



SENATOR

Shirley

KITCHEN

MEMORIAL
KEEPSAKE

A LEGACY, A LIFE DEVOTED TO LIFTING
OTHERS, STRENGTHENING FAMILIES,
AND OPENING DOORS FOR
GENERATIONS TO COME

ORDER OF SERVICE

PROCESSIONAL (FAMILY)

INVOCATION

CONGREGATIONAL HYMN..... LEANING ON THE EVERLASTING ARMS

SCRIPTURE READING

OLD TESTAMENT PSALM 23

NEW TESTAMENT I CORINTHIANS 13

PRAYER OF COMFORT

SELECTIONELDER DARNELL DEAN

REMARKS (2 MINUTES EACH; 5 TO 7 PEOPLE SELECTED BY THE FAMILY)

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT OF CONDOLENCES.....THERA MARTIN,
BROADCASTER/MENTEE

OBITUARY (READ OR SILENT)MINISTER RAYMOND WHITE ,II

SONG OF PREPARATIONYOUR GRACE AND MERCY

MESSAGE OF HOPEPASTOR REUBEN L. MONMOUTH, III

CALL TO CHRIST

BENEDICTION

RECESSIONAL



OBITUARY

Shirley Mae Kitchen was born on September 18, 1946, in Augusta, Georgia, to Ferman and Ruth Sanders Few. She was the second oldest of six children born to this union. She passed away on Sunday, July 5, 2026, in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania.

Shirley and her family relocated to Philadelphia when she was five years old, and settled in the Tenderloin District, now known as Northern Liberties.

The heart of compassion was developed in her adolescent years. As the second oldest, and the oldest girl, she had a charge to look after others. Her mother, Ruth, held her to a higher standard compared to her siblings which instilled a sense of great responsibility.

Her Christian walk began early in life through faithful attendance at church, Bible study, and Sunday School. At 11, she became a "Pioneer Girl" through a local ministry where she learned the books of the Bible. At 13, she was baptized at Christ Baptist Church by Reverend Benjamin Johnson. These core values compelled Shirley to live her life according to these principles: faith, courage, service, and love.

Shirley believed in education. She matriculated through the Philadelphia Public School System; she was a graduate of Antioch University with a baccalaureate of Arts(1979). She obtained many professional certificates through Temple University.

Shirley raised five children and her younger brother, Pete. As a devoted single mother, she was determined to provide a safe and loving home for her family. She taught her children to work hard, to be dependable, and to be a blessing to someone else. In Shirley's world, if you arrived on time, you were already late. She enjoyed baking and regularly made pound cakes and biscuits from scratch. She also loved board games, and the family spent countless hours playing Monopoly, Scrabble, and her favorite, "Family Feud."

She was also a fervent sports fan. As a young mother, even without a car, Shirley used public transportation to take her children to watch Roller Derby and wrestling at the old King Arena in West Philadelphia. The family also regularly attended Sixers games at the Spectrum. She enjoyed football, basketball, and baseball games with family and friends, and she loved traveling and dining out with her daughters.



Before entering elected office, Shirley was gainfully employed as a social worker with Philadelphia County and as Director of Constituent Services for the City of Philadelphia. Shirley was first elected to the Pennsylvania House of Representatives in 1987, she went on to win election to the Pennsylvania State Senate in 1996, where she served five terms before retiring in 2016.

As the second African American woman to serve in the Pennsylvania State Senate, and the only African American woman senator at the time of her retirement, Shirley built a reputation as a champion for the "little guy." Her legislative record reflected her commitment to expanding affordable housing, improving access to prescription medications for seniors, and bringing supermarkets and retail development to neighborhoods long affected by disinvestment.

Her public service was grounded in the same values that shaped her family life and faith: discipline, compassion, courage, and a deep belief in community. She was instrumental in launching the first Mothers and Daughters Day event at Murrell Dobbins Career and Technical High School in 2009, and through her encouragement and support, the Community Empowerment Group was formally established in 2012.

Under her guidance, the Mothers and Daughters Day Conference assisted more than 1,000 women and girls, creating a space to bond, repair relationships, and commit to mutual support. Shirley also supported the Philadelphia Black Women's Health Alliance for more than four decades.

Shirley's legacy also includes her advocacy for equal pay, healthcare access, a higher minimum wage, increased funding for public libraries, and criminal justice reform. She co-sponsored Act 112, which allowed eligible offenders to seek drug rehabilitation, and Act 134, which permitted expungement of certain offenses. She also authored early drafts of what later became known as the Clean Slate Act, which automatically seals some non-violent convictions after 10 years, helping remove barriers to employment and housing.

Although similar legislation she introduced in Harrisburg did not pass during her tenure, the Clean Slate Act became law in Pennsylvania in 2018, two years after her retirement.





During her time in the Senate, Shirley served on committees including Agriculture and Rural Affairs, Public Health and Welfare, Transportation, and Urban Affairs and Housing. She also served as Minority Chairwoman of Public Health and Welfare and was a member of the Pennsylvania Legislative Black Caucus.

She established beloved traditions, including attending the annual Police Thrill Show and the Thanksgiving Day Parade. Shirley and her sister, Mary, supported one another as single parents, raising their children together and creating bonds their families cherished. "Aunt Shirley" was a consistent and loving presence in the lives of her nieces, nephews and their children.

Shirley was a faithful member of From the Heart Church Ministries of Philadelphia, under the tutelage Pastor Emeritus Jeffrey Branson and current Pastor Ruben Monmouth. There she served as part of the Golden Hearts and Political Affairs ministries until her passing.



Shirley leaves a legacy, a life devoted to lifting others, strengthening families, and opening doors for generations to come.



Shirley was preceded in death by her father, Ferman Few; her mother, Ruth Few; her brother, Richard Few; her sister, Vera Few; and her daughter, Veronica “Ronnye” Kitchen.



Shirley is survived by her children: sons, Dwayne Kitchen, and Henry Kitchen, Jr.; her daughters: Shantelle Kitchen-Nelson (Daryl), and Vakiya Few; her brother, Pete Few (Marsha); her sisters, Mary Ruth Green and Sue Ann Thomas; her nieces, Velma Tymes and Crystal Coleman; her nephews, Troy Few, Eric McFadden, Maurice McFadden, Joshua Hale, and Zachary Hale; her cousins, Maggie Jean Clay and Michael Few; and a host of relatives and friends.



THE LEGACY OF SHIRLEY KITCHEN



ATTITUDE

By Charles Swindoll

"The longer I live, the more I realize the impact of attitude on life. Attitude, to me, is more important than facts. It is more important than the past, than education, than money, than circumstances, than failures, than successes, than what other people think, say or do. It is more important than appearance, giftedness or skill. It will make or break a company... a church... a home. The remarkable thing is we have a choice every day regarding the attitude we embrace for that day. We cannot change our past... we cannot change the fact that people will act in a certain way. We cannot change the inevitable. The only thing we can do is play the one string we have, and that is our attitude... I am convinced that life is 10% what happens to me and 90% how I react to it. And so it is with you... we are in charge of our Attitude.





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