

In Loving Memory of
Dr. Miriam Thomas Chaplin

Sunrise
July 1, 1931

Sunset
September 25, 2016

Funeral Services

Sunday, October 2, 2016 - 3:00 p.m.

Bethel AME Church

512 North Church Street, Moorestown, NJ

Rev. Dr. Stanley Hearst, Sr., Officiating

&

Tuesday, October 4, 2016 - 11:00 a.m.

Adams Funeral Service

510 Stephenson Avenue, Savannah, GA

Obituary

In 1978, a book *Reading Comes to College* was published. That curiously titled work resulted from the doctoral dissertation of a little known assistant professor of education at Rutgers University Camden College of Arts and Sciences. And it became the launching pad for skyrocketing career of the newly minted **Dr. Miriam T. Chaplin**.

That wasn't the first curious event in her life. The first was her birth, in 1931, to Andrew and Mary Thomas, already in their mid-30s and parents to two growing boys. They cherished Miriam Joan Thomas and she breathed new life into the Savannah, GA, family. As she grew into a young adult in the Jim Crow South, Miriam followed the lead of her mother and others, protesting injustice where she saw it and advocating for change whenever she could. In school, Miriam was always organizing – whether it was a party or a protest, she was at the fore. As a student at Beach High School, she and her fellow students called a strike to protest building conditions. Five years later, a new school was built, and Miriam's little sister Shirley was enrolled.

Miriam's parents did not have formal educations, but they insisted that she get one. Her railroad man father and homemaker mother put together the money to send Miriam to the prestigious Spelman College in Atlanta, GA. It was there that she met her roommate's beau, Eddie Chaplin of St. Helena, SC. Little did she know that he would have a major impact on her life.

Before graduation, though, Miriam had to leave Spelman when her father became ill. She went to work in Philadelphia, where her brothers Andrew Thomas Jr. and Madison Thomas lived with their young families.

In Philadelphia, Miriam became reacquainted with Eddie Chaplin, who had graduated from Morehouse College and was living with his uncle and aunt and attending graduate school.

They hit it off and were wed on May 30, 1953. They formed a most happy family with the addition of a son, C. Edward, and a daughter Philippa.

Miriam didn't work outside the home in those early years, but she was no homebody. She was active in the Civil Rights Movement, marching, boycotting, organizing. When Cecil B. Moore fought to open Girard College in Philadelphia to blacks, Miriam was there. When the boycott of Tastykake was called to protest the lack of diversity in the newsroom of The Philadelphia Inquirer, Miriam was there. This slight woman from Savannah, with her baby in tow, even marched on Washington -- always prepared to fight the good fight.

She didn't just fight for others. She fought for herself, returning to complete her bachelor's degree at St. Joseph's University, and entering the Philadelphia School District as a second-grade teacher in 1965. At McIntyre School in North Philadelphia, Miriam met a fellow teacher, Lucille Ijoy. They were kindred spirits, albeit a curious pairing. Lucille was tall and Phillywise, Miriam was short and a southern charmer. Together, they were formidable. They worshipped together at Germantown Community Presbyterian Church, they threw house parties, they sold dinners, they raised their children together – and they helped form East Mount Airy Neighbors.

Neither stayed long at McIntyre, and Miriam moved to F.S. Edmonds School in West Mount Airy. But when Miriam learned that Model Cities was coming to the school district, she took the Master's degree she had earned at Temple University in 1967 and went down to apply for a job. She wanted to have a greater

impact on how children learn, and saw this experimental structure as a great opportunity to reach more children than in one classroom.

While Model Cities proved to be a failure of President Johnson's Great Society, it succeeded in positioning Miriam for an appointment as assistant professor of Education at Rutgers-Camden. Her work in setting up language-arts programs in the Philadelphia schools translated nicely to helping nontraditional college students get prepared for the rigors of higher academia in the Academic Foundations Department.

That's where *Reading Comes to College* was born. To stay at Rutgers, Miriam needed one more degree – a doctorate. She set to work to get it: Teaching classes, taking classes, writing articles for academic publications, and writing and defending her dissertation. Four years later, she earned the degree, and eventually became a tenured, full professor.

While all this was happening in her life, her children and husband were thriving. They built a home in Cherry Hill and Miriam helped form the Cherry Hill Minorities Civic Association – and served as its first president – to successfully lobby for the hiring of people of color at the local Shop Rite supermarket. She was appointed to the Cherry Hill Rent Control Board, and joined the Camden County Democratic Committee.

Her professional affiliations included the Modern Language Association, the International Reading Association, the Conference on College Composition and Communication and the National Council of Teachers of English. She led the latter two, chairing CCCC in 1987 and serving as NCTE president in 1994-95. In 1989, she was a leader of the Black Caucus of NCTE that initiated the African American Read In, a national event each February to celebrate literature by and about African Americans. In 1996, she was among the named educators who published the National Standards for the English Language Arts.

When Miriam wasn't championing America's young learners, she was active in Bethel AME Church in Moorestown, where she joined her longtime friend Barbara Darrell and served on the Board of Trustees, and in her beloved sorority, Alpha Kappa Alpha Sorority, Inc. Pi Mu Omega Chapter.

By 1998, Dr. Miriam T. Chaplin was ready to retire from Rutgers, but she continued teaching as an adjunct professor at the University of South Carolina near her new home in Hilton Head. Miriam loved being in the South again – a curious response for a woman who had embraced the hustle and bustle of big cities. But in the South were lifelong friends, Connie Johnson, Betty Lightfoot, Mary Ward, Evelyn Greene and many others, all members of the Teen Age Girls (TAGS), a club from Beach High School – and new friends. She joined the Sea Island Friends, a group of civic-minded and socially active women. Also in Hilton Head, Miriam helped to establish a chapter of the Young Democrats. And she took on her own flowers ministry at her new spiritual home, Queen Chapel AME Church, ensuring that fresh flowers would be on the alter on Sundays.

Miriam and Eddie stayed in Hilton Head for 10 years, until failing health led them to return North to be with their family. Eddie departed this life in November 2008, after 55 years of marriage. Miriam did her best to find solace in her family and friends, but the rocket that had soared so high and for so long was finally taken down by failing health on September 25, 2016, at home.

She was predeceased by her brothers, Andrew and Madison Thomas. Miriam is survived by her son, C. Edward Chaplin (Karen); her daughter, Philippa Chaplin Squire (Vincent); a grandson, Edward A. Chaplin; two granddaughters, Beverly J. Chaplin and Miriam F. Chaplin; a sister, Shirley T. Wright; two sisters-in-law, Ella C. Sturdivant and Pearlle Joetta Chaplin; many nieces and nephews, and a host of friends.

Pre-Service Order of Celebration

2:30 – 3:00
3:00 - 3:15

Viewing and Video Remembrance
Ivy Beyond the Wall Ceremony:
Alpha Kappa Alpha Sorority Inc.
Pi Mu Omega Chapter

The Order of Celebration

Rev. Dr. Stanley Hearst, Sr., Pastor of Bethel A.M.E. Church, Moorestown, NJ – Officiating

PROCESSIONAL

INVOCATION.....	Rev. Dr. Hearst Sr.
MUSICAL SELECTION : “Come, We That Love the Lord”	Bethel AME 125 th Anniversary Choir
PRAYER OF COMFORT.....	Rev. Leslie Harrison, M.Div
OLD TESTAMENT SCRIPTURE: Proverbs 31.....	Shai Goldstein, Esq.
NEW TESTAMENT SCRIPTURE: First Corinthians 15: 50-57.....	Sarah Drummond
THE OBITUARY.....	Dr. Charles Bowers
MUSICAL SELECTION.....	Louise Hargrave
TRIBUTES	
CARDS AND RESOLUTIONS.....	Sandra Haynes
MUSICAL SELECTION: “Total Praise”.....	Bethel AME 125 th Anniversary Choir
FAMILY TRIBUTES	
EULOGY.....	Rev. Dr. Hearst Sr.
FINAL VIEWING	
MUSICAL SELECTION.....	Bethel AME 125 th Anniversary Choir
SUMMATION AND BENEDICTION.....	Rev. Dr. Hearst Sr.
RECESSIONAL.....	“When We All Get to Heaven” - Congregation
REPAST in the Fellowship Hall	

Order of Celebration

**Tuesday, October 4, 2016
Adams Funeral Services
510 Stephenson Avenue
Savannah, GA**

Rev. Edward B. Alston, Pastor of Queen Chapel A.M.E. Church, Hilton Head, SC - Officiating

HYMN

INVOCATION.....Rev. Alston

SCRIPTURE READINGProverbs 31

HYMN

SCRIPTURE READING:.....First Corinthians 15: 50-57

MUSICAL SELECTION

REFLECTIONS

OBITUARY(read silently)

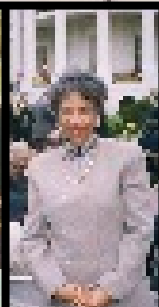
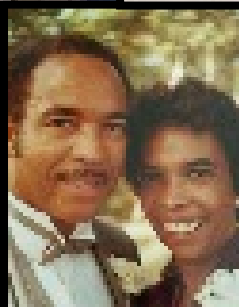
MUSICAL SELECTION

EULOGY.....Rev. Alston

RECESSIONAL

Interment
The Catholic Cemetery
Savannah, GA







When Earth's Last Picture Is Painted

When Earth's last picture is painted
And the tubes are twisted and dried
When the oldest colors have faded
And the youngest critic has died
We shall rest for faith, we shall need it
Lie down for an aeon or two
'Till the Master of all good workmen
Shall put us to work anew
And those that were good shall be happy
They'll sit in a golden chair
They'll splash at a ten league canvas
With brushes of comet's hair
They'll find real saints to draw from
Magdalene, Peter, and Paul
They'll work for an age at a sitting
And never be tired at all.
And only the Master shall praise us.
And only the Master shall blame.
And no one will work for the money.
No one will work for fame.
But each for the joy of the working,
And each, in his separate star,
Will draw the thing as he sees it.
For the God of things as they are!

Acknowledgement

Perhaps you sent a lovely card or sat quietly in a chair.
Perhaps you sent a floral piece. If so, we saw it there.
Perhaps you spoke the kindest words as any friend could say.
Perhaps you were not there at all just thought of us on that day.
Whatever you did to console our hearts, We Thank You, Whatever the part.

Professional Services Provided By

COTTON FUNERAL SERVICE
130 Main Street
Orange, NJ
973-675-6400

1025 Bergen Street
Newark, NJ
973-926-6400

COTTON-PARKER FUNERAL HOME
37 Clinton Avenue
Jersey City, NJ
201-433-1000

