



Bessie Mae Cunningham

October 15, 1921 – December 11, 2022



Bessie Mae Cunningham, known to many as "Bess" of Thorndale, PA went home to be with the Lord on Sunday, December 11, 2022, at the age of 101. She was born on October 15, 1921, in Augusta, GA. Bessie was the youngest child of the late Spurgeon and Mary Collins Marshall.

She married the late Matthew Cunningham Sr. and cherished

being a wife and mother to five children. Bessie was a great woman of God with strong faith which she instilled in her children and grandchildren. She read her bible and kneeled to pray every night until she was unable. Bessie was a devoted member of Christian Faith Fellowship in Downingtown. Known as "Mother Cunningham", she would often give words of encouragement and advice to her church family.



As the matriarch of the Cunninghams', Bessie loved to be surrounded by her family and friends. She didn't need a reason to entertain and often hosted parties, dinners, and cookouts throughout the years. She was an excellent cook and baker. All of her meals were made with love. They were fresh and from scratch. She was notorious for rubbing your head in pinochle and then handing you a slice of her delicious sweet potato pie! Bessie was a social butterfly and seemed to know everyone up and down the "Main Line". She was a member of the first African American Red Hat Society, called the Main Line Afrocentric Chapter of the Red Hat Society and later became a member of the Red Hat Divas of



Chester County. Bessie enjoyed spending time with the ladies in the group.

She was educated in the Tredyffrin Easttown School District but was removed from school by her parents in 1932 because of a discrimination lawsuit, known as "The School Fight." While her formal education ended, Bessie was a very intelligent woman who knew how to navigate a good deal which was evident in her yard sale adventures. She would wake up at the crack of dawn and have destinations circled in the morning paper. She also had a housekeeping business and enjoyed her time working at Burroughs.

Bessie Cunningham was a force to be reckoned with. She had style, class, and sass. She was generous yet matter-of-fact.





You always knew where you stood with her. She loved with her whole heart and was loved by many. Bessie will be truly missed.

Her legacy lives on through her children Emily Jean Brown of Strafford, Patricia C. Seagers of Thorndale, Matthew Cunningham, Jr. (Louise) of Coatesville, George E. Cunningham (Jean) of Exton, Peter M. Cunningham (Yvonne) of Long Island, NY; grandchildren, Alexis Brown, Terrence Brown (Tricia), Joseph Seagers (Jennifer), Troy Brown (Janet), Lauren Sweeting (Percy), Damar Smith (William), Matthew Cunningham III, Dionna Harris, and Edward Williams; 4 great-grandchildren, Xavier, Faith, Joslyn and Drake; 1 great-great-grandchild, Leo and a host of nieces, nephews, cousins, and friends.

In addition to her parents, husband, and siblings, she was preceded in death by a son-in-law, Alexander Brown and granddaughter, Brooke Cunningham.



Order of Service

Processional	Clergy & Family
Officiating	Pastor Donal Anderson
Organ Prelude	Kendall Wilson
Final Viewing	
Opening Hymn “Blessed Assurance”	CFF Ensemble
Scripture Readings	
<i>Old Testament</i>	Pastor Al Cooper
<i>New Testament</i>	Pastor Steve Perry
Prayer of Comfort	Pastor Victor Kirk
Selection “I Just Wanna Praise You”	CFF Ensemble
Cards, Condolences &	
The Obituary	Kenya Jacobs and Dea. Karen Eggleton
Reflections	Family & Friends, Grandchildren
Words of Comfort	Pastor K. Marshall Williams
Selection “When We All Get to Heaven”	CFF Ensemble
Eulogy	Pastor Ricky Wilson Christian Faith Fellowship
Recessional Directives	Ventnor T. Wright, Funeral Director
Recessional	Clergy & Family

HOMEGOING SERVICES

Saturday, December 17, 2022

8:00 AM Viewing

10:00 AM Service

SERVICE LOCATION

Messiah Lutheran Church
46 West Lancaster Avenue
Downingtown, Pennsylvania

PALLBEARERS

Grandsons and Friends

FLOWER BEARERS

Friends

COMMITTAL SERVICE & INTERMENT

Philadelphia Memorial Park
124 Phoenixville Pike
Frazer, Pennsylvania 19355

A NOTE OF THANKS

We extend our heartfelt gratitude to all who supported us with your prayers and kindness during our time of bereavement. May God bless and keep you.

Sincerely, The Family



Wright
FUNERAL & CREMATION SERVICES, INC.

725 MERCHANT STREET
COATESVILLE, PENNSYLVANIA
610-384-0341 | wrightfuneralsvs@aol.com
Ventnor T. Wright, Funeral Director, Supervisor