



Remembering

JOETTA

MARIA MORGAN

October 31, 1944 - February 12, 2025

THE LIFE AND LEGACY OF...



Joetta

Joetta Maria ‘Mama Joe’ Morgan was born October 31, 1944, to DeLilah Lorene Ball Wright and Murphy T. Billups. She grew up in both Clarksville and neighboring Porter, Oklahoma. But she was even more proud to attend grade school and Carter G. Woodson High School in nearby Tulhassee – a place considered to be the oldest surviving all-Black town here in Oklahoma. It was there in Tullahassee that Joetta would make her mark as an intelligent, stylish, and confident ‘no-nonsense’ student. She was a star inside the classroom, sang in the high school chorus, served as a cheerleader, and was on the basketball team.

“She had a lot of natural born talents in many areas of life, an incredible vocabulary and a giving heart,” said Joetta’s English and Music Teacher- now 91-year-old Dr. Mozelle Lewis. “That’s the way she was raised. She was a helpmate to so many people. I called her my little adopted daughter.”

Joetta, nicknamed ‘Joe-gun’ by her teammates, bragged about how she could hoop ‘back in the day.’ Her uncle, Rodien Ball of Nebraska who was close in age, also attended CGW. He jokingly disputes some of that claim saying, “The second she (Joetta) started to sweat on the court while playing basketball, she’d be ready to stop in fear of getting her clothes and shoes dirty.”

But he went on to say, “Aside from being the best dressed student, it was Joetta’s kindness and big personality that made everybody fall in love with her.”

Joetta gave birth to her first child – Shelah, before moving to Tulsa, shortly after graduating in 1962 to start a new life in the big oil city – also home to Tulsa’s Black Wallstreet.

Pie- Joe

Soon after her arrival in Tulsa, a smooth-talking, well-dressed John Estes Morgan, a young U.S. Soldier and WWII Veteran, from the big city made his move on Joetta - whom he would later nickname Pie-Joe (in his words, “Because she was sweet as pie.”) The two would marry and to this union the couple would give birth to Ajuania, Tony, DeWayne and DeMarco. John worked at Oklahoma Steel for decades up until his retirement.

Pie-Joe was a stay-at-home mom and was very active in her local church – Greater Faith Baptist Church under the leadership of Minister Jimmie Dixon and active in the North Tulsa community. But she insisted on paving her own way. She ventured into the funeral business having worked at Dyer Memorial Chapel and completed an apprenticeship under A.C. Dyer. She also worked with adolescents and young adults who suffered from mental health issues at the infamous institution (Hissom) - now shuttered - in Sand Springs, OK. But it wouldn’t be until nearly two decades later that Pie-Joe would embark upon a new journey that would forever change her life by helping put Tulsans on the map with the Jheri Curl once popularized by the late King of Pop Michael Jackson himself in the 1980’s.



Joetta Maria Morgan

Suga-Joe

Suga Joe, a nickname given to her by one of her fellow church members at then 'Friendship Missionary Baptist Church' under the leadership of Dr. L.L. Tisdale, was known as the Queen of Jheri curls in T-Town. After attending Owasso Beauty College in Owasso, OK – she quickly developed a clientele boasting of doctors, lawyers, teachers, politicians, preachers, church members, and entire family households. She purchased products from Tulsa's very own Donnie's Rejuvenation along with Lustrasilk, Care Free, Designer Touch and Wave Nouveau. She was also a Queen with the pressing comb, perms and short haircuts.

"She (Suga Joe) cut my Jheri curl in a shag haircut style – short on the top and long in the back," said former longtime client Neal Harper. "I had the girls jealous of my curls. And you didn't leave her house without her telling you she loved you. She was a precious gem." Suga Joe was a rising star at local hair shows, a frequent shopper for decades at Miss Jacksons, Renberg's and Tulsa's Saks Fifth Avenue. She produced local fashion shows and tea parties throughout the Tulsa area and at her home church Friendship.

Mama Joe

After retiring as a hairstylist, Suga Joe became affectionately known as Mama Joe. She was a beloved Sunday School teacher at Friendship. "She taught me how to pray by teaching me The Lord's Prayer," said former student Paige Samuels. "And that is something I can always lean on when I'm at a loss for words when talking to God." At one point she attended North Peoria Church of Christ under the leadership of Dr. Warren G. Blakney Sr.

Mama Joe would later take her many talents to Tulsa Public Schools working at Academy Central, Monroe Middle School, and Margaret Hudson. Some of her proudest moments were working with troubled youth by mentoring and guiding them toward a better future. She was Mama Joe to everyone at church and at Booker T. Washington H.S. where she was known for volunteering with the marching band long after one of her children finished school. She was also the cheerleading coach at Madison Middle School. She has volunteered for local charities and several food banks throughout the Tulsa metropolitan area. But whether Mama Joe was adopting and nurturing students from Jackson State University, Grambling State University, Pitt State University, or students from Columbia University in New York – it is evident that she touched the lives of so many throughout the country with her unforgettable presence and undeniable character. She even kept in touch with just about every single one of them through texts and social media. She was most certainly loved!

In the early morning hours of February 12, 2025, God called Mama Joe home. She is preceded in death by her parents, her husband John E. Morgan, sons – Tony L. Morgan and Dewayne T. Morgan, a granddaughter Carlethia (Pooh) Byllups-Fox, her brothers – Kenneth Tyrone Sanders and Herman Fitzgerald Wright.

She leaves behind two daughters in Tulsa – Shelah Gaines Frometa (Alfredo), Ajuania Morgan Herrion Pratt (Curtis); son DeMarco DeJuan Morgan (New York); 55 grand, great-grand and great-great-grand kids. She will forever be missed. But we know we'll see her again one day soon.





Final Viewing 10:00 AM
Boston Avenue United Methodist Church - 1301 South Boston Avenue - Tulsa, OK

Family Breakfast
Historic Vernon A.M.E. Church - 311 North Greenwood Avenue - Tulsa, OK

First Stop:
Retired Corporal U.S. Army Dontay Barnett
In Memory of John E. Morgan - Salute in front of Mama Joe's Home
Procession to Church

Celebratory Service

March 1, 2025 - 11:00 AM
Boston Avenue United Methodist Church - 1301 South Boston Avenue - Tulsa, OK
Reverend Dr. Sam Powers, Senior Pastor
Reverend Jamaal Dyer, Sr., Senior Pastor - Friendship Church, Officiant

| | | |
|--------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------|
| Prelude | Lorelei Barton, Harpist | Tulsa, OK |
| Musical Selection | Friendship Church Master's Choir | Tulsa, OK |
| Entrance of the Cortège - Clergy and The Morgan Family | | |
| Melodic Arrangement | The Late Aretha Franklin | <i>"Mary Don't You Weep"</i> |
| Closing of the Bier - Funeral Directors | | |
| Welcome | Rev. Dr. Sam Powers | Senior Pastor, Boston Avenue United Methodist Church |
| Old and New Testament Reading | Rev. Keith R. Mayes, Sr. | Senior Pastor, Historic Vernon A.M.E. Church |
| Musical Selection | Friendship Church Master's Choir | Tulsa, OK |
| Tributes | <i>THE HONORABLE MONROE NICHOLS</i> | 41st Mayor of Tulsa, OK |
| | The Honorable Ronald Stewart | Oklahoma State Representative District 73 |
| | The Honorable Regina Goodwin | Oklahoma State Senator, District 11 |
| | Willie R. Sells Sr. | Class of 1962 - President Carter G. Woodson High School |
| Resolutions - Reading of Obituary | Bathena Weber | Milwaukee, Wisconsin |
| Musical Composition | Lorelei Barton, Harpist | <i>"Order My Steps in Your Word"</i> |
| Remarks | DeMarco Morgan | The Morgan Family |
| Musical Selection | Friendship Church Master's Choir | Tulsa, OK |
| Eulogy | Rev. Jamaal Dyer | Sr. Pastor, Friendship Church |
| Service Concludes | | |



Pall Bearers

(Grandchildren)

DeUndra Gaines

Loren Gaines

Aries Herrion

Antonio Morgan

DeUndra Gaines II

Keith Fox II

Kenneth Fox

Donnie Atkins II

Loren Gaines

Jaiden Gaines

Caleb Gaines

Kameron Ledbetter

Dayon Gaines

DeVion Moore

DeUndra Gaines III

Daylen Gaines

Honorary Pall Bearers

(Grandchildren)

Dr'hae Atkins

Rhyan Ledbetter

Chase Herrion

Rhylan Byllups

Channing Herrion

Kobi Gaines

Gabriel Holland

Chance Herrion

Keith Fox III

Kenneth Fox II

Hassani Atkins

Zaydian Morgan

Logan James



Acknowledgment

The family of **Joetta Maria Morgan** wishes to express our heartfelt gratitude for the outpouring of love and support during this difficult time. Your prayers, kindness and thoughtful gestures will never be forgotten.

Thank you to Boston Avenue United Methodist Church, Friendship Church, Historic Vernon A.M.E Church, Tulsa Mayor's Office, Toni's Flower Shop, OSU Tulsa Campus, My Momma's House Soul Food, MVP Transportation - Tulsa, LaToyia Walters-Makeup, The Samuels Family, Sweet Lisa's Cafe, and Stephanie Busby - S-Press Yourself.

May God continue to bless and keep each one of you in His loving embrace.

Committal Procession

Horse-Drawn Carriage:

Memorial Park Cemetery

5111 South Memorial Drive - Tulsa, OK

Services Entrusted to:

Schaudt's Tulsa Funeral Service & Cremation Care Center
5757 South Memorial - Tulsa, OK 74145

A Special Thanks to The New Pitts Mortuary
Milwaukee, WI 53206

THE **MORGAN** FAMILY

“May His Peace Be With You, Until We Meet Again.”