CELEBRATING THE LIFE OF
Mrs. Muriel E. West Durley

December 31, 1944 - January 8, 2021

FRIDAY, JANUARY 15, 2021
11:00 AM

PROVIDENCE MISSIONARY BAPTIST CHURCH
2295 Benjamin E. Mays Drive, SW
Atlanta, GA 30331
Reverend Damon P. Williams, Ph.D., Pastor
Mrs. Muriel E. West Durley


Mrs. Muriel E. West Durley was born on December 31, 1944 in Charlotte, North Carolina to Charles and Elizabeth West, the second of three children. A few months after her birth the family moved to Hempstead, New York (Long Island) where she was reared.

After graduating from Hempstead High School in Hempstead, New York, Muriel entered Fisk University in Nashville, Tennessee in 1962. It was at Fisk that she immersed herself in the academic world. During her time at Fisk, she was a member of the French Club and pledged Delta Sigma Theta Sorority, Incorporated, and was elected the sorority’s President her senior year.

Muriel graduated Fisk University in 1966 with a Bachelor of Science degree in Foreign Language, and then she headed overseas. As an exchange student, Muriel met Gerald Lee Durley in Neuchâtel, Switzerland where he was playing basketball for the National team. Muriel and Gerald’s lives were forever intertwined in Switzerland, with the picturesque landscape of the Swiss Alps being a foreshadowing of the pinnacles of life they would enjoy together.

She returned to the States and began her professional career in New York, New York. It was here that this young, educated woman became the first Black customer service representative overseeing international accounts for the newly formed company, Xerox Corporation.

In 1968 Muriel and Gerald (Jerry) wed in Hempstead, New York and together they experienced the adventures of life. They lived in several cities throughout their young married life – Dekalb, Illinois and Washington, D.C. In Washington, D.C. she continued her professional endeavors while beginning her greatest lifework – becoming a mother to Nia and Hasan. Her young family became her focus and her greatest joy, while she supported her husband as he continued his education. With her artistic talents, she created her own ceramic business where people from all over purchased her products.

Muriel and Gerald then moved to Atlanta, Georgia in 1984 and she carved out her professional endeavors in Atlanta by becoming an educator. She taught kindergarten at Oak Knoll and Longino elementary schools for 8 years. She understood the importance of molding young minds early and ensured her students were well prepared and enthused for the exciting path of lifelong learning.

In 1987 this family was called to Providence Missionary Baptist Church on Atlanta’s southside. Within this historic church, rich in Black culture that reached beyond the city limits, was a divine niche for the ministry of Reverend Dr. Gerald and Mrs. Muriel Durley. The church rapidly embraced this young family and Muriel immediately loved the family of Providence. While Dr. Durley continued his calling, Muriel quietly made her mark on the fabric of the ministry. The ministry grew and relocated as she steadily worked within. She was a faithful weekly Bible Study participant, and she worked within several organizations such as the Sunday School, Vacation Bible School, the Bereavement Ministry, the Matron’s Circle and The Clemmie B. Hatchett’s Red Hatter’s Club. Muriel was instrumental in Providence’s annual Black History Celebrations each February and changed the theme and importance of the month by initiating the term “Black Family Life”. The month-long celebration culminated with the Black History Family Dinner where she often spearheaded the logistics of such a large undertaking. Muriel insured Providence’s events, programs, and people were preserved for historical purposes.
and was therefore a staunch supporter of the PMBC archives. Muriel was instrumental in ensuring the resources were available for the daunting task of preserving the history of the church. And being an entrepreneur in gift baskets, she participated in the Providence Market Place and encouraged other small business owners to develop their craft and share their services, goods, and talents within the church membership. And in her love and attention to the children of the church, Muriel advanced the revitalization of the nursery, its renovation, and gathering the essential nursery equipment and supplies.

Throughout her life Muriel Durley exhibited genuine warmth, kindness, generosity, and love. A woman of timeless beauty, she was always impeccably dressed and elegantly alluring. Muriel could work with the poor and downtrodden with broken and injured souls and make them feel as if they were the only persons in the room. With each person she met she exuded compassion and tenderness because these qualities are within her essence. She met persons of high regard – from Ministers, Rabbis, Imams, Priests, Senators, Mayors, Governors, and Presidents, and remained graceful, polished, and lovely.

For 53 years, Muriel and Gerald partnered through life together. She enjoyed the expanding families of Nia and Hasan, and their families. And her pride and joy exploded when grandchildren and great-grandchildren arrived. Family was paramount to Muriel and her family realized that her examples of faith, her teachings of life lessons, and the genuine encouragement she freely gave is the glue that held them all together. On Friday, January 8, 2021 she transitioned to immortality with the love of Gerald, and the love of her family, by her side.

Muriel will be lovingly remembered by her husband, Reverend Dr Gerald L. Durley (Atlanta); her daughter, Nia Durley Dozier (Atlanta); her son, Hasan Durley (Atlanta); her grandchildren, Tai (Morgan) Dozier (California), Tori Dozier (New Jersey), Niara Durley (Atlanta), and Jelani Durley (Atlanta); her 2 great-grandchildren, Zia and Zara Dozier (California); her brothers, Charles P. West (New York), Gilbert (Sonia) West (California); Her In-laws, Leander Durley (California), Myrna Durley (Texas), Denise Durley (Ohio) and Tonya (Gerald) Lee (Texas); and a host of extended family, friends, and the Providence church family.
Order of Service

Prelude
Processional
Lighting of the Candle
Welcome  
Reverend Damon P. Williams, PhD
Congregational Hymn  
“Great is Thy Faithfulness”
Prayer  
Pastor Alphonse Allen, Jr.
Scripture Readings
  Old Testament  
Reverend Dr. Kathy Chavous
  New Testament  
Reverend Phillip Terry
Prayer  
Deacon Julius Milton
Reflections
  Reverend Curtis Echols – Close Friend
  Reverend Timothy McDonald – Concerned Black Clergy
  Hank Stewart – Poet Laureate and Community Leader
  David Crippens – Close Friend
  Senator-Elect Reverend Raphael Warnock, PhD.
  Honorable Mayor Keisha Lance Bottoms – Mayor of Atlanta
Musical Selection
Reflections
  Reverend Dr. Khalia J. Williams, First Lady, PMBC
  Dr. Karen Wallace – Lifelong Friend
  Gilbert & Sonia West, Brooke West Hodge & Taylor West Davis – Brother and Family
  Imam Pleton El-Amin, Imam Emeritus of the Atlanta Masjid of Al-Islam
  Judge Glenda Hatchett – Close Friend
  Niara Durley and Jelani Durley – Grandchildren
  Tai Dozier, Lieutenant, Junior Grade-U.S. Navy – Grandson
  Hasan Durley – Son
Video Tribute
Musical Selection
A Love Letter to the Love of my Life  
Reverend Dr. Gerald L. Durley
Committal Service  
Reverend Dr. Gerald L. Durley
Acknowledgements
Postlude  
Native New Yorker (by Odyssey)
Recessional  
Going Up Yonder
Acknowledgements

The family of Mrs. Muriel E. West Durley is forever grateful to our family and friends for the outpouring of overwhelming support, prayers, acts of kindness and love showered upon our family. Words can never fully express our gratitude. We are warmed by the expressions extended toward us and as we think on those things that are good, and pure, and lovely, we are comforted by the light of the life of our dearest Muriel.

Active Pallbearers
Hasan Durley  Reginald Oliver
Jelani Durley  Darroll Lawson
Barnabas White  Billy Briggs

Pall Bearers
The Deacon Board of Providence Missionary Baptist Church
The Trustee Board of Providence Missionary Baptist Church

Honorary Flower Bearers
The Matrons Circle of Providence Missionary Baptist Church
The Clemmie Hatchett Red Hatters

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