



A Journey of Grace and Faith

Friday, March 28, 2025
Family Visitation: 11:00 A.M.
Funeral Service: 12:00 Noon

Sunrise
May 31, 1925
Sunset
March 20, 2025

Mattie Octavia Murray Woods Dunston

Celebration of Life



1925 MATTIE OCTAVIA MURRAY WOODS DUNSTON 2025

Acknowledgements

The family would like to acknowledge her wonderful caregiver and longtime aide, Alicia (Fishback) Wilhoite, who cared for her with great compassion until the end of her life on Earth. We would also like to thank Home Helpers Home Care in Murfreesboro and Gentiva Hospice, located in Murfreesboro.

-The Family



Oaklands Park Seventh Day Adventist Church • 711 North Maney • Murfreesboro, TN



NELSON & SONS
Murfreesboro • Shelbyville
Funeral Directors: Albert, Demetrius & Brandon Nelson
(615) 494-5001 (931) 685-4200
www.nelsonandsons.net



Order of Service

Prelude	
Processional	
Minister of Ceremony.....	<i>Pastor James C. Harris, Oaklands Park SDA</i>
Music	
Scripture Reading	Old Testament, Ecclesiastes 9: 5-6 <i>Elder Alan Greshum, Oaklands Park SDA</i> New Testament, 1 Corinthians 15: 50 -57 <i>Elder Doris Carlton, Oaklands Park SDA</i>
Opening Prayer	<i>Elder Jeffery Gaithers, Oaklands Park SDA Church</i>
Music	
Acknowledgments & Resolutions.....	<i>Sheila Rhodes, Oaklands Park SDA</i>
Expressions of Love.....	Church: <i>Elder Frank Michello, Oaklands Park SDA</i> Community: <i>Pastor Robert D. James, Saint John United Methodist Church</i> Family Member: <i>Marilyn Woods-Robinson, daughter</i>
Special Music & Reading of Obituary	(To Be Read Silently)
Music	
Eulogy.....	<i>Pastor Fred W. Batten, Jr Bethany SDA Church, Montgomery, AL</i>
Closing Prayer	
Recessional	
Interment.....	<i>Evergreen Cemetery, Murfreesboro, TN</i>

Mattie Octavia Murray Woods Dunston

Mattie Octavia Murray Woods Dunston was born May 31, 1925, the first child of the late James Edgar Earl Murray and the late Mary Lizzie Swafford Murray.

She met and married Herschel Greene Woods, Sr. on July 17, 1948. Initially, the couple lived in Murfreesboro but later moved to Eatonville, Florida, the oldest black city in the United States. Herschel taught Industrial Arts at Robert Hungerford Normal and Industrial School for a few years before relocating back to Murfreesboro.

After 12 years of marriage, Herschel Greene Woods, Sr. preceded Mattie in death. From this union, four children were born. In 1973, she married James Howard Dunston, Sr. who also preceded her in death.

Mattie attended Bradley Academy and graduated class of 1943 from Holloway High School. She earned her Bachelor of Science in Biology at Tennessee Agricultural and Industrial University in 1959. She then earned her Master of Education at Middle Tennessee State University in 1979.

Her teaching career spanned over three decades, starting as a substitute teacher, and eventually joining the Mid Cumberland Head Start program. She continued her teaching journey with the Rutherford County School System, working at Central High School (Holloway Annex) in Resource Education, and ultimately concluding her career as a Resource Specialist at Riverdale High School. She retired from Rutherford County Schools in 1987. She received several awards and certificates of appreciation throughout her career as an outstanding educator and community leader. Most noteworthy, her special recognitions from Rutherford County School System, Holloway High School Alumni Association, and Oaklands Park SDA church.

She was a founding member of Oaklands Park Seventh-day Adventist Church where she attended for over 60 years. Mattie served as a Sabbath School Superintendent, Deaconess, and a Colporteur distributing Adventist literature. She contributed to the Church's missionary efforts to aid disaster relief in the Mississippi Delta region during the early 1970s.

Mattie, affectionally known by many family members as Mama, Little Mama, Granny, and Gran-Gran, had a winning smile, effortless grace, and calm demeanor that made her a confidante to friends, family, and neighbors. She could be seen sitting on her front porch reflecting on her life experiences living in Murfreesboro. She was an enthusiastic seamstress and could often be seen walking around the neighborhood or even driving a little too fast. With a passion for gardening, many people would stop by for roses on their way to church services on Mother's Day. She kept her mind sharp by doing daily word puzzles, reading her Sabbath School materials, and watching the 3ABN network.

Mattie was the eldest member and matriarch of the family; she embraced her role as protector and preserver. She loved her parents and shared responsibility for their well-being with her siblings. She valued her church and community as an educator, consummate professional, and dedicated family member who upheld strong values.

Mattie was also preceded in death by son, Herschel Greene Woods, II; sisters, Florence B. Taylor and Hattie Sue Tipton; brother, Johnnie L. Murray.

Mattie is survived by her sister, Barbara Jean Alexander of Murfreesboro; children, Marilyn Woods-Robinson, and Collier L. (Wuanteena) Woods, both of Murfreesboro, Frederick (Hope) Woods, of Odenton, MD, grandchildren, Michael Broyles, Jr, of Murfreesboro, Amentheia J. Johnson of Nashville, Shaterial (Tyronne) Easley of Nashville, Herschel G. Woods, III of Murfreesboro, JuRita Rhodes of Murfreesboro, Herneaschia (Andre) Woods of Murfreesboro, Justin (Lanay) Woods of Harrisburg, PA, Kimberly Hussein of Murfreesboro and Onna Woods, Dover, DE; and a host of loving great-grandchildren, nieces, nephews, cousins, and friends.

Her children, Marilyn, Frederick, and Collier gather with family, neighbors, and friends to celebrate the grace and strength of our matriarch, Mattie Octavia Murray Woods Dunston. Her legacy will continue through the many students she taught during her teaching career.



Honorary Flower Bearers

Deaconess of Oaklands Park Seventh Day Adventist Church
Bobbie Jennings James
Jacqueline Jennings -McGowan
Thelma Murray Jones
Deborah Harris
Mary Lucille White

Honorary Pallbearers

George Woods
Harry Smart
Deacons of Oakland Parks SDA church

Flower Bearers

Granddaughters & Nieces

Pallbearers

Grandsons & Nephews

