

DR. RUBY

SUNRISE
JUNE 7, 1932

SUNSET
APRIL 26, 2026

Lee
DUNCAN



REMEMBERING
THE LIFE AND LEGACY OF

DR. RUBY

Lee

DUNCAN

With profound love, reverence, and gratitude for a life that forever changed countless lives, we celebrate the remarkable journey and enduring legacy of Dr. Ruby Lee Duncan — beloved matriarch, humanitarian, activist, visionary leader, and steadfast champion for justice — who peacefully departed this life on April 26, 2026, at the age of 93.

Born Ruby Lee Phillips on June 7, 1932, in Tallulah, Louisiana, she was the cherished daughter of Ida Bolden and Joseph Phillips Sr., both sharecroppers whose lives were rooted in faith, perseverance, and hard work. By the tender age of three, Ruby endured the heartbreaking loss of her mother in 1935 and was subsequently raised by relatives in rural Louisiana. Her father, Joseph Phillips Sr., later passed away in 1968. Her childhood was shaped by the harsh realities of the segregated South, spending long seasons laboring in cotton fields from spring through fall while attending segregated schools during the winter months. Yet even amid tremendous hardship, Ruby's spirit remained unbroken. The resilience, compassion, discipline, and unwavering determination cultivated during those formative years would later become the very foundation of her extraordinary life's work.

Before leaving Louisiana, Ruby worked for two years as a drugstore clerk. In 1953, driven by hope, courage, and the desire to create greater opportunities for her family, she journeyed west to Las Vegas, Nevada. That courageous decision marked the beginning of a transformative chapter — one that would not only redefine her own destiny, but profoundly impact generations of families throughout Southern Nevada and across the nation.

Family was the sacred center of Ruby L. Duncan's life. She was a deeply devoted and loving mother to seven children. Her journey from Tallulah, Louisiana, to Las Vegas became the cornerstone of a multigenerational legacy rooted in faith, perseverance, love, dignity, and service to others. Her older children were born in Louisiana during the humble beginnings of that journey, while her younger children were born in Las Vegas — the city where Ruby would ultimately walk fully in her divine purpose and emerge as a transformational force within the community she so dearly loved.

While raising seven children, Ruby encountered many of the struggles endured by working-class mothers during that era. She labored tirelessly in the hotel industry as a maid and kitchen worker before suffering debilitating injuries that prevented her from continuing physically demanding work. Confronted with poverty, discrimination, and the indignities of an often-unjust welfare system, Ruby met every challenge with extraordinary grace, dignity, and perseverance. Rather than allowing adversity to diminish her spirit, she transformed her personal struggles into a mission of advocacy, compassion, and empowerment for women, children, and underserved families throughout Nevada.



What began as a mother's determination to provide for her children evolved into a historic movement that would forever alter the social and political landscape of Nevada and beyond. Dr. Ruby L. Duncan became a nationally respected voice for welfare rights, social justice, and community empowerment. Through marches, demonstrations, and fearless advocacy, she fought tirelessly to affirm the dignity and humanity of working-class families. In a historic act of extraordinary courage and leadership, Ruby became the first African American woman to organize a protest that disrupted the Las Vegas Strip and shut down Caesars Palace, bringing national attention to poverty, inequality, and the struggles faced by vulnerable families across America.

Ruby's extraordinary life and fearless advocacy inspired scholars, historians, activists, authors, filmmakers, documentaries, literary works and future generations of leaders. In 1973, she represented the United States at the World Congress of Peace in Moscow, further affirming her role as an influential voice for justice, equality, and human dignity on the global stage. She was recognized as a Distinguished Nevadan and received honorary degrees from the University of Nevada, Las Vegas; the University of Nevada, Reno; and the College of Southern Nevada in recognition of her immeasurable contributions to humanity, public service, and social justice.

Among her many honors and accolades, Ruby received the 2008 Margaret Chase Smith Award from the National Association of Secretaries of State and the 2009 Freedom Tree Award from the University of Nevada, Reno. Her impact on the community was honored as early as 1987 with the establishment of Ruby Duncan Manor, a more than 30-unit apartment complex dedicated to providing affordable housing for seniors and low-income residents, reflecting her lifelong advocacy for dignity, stability, and opportunity for underserved families. In 2010, her enduring legacy was further immortalized with the opening of Ruby Duncan Elementary School in North Las Vegas — a lasting tribute to her unwavering commitment to children, education, and community empowerment. She was instrumental in bringing the first library to the historic black community of West Las Vegas, which now has inspired the new 44,000 sq ft state of the art facility. Ruby was twice honored on the floor of the United States House of Representatives by Congressman Steven Horsford — first in 2014 and again in 2026 — in recognition of her extraordinary humanitarian work, civic leadership, and lifelong commitment to social justice. In 2020, Ruby was selected as one of ten women chosen to represent Nevada in USA TODAY's national commemoration of the centennial anniversary of the ratification of the Nineteenth Amendment to the United States Constitution.

Despite her many honors, public recognitions, and historic achievements, Ruby remained profoundly humble and deeply devoted to the people she served. Her greatest joy was never found in awards or accolades, but in uplifting others, strengthening families, and advocating for those too often unseen and unheard. She believed wholeheartedly that every person deserved dignity, opportunity, compassion, and hope — and she dedicated her life to ensuring that belief became reality for as many people as possible.

She was welcomed into eternal rest by her grandson, David Lee Phillips Jr., beloved daughter, Georgia Ann Jones, her faithful, loving caring daughter-in-law, Blanchie H. Phillips and beloved friend and daughter-in-law, Elan Calloway who preceded her in death.

Ruby leaves behind a loving family who will continue to honor and carry forward her extraordinary legacy, including her beloved children: Ivory Lee Phillips, Attorney David Lee Phillips, Sr., Esq., Ronnie Phillips, Kenneth Phillips, Sondra Phillips-Gilbert, Roy Duncan Jr. and wife Adrine Duncan; along with a host of grandchildren, great-grandchildren, great-great- grandchildren, nieces, nephews, extended family members, dear friends, colleagues, fellow advocates, and community members whose lives were forever touched by her wisdom, generosity, courage, and unconditional love.

Dr. Ruby Lee Duncan's life was a powerful testament to faith, sacrifice, perseverance, compassion, and the extraordinary impact one woman can have on the world. Her legacy lives on in every barrier she broke, every life she uplifted, every voice she empowered, and every community she helped transform.

Though she will be deeply missed, her spirit, vision, and influence will continue to inspire generations for years to come.

She will be forever celebrated, lovingly remembered, and eternally honored.







MEMORIAL SERVICE/VIEWING
OF

DR. RUBY
Lee
DUNCAN

FRIDAY, MAY 22, 2026
5:00 P.M. ~ 8:00 P.M.

SECOND BAPTIST CHURCH
500 MADISON AVENUE
LAS VEGAS, NEVADA 89106
BISHOP DR. JAMES M. ROGERS SR., OFFICIANT
DR. JACQUELINE PARSONS-BARKER, EXPEDITOR

INVOCATION

Pastor Micheal Jackson
Tabernacle of Praise COGIC, Las Vegas, NV

THE OLD TESTAMENT READING

Psalms 23:1-6
Elder Charity Rimson
The Wealthy Place Ministries, Las Vegas, NV

THE NEW TESTAMENT READING

I Corinthians 15:51-57
Senior Pastor, Antone Parson-Dotson
Society Church Las Vegas, Las Vegas, NV

MUSIC SELECTION

Matt Banks & Liberated

REFLECTIONS

Renee Diamond, Beloved Friend
Miss Evelyn, Beloved Friend
Gene Collins, Beloved Friend
David & Marsha Washington, Beloved Friends

MUSIC SELECTION

Matt Banks & Liberated

SPECIAL VIDEO PRESENTATION

Footprints in Our Hearts ~ A Family Tribute

REMARKS

Ashley Garcia, Civics Educator, Civics Organizer,
National Political Strategists and Josie's Daughter

MUSIC SELECTION

Keller Middle School

A FAMILY TRIBUTES

Forever in Our Hearts - Great Grandchildren

Through the Eyes of Her First Grandchild
Ms. La Tanya Phillips

Celebrating Her Life — A Grandson's Reflection
Mr. Sanders Duncan Phillips ~ Mr. Monroe
Jones Jr. ~ Justin Henderson

Forever Her Girls ~ Granddaughters' Tribute
Rudi Butler ~ Brittney Phillips ~ Niani Jones ~
Libra Duncan

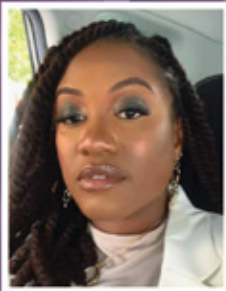
THE SERMONIC SELECTION

Mrs. Nadine Woodfork ~ Niece

THE MESSAGE OF HOPE

Bishop Dr. James M. Rogers Sr.
Senior Pastor and Founder New Jerusalem
Worship Center Las Vegas, NV

BENEDICTION



CELEBRATION OF LIFE
OF

DR. RUBY
Lee
DUNCAN

SATURDAY, MAY 23, 2026
10:00 A.M.

SECOND BAPTIST CHURCH
500 MADISON AVENUE
LAS VEGAS, NEVADA 89106
BISHOP NAIDA PARSON, PHD, EULOGIST
MR. LAWRENCE WEEKLY, EXPEDITOR

THE PRELUDE

THE OPENING

"The hour of Homegoing celebration has come,
O Lord, hear our prayers and accept our
meditation as we glorify Thy name. Amen.

THE PROCESSIONAL

Clergy and The Family

THE SEALING OF THE BRIER

Her Sons & Daughter

THE INVOCATION

Pastor Micheal Jackson

Tabernacle of Praise COGIC, Las Vegas, NV

THE OLD TESTAMENT READING

Ecclesiastes 3:1-4

Bishop Bill McDonnell

The Wealthy Place Ministries, Las Vegas, NV

THE NEW TESTAMENT READING

I Thessalonians 4:13-18

Pastor Sharonda Manor-Foster

New Antioch Christian Fellowship
Las Vegas, NV

MUSIC SELECTION

Matt Banks & Liberated

COMMUNITY TRIBUTES
(3-5 MINUTES PLEASE)

Mrs. Kitt Miller, Beloved Friend

Mr. Mike Flores, Founder

Nevada Youth Network

Mr. Kelvin Watson, Executive Director
Las Vegas-Clark County Library District

Mrs. Hazel Gurland Pooler, Producer/Director
"Storming Caesars Palace" Documentary

Mrs. Maria Silva, Producer-Vegas PBS

Mrs. Ericka Washington, Executive Director
"Make it Work Nevada"

MUSIC SELECTION

Matt Banks & Liberated

SPECIAL VIDEO PRESENTATION

Mr. Robert Bush, Presenter

Reverend Al Sharpton, President & Founder
National Action Network



**REFLECTIONS FROM
ELECTED OFFICIALS**

The Honorable Shelley Berkley, Mayor
City of Las Vegas

The Honorable Aaron Ford,
34th Attorney General
State of Nevada

The Honorable Steven Horsford,
US Representative (NV-04)

MUSIC SELECTION
Matt Banks & Liberated

**ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS OF
CARDS, CONDOLENCES &
RESOLUTIONS**

Lady Sandra Harris
Bethesda COGIC, Las Vegas, NV

READING OF THE OBITUARY

Read Silently Please

THE SERMONIC SELECTION

Ms. Niani Jones, Granddaughter

THE MESSAGE OF HOPE

Bishop Naida Parson, PhD, Senior Pastor
Las Vegas, NV

THE RECESSIONAL





HONORING
THE LIFE AND LEGACY OF
DR. RUBY
Lee
DUNCAN

FROM HER CHILDREN

Mother, you were the steady hands that carried us through storms, the voice that reminded us we came from strength, and the heart that never stopped giving.

To many, you were a leader. To history, you were a fighter for justice. But to us, you were home. You taught us that dignity was not something to beg for, but something every person deserved. You showed us what courage looked like when the world tried to say "no," and you answered with faith, love, and determination. You were laughter in the kitchen, wisdom at the table, warm embraces after long days, and prayers whispered over every one of us.

To your children, you were our foundation. To your grandchildren, you were our guide. To your great-grandchildren and great-great-grandchildren, you were our legacy. You loved so deeply, because of you, we learned how to stand tall, how to love fiercely, and how to keep going even when life became difficult. Your legacy does not end here. It lives in your children, your grandchildren, your great-grandchildren, your great-great-grandchildren, and in every life you touched with compassion and grace. Though our hearts are heavy, we are grateful beyond words that God chose you to be our mother. Your work here was extraordinary, and your love will remain with us forever.

PALLBEARERS

Mr. Robert Butler, Jr. | Mr. Michael Finley | Mr. Monroe Jones Jr.
Mr. Aubrey Clifton Sr. | Mr. Timothy Larry | Mr. Sanders Duncan Phillips
Mr. Tavita Taito, III | Mr. Terrell Stewart

HONORARY PALLBEARERS

Mr. Gene Collins | Mr. Roy Duncan | Attorney David Phillips | Mr. Ivory Phillips
Mr. Keith Larry | Mr. Kenneth Phillips | Mr. Ronnie Phillips
Mr. Dennis W. Woodfork, Sr. | Mr. Justin Lee Henderson

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

We the children and family of our beloved mother, extend our deepest gratitude for the outpouring of love, kindness, prayers, and support shown to us during this time of loss. Your comforting words, gentle hugs, phone calls, visits, prayers, flowers, and acts of kindness have been a source of strength and solace. Each gesture has reminded us that we are not alone and has helped us find comfort in the love that surrounds us. Though our hearts are heavy, we take comfort in knowing how deeply our mother was loved and how many lives she touched. Your presence here today is a testament to the beautiful legacy she leaves behind.

Thank you



A FINAL STATEMENT FROM RUBY

I am at peace and free, wrapped in God's love so true. Thank you for loving me here on earth.

I'm resting in heaven, reunited with those who've gone before me.

Don't weep for me, for I am whole.
Live in love, laugh often, and carry my memory in your heart.

Until we meet again.



Giddens
MEMORIAL CHAPEL

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