she made most of their clothing for holidays and special occasions.

Marie was employed as a Teacher for the Newark Pre-School Council for 17 years. While teaching and taking care of her family she also made time to earn her BS degree from Jersey City State College. After 17 years of teaching she retired in 1982.

Marie joined St. James AME Church in 1958 under the pastorate of Rev. Eustace Blake. She had a natural desire to assist people so she decided to join the Nurses Unit and Missionary Society. For many years Marie held the position of Secretary for the Nurses Unit. As a dedicated member she remained caring and compassionate. When the Nurses Unit held fundraisers within the church the best way to achieve their goal was to hold a bake sale. Marie was always known for raising funds by making her famous coconut cake and chocolate cupcakes. After retiring from teaching she volunteered more time to the church by attending the Nurses Anniversaries of other churches within Newark. She assisted at funerals on a regular basis. As a Missionary she traveled to Haiti and assisted the late Rosetta Lee with her school. She regularly volunteered for Birlah Tucker's Clothes Closet and assisted with the distribution of clothing for those in need. The gifts she brought and the life lessons learned made her a pillar in her home and her community.

Despite the loss of her beloved husband in 2005, and longtime companion of 63 years, and the passing of two sons, she continued to press on working within the church even at the ripe young age of 93. Upon the passing of her eldest daughter and caregiver in 2014, Marie relocated to Columbia, Maryland to reside with her youngest daughter who became her caregiver.

With the declining of her health she remained a lifelong member of St. James and although she resided out of state, she looked forward to Sunday mornings service online with her daughter. She remained true in her faith to God until her passing at the end of her life's journey.

Marie is survived by: her son, Dwight Theodore Cunningham of Sweden; daughter, Rose Maria Cunningham-Martin of Columbia, MD; son-in-law, Cordell Martin; sister, Essie Lee Thomas of Pittsburgh, PA; sister-in-law, Doretha Franklin of Cleveland, OH; daughter-in-law, Joyce Cunningham; seven grandchildren and nine great grandchildren and a host of nieces, nephews and cousins. She is predeceased by her husband, Lawrence Cunningham May 2005, son, Larry Oliver Cunningham August 1986, son, Brian Philip Cunningham December 1994 and daughter, Vivian Odessa Cunningham May 2014, brothers, Charles, Dave, Woodrow, Willie James and Jim, sisters, Helen and Emma.

Order of Service

Musical Prelude Rev. TJ Martin

Processional Clergy & Family

Opening Hymn “Jesus Keep Me Near The Cross”

Prayer of Comfort

Scripture Readings

Old Testament

New Testament

Solo “My Soul Is Anchored”
Rev. TJ Martin

Resolution and Acknowledgements Gwen Garretson

Remarks

Obituary (Read Silently)

Solo “Stand”
Rev. TJ Martin

Eulogy Rev. Jacqueline Reeves

Recessional

Interment
Rosedale Cemetery
Orange, New Jersey

*Family and friends are invited to join us for a repast at
St. James A.M.E. Church
588 Martin Luther King Blvd. • Newark, NJ*

You can shed tears that she is gone
or you can smile because she has lived

You can close your eyes and pray that she'll come back
Or you can open your eyes and see all she's left

Your heart can be empty because you can't see her
or you can be happy for tomorrow because of yesterday.

You can remember her and only that she's gone
or you can cherish her memory and let it live on

You can cry and close your mind, be empty and turn your back
or you can do what she'd want:

smile,
open your eyes,
love
and go on.

Author Unknown

I Corinthians 15:38

*Therefore, my beloved brethren, be ye stedfast, unmoveable,
always abounding in the work of the Lord, forasmuch as ye
know that your labour is not in vain in the Lord.*

Acknowledgement

*The family wishes to express their sincere thanks and appreciation
for all acts of kindness and expressions of sympathy that was shown
to them during this time of bereavement.*

Professional Services by:
Whigham Funeral Home

580 Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Blvd.
Newark, New Jersey 07102
973-622-6872

Carolyn Whigham, Director

