

## *Affirmation*

I believe in living. I believe in the spectrum of Beta days and Gamma people. I believe in sunshine. In windmills and waterfalls, tricycles, and rocking chairs. And I believe that seeds grow into sprouts. And sprouts grow into trees. I believe in the magic of the hands. And in the wisdom of the eyes. I believe in rain and tears. And in the blood of infinity. I believe in life. And I have seen the death parade march through the torso of the earth, sculpting mud bodies in its path. I have seen the destruction of the daylight, and seen bloodthirsty maggots prayed to and saluted. I have seen the kind become the blind and the blind become the blind in one easy lesson. I have walked on cut glass. I have eaten crow and blunder bread and breathed the stench of indifference. I have been locked by the lawless. Handcuffed by the haters. Gagged by the greedy. And, if I know anything at all, it's that a wall is just a wall and nothing more at all. It can be broken down. I believe in living. I believe in birth. I believe in the sweat of love and in the fire of truth. And I believe that a lost ship, steered by tired, seasick sailors, can still be guided home to port.

*Assata Shakur*

## *Repast*

Immediately Following the Service  
Redefined Studios  
9529 Phippen Road, Cincinnati, Ohio 45231

## *Acknowledgments*

The family extends their heartfelt thanks and gratitude for the outpouring of love, concern, and kindness shown to them during this time of bereavement. Your support has been a source of comfort and strength, and we deeply appreciate each expression of care and compassion. May God bless and keep you always.

With love,  
The Johnson and Smith Family.



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Walker - Mt. Healthy Chapel  
7272 Hamilton Avenue  
Mt. Healthy OH 45213

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## *Celebrating the Life of*



*Sandra Annlea Soweto*  
*"Smitty"*

Sunrise: September 23, 1948 - Sunset: December 9, 2024

*Saturday, December 21, 2024*

Visitation: 2:00 pm - Funeral Service: 3:00 pm

*Walker Funeral Home Mt. Healthy Chapel*

7272 Hamilton Avenue - Mt. Healthy, Ohio 45231  
Dr. Mike Scruggs, Pastor - Officiating  
Light of the World Church

# Obituary

Sandra Annlea Smith-Soweto, "Smitty", born on September 23, 1948, at Christ Hospital in Cincinnati, Ohio, to the late Katie Beatrice Smith and Charles Clay Smith Jr., peacefully transitioned with her family right by her side after a life filled with love, adventure, and unwavering faith. She fought a good fight and leaves behind a legacy of kindness, strength, and inspiration.

Sandra was baptized in 1963 at The Church of God, where she continued to grow in her faith. A woman of strong belief, she dedicated her life to her family, community, and Creator.

Sandra retired from AT&T in 2004, following a distinguished 35-year career. Her commitment to excellence and service did not end there, as she continued to make meaningful contributions through her work with the IRS and at the Westin Hotel in Cincinnati. Sandra was also actively involved with Genesis Academy Learning Center, where her passion for helping others shone brightly. Even as her health began to decline, her unwavering dedication to charitable work never wavered. She generously supported numerous causes, always putting the needs of others before her own and leaving a legacy of kindness and selflessness.

Sandra was a proud graduate of Withrow High School, Class of 1966, and attended the University of Cincinnati, where she studied Psychology. Her passion for understanding human behavior and helping others guided her throughout her life, shaping her into a compassionate and insightful individual.

Sandra married her high school sweetheart, (Jerry Johnson) and together they were blessed with their only child, Nilaja Clay Johnson, Sr. She took great pride in the man he became—a loving husband, devoted father, and an all-around incredible person. Sandra's love and guidance shaped him into the great man he is today.

Later in life, she married William C. Taylor, who preceded her in death. Together, they built a life filled with love and cherished memories. Both shared a deep appreciation for art, often spending time exploring galleries and marveling at creative works. Their home was adorned with vibrant art pieces, serving as a beautiful reflection of their shared passion and the bond they nurtured through their love for creativity and beauty.

Sandra spent the last five years of her life with her son and his family, a period she regarded as a true joy and privilege. Together, they shared countless cherished moments and created enduring memories. Surrounded by their love, care, and unwavering support, Sandra experienced comfort and peace until her transition. Her grandson, Nilaja Clay Johnson, Jr., was truly the apple of her eye. Sandra retired after a fulfilling career so she could care for him while his parents were working, cherishing every moment of that precious time. Her bond with him brought her immense joy, and their connection remained one of the most treasured parts of her life.

Sandra had a generous heart and was devoted to empowering others. She mentored young women in college, offering guidance and support to help them achieve their dreams. A dedicated donor to charities like United Way, Acorn, and Save the Children, Sandra's selfless spirit and commitment to uplifting others left a lasting legacy of kindness and compassion.

Sandra loved to travel the world, visiting destinations such as China, Africa, Japan, Paris, Italy, and Jamaica. She embraced the diversity of cultures and treasured the beauty she encountered on her journeys. An avid reader, she enriched her mind and soul through books, gaining knowledge and inspiration.

One of Sandra's greatest joys was the lifelong bond she shared with her childhood friends. This close-knit group gathered regularly, celebrating birthdays and life's milestones while supporting one another through every stage of life. Their enduring friendship reflected the love, laughter, and warmth that Sandra brought into the lives of everyone she touched.

She is survived by her loving son, Nilaja Clay Johnson Sr. (Frances Johnson), and her cherished grandson, Nilaja Clay Johnson Jr. She also leaves to mourn bonus grandson, Desean Flagg, Sr. (Jessica Flagg), along with her treasured great-grandchildren: Desean Flagg, Jr. and Ni'Cari Flagg. Her memory will be forever cherished by her devoted siblings: Shirley A. Jordan, Larry Clay Smith, Michelle Smith, and Pamela Thompson. She will be fondly remembered by a host of dedicated caregivers, beloved nieces and nephews, extended family, and dear friends who were touched by her warmth and kindness.

She was predeceased by her father, Charles Clay Smith Jr., and her mother, Katie B. Smith, as well as her great-grandparents, Charles Clay Smith Sr. and Anne Lee Mallburton-Smith, great-great-grandparents, George Mallburton and Sallie Jane Burdette Mallburton.

Sandra's memory will live on in the hearts of those who loved her. Her life was a testament to the power of faith, generosity, mentorship, and the beauty of living fully. She will be greatly missed but forever celebrated.

## Order of Service

Musical Prelude	Soft Music
Parting View	Family
Prayer	Pastor Dan Larkin
Scripture	Minister Vernell Starnes
Selection	Vince Strout
Acknowledgments	
Special Remarks	Cheryl Meadows
Remarks	Family & Friends (Please limit remarks to two minutes)
Obituary	Read Silently <i>A time to reflect and thank God for the life of Sandra Annlea Soweto</i>
Praise Dance	African Dancers
Eulogy	Pastor Mike Scruggs
Benediction	Pastor Mike Scruggs
Recessional	Clergy, Family, & Friends