

Pallbearers

Bible Outreach Ministries

Floral Bearers

Wateree Head Start Staff

Repast

Immediately following celebration service

South Hope Center
1125 S Lafayette Dr
Sumter SC 29150

Interment

Monday, September 21, 2026
11:00 a.m.

Florence National Cemetery
803 E National Cemetery Rd
Florence, South Carolina 29506

Job's Mortuary Inc.

Home of Distinctively Finer Funeral Service

Dr. Ralph W. Canty, Sr., Director

312 S Main Street
Sumter, South Carolina 29150

803.773.3323 / 803.773.3324
jobsmortuary.net



*Celebrating
the life of*

Artrell
Benbow Brown

AUGUST 10, 1948 - SEPTEMBER 10, 2026

Friday, September 18, 2026

Westend Community Church of Christ
101 S. Salem Avenue, Sumter SC 29150

Wake & Musical Celebration 6:00pm
Celebration of Life Service 7:00pm

"There was room - in her heart, in her home, and at her table"

Her Life and Legacy

Artrell Patricia Benbow Brown was born on August 10, 1948, to the late Nathaniel Benbow, Sr. and Essie Gibson Benbow. She peacefully transitioned from this earthly life on September 10, 2026, leaving behind a remarkable legacy of faith, courage, family, music, education, advocacy, and service to others.

Artrell attended the public schools of Sumter, South Carolina, and graduated from Lincoln High School with the Class of 1966. A gifted and involved student, she was a member of the French Club, served as President of the Dramatics Club, sang in the Lincoln High School Choir, and was a member of the Madrigal Singers. Even in her youth, her leadership, confidence, determination, and love of music were evident.

A Woman Who Helped Make History

Artrell came of age during one of the most transformative periods in American history - the Civil Rights Era. As a young Black woman growing up in the South, she witnessed a generation courageously challenge racial barriers and demand equal access to education, employment, public institutions, and opportunities that had long been denied.

Artrell did more than witness history; she became a part of it. Following high school, Artrell was among the first three Black students to integrate Clemson University's Sumter campus. Walking through doors that had previously been closed to African American students required tremendous courage, determination, and strength of character. Her presence helped break barriers and contributed to opening educational opportunities for generations who would follow.

The principles that characterized the Civil Rights Movement - equality, education, advocacy, service, and standing for what was right - remained evident throughout Artrell's life. She carried those values into her profession, her church, her community, and especially her lifelong service to children and families.

A Life Rooted in Faith & Music

During her youth, Artrell accepted Jesus Christ as her personal Savior at Union Station AME Church. It was there that her extraordinary love for music and ministry was cultivated through her participation in the youth, young adult, adult, and mass choirs. Music became much more than a talent for Artrell; it became a ministry.

Special Acknowledgements

The family of Artrell Patricia Benbow Brown extends heartfelt gratitude to the many individuals who demonstrated their love, compassion, friendship, and support throughout her life and especially during her illness and transition.

Special appreciation is extended to her nieces, Gloria Logan-Farmer and Derranita Finklin, who remained by her side during her illness and transition; and to Marie Anderson, her devoted caregiver, for the care, comfort, patience, and support she lovingly provided.

The family gratefully acknowledges Elder Larry Evans and Joycelyn Hinnant, who faithfully provided support during dialysis treatments, and Asher Felder, who supported Dessa and the family by transporting Artrell to medical appointments and helping ensure that she received the care she needed. Thanks to Nephew Michael Finklin for every food run and rehab visit.

Heartfelt gratitude is extended to Dr. Loreli Munford, Artrell's dedicated personal physician, and Munford Medical Services for their compassionate care, commitment, and concern for Artrell's health and well-being.

The family is especially grateful to Priscilla Pee for the love, encouragement, and support she extended to the family during this difficult journey.

Special thanks are extended to Chaplain Deborah Fortune, whose midnight prayers for Ma's healing brought spiritual comfort, encouragement, hope, and strength during some of the family's most difficult hours.

The family lovingly acknowledges Reverend Dr. Ralph W. Canty, Artrell's lifelong friend and spiritual leader, for the friendship, guidance, prayers, and spiritual presence he shared throughout her life; and Pastor Calvin Peterson, whose pastoral care, prayers, and spiritual support were deeply appreciated.

The family also lovingly acknowledges Artrell's special and close friends, Shirley Jenkins, Tammy Canty, Janifer Squire, Minnie Sanders, Lydia Woods, and Rose Colclough, whose friendship, love, and presence were treasured throughout her life; and her cousins, Annie Gibson and Johnnie Lee Gibson, with whom she shared a special and enduring bond. Cousin Bruce Richardson who was everything to Artrell. Thanks for daily check-ins and how he handled her with grace and patience. To every person who prayed, called, visited, transported, cared for, encouraged, comforted, or simply stood beside Artrell and our family; your acts of kindness and love will never be forgotten. We are forever grateful.

Special thanks are extended to cousin Bruce Richardson, who looked out for her each day, several times a day.

Whether it meant making pallets on the floor, giving up her own bed, preparing another plate of food, offering advice, providing encouragement, or simply giving someone a safe place to be, Artrell always made room. Although Artrell gave birth to one biological child, she became a mother to many.

Artrell was one of the founding mothers of the Voices of High Praise, a community-based choir that brought together youth and young adults from Sumter and surrounding communities. She lovingly referred to its members as her “High Praise.” Through music, mentorship, discipline, encouragement, and faith, she poured into generations of young people.

Her impact extended far beyond the walls of a church or the boundaries of her profession. There are people throughout the community who are better because Artrell encouraged them, corrected them, prayed for them, fed them, welcomed them, or simply believed in them.

Home Was Where Her Heart Was

In the later chapter of her life, Artrell made her home with her daughter, Dessa Hearn, and granddaughter, Heaven Heygod. Their home became a place where three generations shared everyday life together - family, laughter, conversations, meals, challenges, celebrations, care, and countless memories.

To Dessa, Artrell was not simply her mother; she was a constant presence in her life. To Heaven, she was her beloved “Nana,” a relationship that held a very special place in Artrell’s heart.

Dessa and Heaven will sadly and deeply miss her presence in their home and in their everyday lives. The space Artrell occupied was far greater than any room in a house; she occupied an irreplaceable place in their hearts. Their home will undoubtedly feel different without her, but everything she poured into them - her strength, wisdom, faith, determination, humor, lessons, traditions, and unconditional love - will remain.

For Dessa and Heaven, saying goodbye means more than mourning a mother and grandmother. It means missing someone with whom they shared their home, their lives, and their everyday moments.

Leaves to Cherish Her Memory

Artrell leaves to cherish her memory her devoted daughter, Dessa (Shawn) Hearn; Tianna (Michael) Hines; her beloved nephew/son, Jamison Holmes, with whom she shared a special mother-and-son bond; her first granddaughter, Heaven Heygod, who lovingly made Artrell “Nana” to everyone; granddaughter McKenzie Hines; grandsons Michael Collin Hines, and Dariell Cooper III; her brother, Nathaniel Benbow, Jr.; her sister, Rosalind Jenkins; and a host of nieces, nephews, cousins, extended family members, church family, friends, former coworkers, and countless young people whose lives she touched; and her Granddog Makaveli.

Artrell was preceded in death by her husband, Maceo Brown; her parents, Nathaniel Benbow, Sr. and Essie Gibson Benbow; her mother-in-law and father-in-law, Daisy Brown and James Brown; her daughter, Tierney Brewer; her brothers, Moses Benbow and Michael Rene Benbow; and her sisters, Ethel Benbow Logan, Sylvia Yvonne Holmes, Rosa Grayce McKnight.

A Legacy That Will Live On

Artrell Patricia Benbow Brown lived a life that cannot adequately be measured simply by the number of years she was given. Her life is better measured by the doors she helped open, the barriers she helped break, the children she advocated for, the songs she helped lift, the young people she guided, the family she loved, and the countless people for whom she made room.

She was a woman who came of age during the Civil Rights Era and helped make history. She was a licensed Social Worker who devoted 61 years to serving children and families. She was a woman of deep faith, a musician, mentor, advocate, wife, widow, mother, grandmother, sister, aunt, cousin, friend, and community servant.

To some, she was Artrell. To others she was Mrs. Brown. To many she was “Ma” or “Auntie Trel.” And to Heaven, she was simply and lovingly “Nana.”

Her earthly voice may now be still, but the life she lived continues to speak through every person she loved and every life she touched.

There was always room - in her heart, in her home, and at her table.
And the love she gave will remain long after her chair is empty.