

**Celebration of Life**

**For**

*Ella Mary Harper-Edwards*

**Sunrise**

April 16, 1933

**Sunset**

April 4, 2017



Saturday, April 15, 2017

Viewing: 9 AM – 10:55 AM - Homegoing: 11 AM

**Greater Friendship Baptist Church  
And International Ministries**

84 Custer Avenue – Newark, New Jersey 07112

Pastor Rev. Bernard F. Johnson, III

## Reflections of the Life of ... *Ella Mary Harper Edwards*

The Angels in Heaven are truly rejoicing, as one has gone home to be with our Lord and Saviour, Jesus Christ. **Ella Mary Harper Edwards** (known, affectionately, to family as "Nana") arrived in her heavenly home as the sun was rising, on Tuesday, April 4, 2017 in Palm Bay, Florida. She was born in Newark, New Jersey on April 16, 1933, the youngest of three children (sister, Wilmere Kinsey and brother, Wilbur L. Harper, Jr. both now deceased) to the union of the late Wilbur L. Harper, Sr. and Arzula Lane Harper Watford. Later in life, **Ella's** siblings: Ernest, Vincent, Eric, Bryant (deceased) and Donna, also became a part of this family.

**Ella** grew up on Governor Street and later the Baxter Terrace Housing Development, in Newark, NJ. She attended the Newark Public School System and later attended Essex County College of Newark, NJ. In the late-1940's, she met the man she would later marry, Harold R. Edwards, II. To this union was born, Harold, III and Wilma. Harold left his family (Ella, son, Harold III and daughter, Wilma, aka Butch and Penny) to serve this great country of ours in the U.S. Army, wherein he died in 1952 during combat in the Korean War, having earned the Purple Heart. Later in life, around the 1950's, **Ella** met and fell in love with Roscoe Curtis (now deceased) from Newark, NJ and from this union came Rosalyn, Arline, Rodney (deceased), Rhonda and Deneen.

**Ella** was always a working woman. Laboring for years at ITT, Clifton, NJ and moving from that employment for a job in the Newark Municipal Court System, where she worked under Honorable Harry Hazelwood and Honorable Irving B. Booker, both deceased. Looking for new challenges, **Ella** moved to Melbourne, Florida, settling in Palm Bay around 1987, she resided in several homes until she found the one that perfectly fit her lifestyle and could accommodate the family that soon followed her there. She continued to work, first at Harris Corp, followed by Walmart and Walgreens. She became a true socialite when she secured the position of President of the Democratic Women's Club and the local Chapter of the NAACP. Eventually, she even ran for Palm Bay City Council in 1992.

It may have been the new decade and the new millennium that tugged on **Ella's** heart and soul, bringing her back to Newark, after ten years in Florida. She secured a job at the Centre Inc. on Elizabeth Avenue, founder, her childhood friend, the Late Honorable Donald K. Tucker, former leader of the Newark Municipal Council. **Ella** ended her second career in City Government with a stint at the Newark Office of the Aging, appointed by another great leader, the Honorable Sharpe James, former Mayor of Newark.

Something about that Florida sunshine that **Ella** just could not resist, so around 2010 she returned to Palm Bay, Florida settling in her former neighborhood and enjoying her golden years with family and friends. Some of her favorite pastimes were: playing Sudoku, Bingo, going on outings, reading Our Daily Bread magazine, dining out, creating her floral designs, decorating for special occasions, among other things.

**Ella** was always involved in community organizations, especially where youth are concerned. She was a leader with the Girl Scouts of America, assisted in the founding of the South Ward Girls Club, Inc. and worked tirelessly with the late David L. Warner in establishing the South Ward Boys Club Unit on Hawthorne Avenue. In Palm Bay, Florida she worked with various City Youth Programs.

For a time, **Ella** pursued modeling, attending charm school and modeling classes and eventually becoming one of the renowned Emily Miles-Belle Meade Models, of Newark, NJ. Quite the entrepreneur she owned **Ella's** Boutique and **Ella's** Creative Silk Flower Designs, known from New Jersey to Florida.

**Ella** was appointed to the Senior Citizens Commission by former Mayor Sharpe James and the Seth Boyden Advisory Commission by James C. Moore, both in Newark, NJ. She was appointed as an Election Board Official and a Public Notary, both in New Jersey and Florida.

**Ella's** numerous affiliations and memberships included some of the following: The Sharpe James Civic Assoc.; The Donald K. Tucker Civic Assoc and the Bessie Walker Civic Assoc and United Community Corporation, all of Newark, NJ. She was a member of the American Legion Auxiliary; National Council of Negro Women; the Golden Wives Club of America; The Duchess Social Club of Florida; and the Eastern Stars Queen Esther Chapter No. 98 of Melbourne, Florida. At an early age **Ella** accepted Christ and was a member at Mt. Zion Baptist Church, Newark, NJ, pastored by the Late Homer J. Tucker; then Good Neighbor Baptist Church, Newark, NJ, presently Pastored by Rev. Dr. George Blackwell, III; followed by Greater Friendship Baptist Church, Newark, NJ, Founder, the Late Rev. Dr. John T. Teabout, Sr., presently Pastored by Rev. Bernard F. Johnson, III and her last church affiliation was Macedonia Missionary Baptist Church, Melbourne, Florida, Pastored by Rev. Nathaniel L. Harris. She became a Deaconess while a member at Greater Friendship Baptist Church. While being a faithful member, she served in whatever capacity she could throughout her years of her church memberships. She was giving, loving and a friend to the end.

The memory of **Ella** will be held fond and dear by her, son, Harold (Cheryl); daughters: Wilma, Rosalyn, Arline (Michael) Summey, Rhonda and Deneen; siblings: Vincent, Ernest, Eric and Donna Alexander; sisters-in-law: Gertrude McBride and Mary Jenkins; 15 grandchildren; 28 great-grandchildren and 1 great-great grandchild; a host of nephews, nieces, other family members and friends.....take your rest, **Ella**, Sister, Mother, Nana, Auntie, Friend, we LOVE you, the Almighty loves you best.....Sorrowfully submitted,

*The Family*

## Death Opens the Door to Life Evermore

*We live a short while on earth below.  
Reluctant to die for we do not know  
Just what "dark death" is about  
And so we view it with fear and doubt  
Not certain of what is around the bend  
We look on death as the final end  
To all that made us a mortal being  
And yet, there lies, just beyond our seeing  
A beautiful life so full and complete  
That we should leave with hurrying feet  
To walk with God by sacred streams  
Amid beauty and peace beyond our dreams –  
For all who believe in the RISEN LORD  
Have been assured of this reward  
And death for them is just 'graduation'  
To a higher realm of wide elevation –  
For life on earth is a transient affair.  
Just a few brief years in which to prepare  
For a life that is free from pain and tears  
Where time is not counted by hours or years –  
For death is only the method God chose  
To colonize heaven with the souls of those  
Who by their apprenticeship on earth  
Proved worthy to dwell in the land of new birth –  
So death is not sad...it's a time of elation.  
A joyous transition...the soul's emigration  
Into a place where the soul's SAFE and FREE  
To live with God through ETERNITY!*







## Death Opens the Door to Life Evermore

*We live a short while on earth below.  
Reluctant to die for we do not know  
Just what "dark death" is about  
And so we view it with fear and doubt  
Not certain of what is around the bend  
We look on death as the final end  
To all that made us a mortal being  
And yet, there lies, just beyond our seeing  
A beautiful life so full and complete  
That we should leave with hurrying feet  
To walk with God by sacred streams  
Amid beauty and peace beyond our dreams –  
For all who believe in the RISEN LORD  
Have been assured of this reward  
And death for them is just 'graduation'  
To a higher realm of wide elevation –  
For life on earth is a transient affair.  
Just a few brief years in which to prepare  
For a life that is free from pain and tears  
Where time is not counted by hours or years –  
For death is only the method God chose  
To colonize heaven with the souls of those  
Who by their apprenticeship on earth  
Proved worthy to dwell in the land of new birth –  
So death is not sad...it's a time of elation.  
A joyous transition...the soul's emigration  
Into a place where the soul's SAFE and FREE  
To live with God through ETERNITY!*

*Celebration of Life  
For  
Ella Mary Harper Edwards*

*Rev. Bernard F. Johnson, III – Presiding*

*Processional – Clergy and Family*

*Opening Hymn – What A Friend We Have In Jesus*

*Prayer of Invocation – Rev. Frances Snelling-Teabout,  
Pastor of the Open Door Ministry – Jersey City, New Jersey*

*Scripture  
Old Testament Psalm 23  
New Testament John 14:1-6*

*Selection – Bro. Donnie Harper*

*Reflections of Life  
Cheryl Bush-Edwards*

*Acknowledgements and Resolutions*

*Words of Expression*

*Selection – Choir*

*Words of Comfort  
Rev. Arthur Brooks – Associate Minister  
Greater Friendship Baptist Church and International Ministry, Newark, NJ*

*Musical Selection – I'm Gonna Be Ready  
Recorded by Yolanda Adams*

*Recessional*



*Internment – Fairmount Cemetery – East Orange, NJ*



*Repast – The Centre Inc.  
23 Elizabeth Avenue – Newark. NJ 07112*

## **WORDS FROM ELLA**

### *WHEN I MUST LEAVE YOU*

*When I must leave you for a little while,  
Please do not grieve and shed wild tears  
And hug your sorrow to you through the years.  
But start out bravely with a gallant smile;  
And for my sake and in my name  
Live on and do all things the same.  
Feed not your loneliness on empty days,  
But fill each waking hour in useful ways,  
Reach out your hand in comfort and in cheer  
And I in turn I will comfort you and hold you near;  
And never, never be afraid to die,  
For I am waiting for you in the sky!*

---

*Pallbearers*

*Family and Friends*

*The Edwards Family Greatly Appreciated*

*The Services of*

*Holmes Regional Medical Center \* Life Care Center of Palm Bay \* Health First Hospices*

### **Acknowledgement and Gratefulness**

**From Ella M. Edwards**

*"I am grateful to all that helped my children in this time of bereavement. Words can never express my deep sense of gratitude. I am gone, but hope I left some GOOD memories with you..."*

**Professional Services Provided By**

**COTTON FUNERAL SERVICE**

1025 Bergen Street

Newark, NJ

973-926-6400