

WHEN YOU'VE BEEN BLESSED...



Evelyn Geneita Davis McCray

JULY 19, 1929 - MARCH 9, 2025

SATURDAY, MARCH 22, 2025

Trinity Baptist Church,
507 State University Dr, Fort Valley, GA 31030
at two o'clock in the afternoon

ORDER OF SERVICE

Music provided by Mr. Dexter Davis

Officiating: Pastor Gregory Moore

Processional

Old Testament: Ecclesiastes 3: 1-8 Deacon Walter Phillips (nephew)
New Testament: 1 Corinthians 15: 50-58 Deacon Ronald McCrary
Prayer: Deacon Alfred Conteh, Sr.

Musical selection: *It is Well With My Soul(Trumpet): Mr. Alfred Early*

Tributes of Remembrance (Limit to 2 minutes please)

Dr. Angela Ezell Addison (Former student)
Deaconess Brenda Weatherspoon (Trinity)
Mrs. Patricia Simmons Stuckey (Family friend/Trinity)
Mrs. Eva Hoskin Henderson (Family friend/Tabor Heights Community)
Ms. Beverly Delton (Family friend/HECC)

Musical selection: *His Eye Is On The Sparrow (Mrs. Vendya Cornelius-Gardner)*

Tributes of Remembrance continued (Limit to 2 minutes please)

Ms. Veronica Pittman (Zeta Phi Beta Sorority)
Rev. Ricky Jackson (HECC)
Dr. Delores Bryant Booker (HECC)
Mr. Eric Konan (Oldest grandson)
County Commissioners (Proclamation)

Eulogy – Rev. Moore

Musical Selection: *Black Butterfly (Ms. Edikan Hyacinth Essiet)*

Acknowledgements

Recessional

Interment will be at the Ragin Family cemetery on Perry Highway.

OBITUARY

Whenever she was asked, "How are you doing, Ms. McCray?"

"Counting Blessings"

was her response... and she counted all as blessings...

Evelyn Geneita Davis McCray was born to Robert Lee Davis and Mary Bell Ragin (Minnie Bell) in 1929 in Kathleen/Houston County, GA. Her birth certificate said she was stillborn, until she, as an adult, petitioned for its change. She was the eldest of five children born to this union and the only girl. Her brothers -- Robert, Calvin, Rudolph, and Ernest -- preceded her in death. Her life was not an easy one, but she found ways to count it all as blessings.

As a baby, she contracted a bad case of whooping cough (pertussis) before the vaccine became available in the 1940s. Some said she was small, frail, and weak as a sparrow. Perhaps this is the inspiration of what became her signature solo song, "His Eye is on the Sparrow". Her mother died when she was 12 years old; she became "sister-Mama" to her four brothers, helping to support and nurture them. She was fortunate to have many who steadied her way, including "Papa" Willie Frank Ragin (grandfather), "Big Mama" (Nettie Davis Rumph) and Auntie (Mary Frances Davis Lyons), and the Preston Street/Cullers Alley community. Evelyn also joined the Trinity Baptist Church at age 12 in 1941. Trinity and her faith remained central to her throughout her life. She married Eugene (Augustus) Thomas McCray in 1949 and they had six daughters. The family moved to Long Island, New York for his Air Force military service.

"May the Work I've done speak for me..."

Evelyn was sure to use the talents gifted her by God. She contributed her beautiful soprano voice to the Trinity choir, often with her youngest daughter, Anita. The family held two concerts at the church - in 1976 and for her 75th birthday in 2004.

She graduated from the Henry Alexander Hunt High School, a proud member of the class of 1948. As a single mother, she completed her degree from FVSC in 1966 at age 36 with dual degrees in Library Science and Elementary Education. Her commencement speaker was Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. She became THE librarian for the Black community at the segregated Thomas Public Library in the Gano community, near the Peach County Training School on what is now State College Drive. While serving in this capacity, she had to personally go to the white library to pick up the books, using her own transportation.

She worked hard from the time she was 12 to help support her family. She picked peaches and cotton, and other crops to help support the family. She worked in the peach packing house, as a switchboard operator at Fort Valley State College (now FVSU), as a factory worker making eyeglass frames in New York, at Doubleday Book Publishing Company, and as a department store saleslady, modeling dresses for female customers. She always said she had “working hands”.

During the 70’s and 80’s she began her career as a community activist and served as the first female President of the Citizen Education Committee, Fort Valley’s local civic organization pushing voter registration and civic engagement. Because of her activities, she was fired from her job as a teacher/librarian due to her support of Dr. Robert Threat (a Black educator) as Superintendent of Peach County Schools, against incumbent white Superintendent since 1945, Mr. Ernest R. Anderson. She was one of four teachers who brought a lawsuit against the Superintendent and the school system, who fought hard and won the lawsuit...**counting it all as blessings...**

In retirement, she and long-term Principal and Vice-Principal, Mr. H.E. Bryant, co-founded the Hunt and Educational Cultural Center (HECC), in an effort to preserve the history, legacy and contributions of Black academia, athletics, culture, and community in Fort Valley/Peach County. Together, they led efforts to purchase the Gym from the city. In many other communities, following desegregation, schools were closed without fanfare, with no evidence of their existence and contributions remaining. Evelyn wanted to ensure that we regularly told our own story of successes and challenges, and over the years, and developed a strong relationship with staff at the local newspaper, the Leader Tribune.

Some of her work with the HECC resulted in the: renovation and re-opening of the swimming pool; the preservation of Hunt High school complex history; conducting research for and installation of a sculpture/bust of Principal H. E. Bryant on the Spruce Street grounds of the Fort Valley/Peach County school complex; making the gym available for community activities; preservation of the Anna Lumpkin Auditorium; and work to create the walking trail as for intergenerational inclusiveness as part of the athletic field. **So many blessings...**

Evelyn received many awards and recognitions for her work in the community. She was invited to and attended a Governor’s Inaugural Ball. She was one of Peach County’s “Peach Award” recipients, received the 'Humanitarian of the Year' award from WMAZ-TV in Macon, GA, and received her last recognition as a Community Trailblazer Award by the Retired Teachers of Peach County, during Black History Month, February 16, 2025. She applied for and received competitive grants like the one from the Kellogg Foundation that allowed her to learn more about the process for preserving history, and to visit other local, national, and international examples of the and return to share her findings. She forever remained a “Light in the Valley” (Hunt High’s school song title). ..many Blessings...

In May 2021, after many years of working with the Georgia Historical Preservation Society, Evelyn, along with the 15-member HECC Legacy Committee, were successful in the H. A. Hunt High School Gym receiving its official designation and marker as a Georgia and National historical site and recognized by the Georgia African American Register of Historic Places. Thank God she was a dedicated librarian and kept and filed everything! The HECC is now an active hub in the community for education, entertainment, physical activity, and continued preservation of Black history -- serving as a site for sports, observation of Black History Month and Kwanza events, a walking trail for exercise (named in her honor), health fairs, and social events
...Blessings...

In retirement, she also created educational opportunities for youth and adults to travel with a purpose. She formed a "Travel, See, and Learn" group to ensure the youth of Fort Valley could continue to grow academically during summers. They traveled to places like the space center in Huntsville AL, New Orleans, Washington, DC, and Disney in Florida. She organized trips for adults as well - taking the "Class of 48" across country to California, Las Vegas, Arizona, and Virginia.

Evelyn balanced her civic and political endeavors with showing her love for family and friends. In 2014, she insisted that the family take a road trip to Marshall, Texas, to witness her brother Calvin's achievements and induction into the Wylie College Hall of Fame. She always wanted people to be recognized for and to document their talents, hard work, and overall becoming their highest and their best. Her travels took her to Abidjan, Ivory Coast (Africa), France, Switzerland, Jamaica, and she turned a vacation trip to Nova Scotia, Canada into a research opportunity to study the history and path of African Americans and the Underground Railroad. She loved her flower and vegetable gardens and would spend lots of time on her patio communing with nature and the birds that would often come and pay a visit.

Evelyn joined the Zeta Phi Beta Sorority in her post-graduate years. As she journeyed through her life and careers, there were many Zetas who befriended and encouraged her, including Mrs. Katie Troup, Mrs. Harriette Tabor, Mrs. Marion P. Bryant, Mrs. Anna Lumpkin, Mrs. Ruby Church, and Mrs. Alma Simmons. She found many ways to pay-it-forward and rose in service to become Basileus. *So many blessings...*

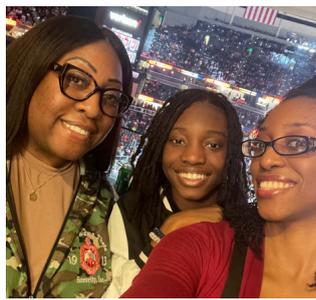
Education, Leadership, serving Community, Family, and Compassion are the pillars of her daily living. She is most proud of having never missed a single election since her illness. Voting has always been a high priority for her. Through it all, she remained a proud, yet humble woman. She encouraged us to "Count your blessings".

Along with her legacy of community service, she leaves a devoted family: daughters – Jaqueline Konan, Paulette Neely (Paul- dec’d), Gail McCray, LuChrista (dec’d), Avis Revear (Larry – dec’d), and Anita-dec’d (Richard ‘Bob’ Hogan), Linda S. Neal – “adopted” daughter (Lovie); grandsons – Moieh Eric Konan (Trish), Richard Thomas Hogan, II (Anjenetta), Timothy Jared Hogan (Qualen Bradley), Jonathan McCray Hogan (Treyada); Granddaughters – Geneita Lynn Revear, Alanna Yvonne Revear; step-granddaughters, Tara T. Neely, and Maryum Neely Snapp; great grandchildren – Victoria Konan, Jalen Hogan, Jackson Hogan, Jordan Hogan, Charlotte Rose Revear, Alaska Tori Lockhart, Alaric Antonio Revear, Anaiya and Ezra Hogan; step- great grandchildren, Austin J Neely, Zakkiyah I. and Rashad J. Neely, Gabriel, TeShaun and Jaylen; Nieces and Nephews – children of Joseph (dec’d) and Glynn Eva McCrary: Joseph McCrary, Jr. (Avera) and Michael McCrary (Renee), and Burdette McCrary (dec’d); children of Wilborn and Delores McCrary (both dec’d): Debra Collins (Neil – dec’d), Diane Fort (Daryl), and Wilborn McCrary, Jr. (Greta); children of Lula and Jessie Smith (both dec’d): Ventura McCray (Tina) and Travis Smith; Children of brother, Robert Davis: Robin Phillips (Walter), Carnita Bronson, Cynthia Lattimore, and Samuel Todd Bronson, and children of brother, Ernest Davis: Tony (dec’d), Tanja Davis, Kirek Davis (Karen), and Keisha Davis. We count the many other family and friends who love her as her survivors. ***Each one -- a Blessing.***

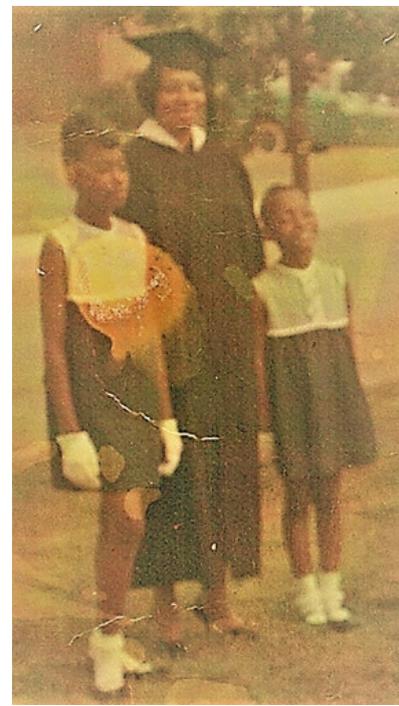
We are each so blessed to have Ms. Evelyn as a part of us. When someone close to us dies, they don't leave us feeling empty; instead, they leave us with their love. This love continues to guide us, heal us, and remind us that they are still with us in spirit, even though they are physically gone. It emphasizes the lasting impact of a person's love on those they leave behind. May her legacy continue to inspire us all.

One of her favorite quotes that she recited often in her later years was:

“This old world we’re living in
is mighty hard to beat.
You get a thorn with every rose,
But ain’t the roses sweet?”
Frank Leby Stanton









“ ———
| *You can't find that
| on page 99.*



“ ———
| *... sit down child, let me
| tell you a few things.*





*When You've Been Blessed
(Feels like Heaven)*

In a world of superheros
In a world of weak and strong,
I've survived the raging storm.
And I pray for a world
Where we all can be free.
It's a heavenly vision, it's a garden I see
Nothing but joy, nothing but peace, Let it be.

When you've been blessed, Feels like heaven
When you've been blessed, Feels like Heaven.

I have faith, I have hope.
And I trust in the day, When the music
From Heaven, Will show us the way.
It's a garden of music, It's a garden of love
And we all are His children, Sharing gifts
from above.

When you've been blessed, Feels like Heaven
When you've been blessed, Feels like Heaven
Pass it on, Pass it on. Why don't you?

When you've been blessed, that's what it feels like
There'll be no more sorrow, No more pain
Nothing but joy, joy, joy
No more sickness, No more strife
Nothing but love, love, love.
And everybody, we will get together and say
That's what it feels like
When you've been blessed, I'm blessed.

I talked to my mother, My father, My sistas
And they said, girl, you are blessed.
So pass it on--
Don't keep it to yourself
We're not talking about prayer -- Talking about
yourself.
Not silver or gold
Something, Somewhere
You've got to pass it on.

— by Patti Labelle and Nona Hendryx, 1991



In lieu of floral tributes, we ask that you please consider a contribution to one of the following organizations in the name of Evelyn D. McCray:

Hunt Educational and Cultural Center (HECC), Mail Check: HECC P.O. Box 1391 Fort Valley, Ga. 31030; payable to HECC; CashApp: \$HECC1954 -

Or Mail check to: the Trinity Baptist Church, 507 State University Dr, Fort Valley, GA 31030.

The family of Evelyn McCray expresses sincere appreciation for all acts of kindness shown during this most difficult time. We shall never forget you and ask for your continued prayers as we face tomorrow without Mom's presence.

Broken Chain

By Ron Tranmer

We little knew that morning God was to call your name.
In life we loved you dearly, in death we do the same.
It broke our hearts to lose you, You did not go alone.
For part of us went with you, The day God called you home.
You left us beautiful memories, Your love is still our guide,
And though we cannot see you, You are always at our side.
Our family chain is broken, and nothing seems the same,
But as God calls us one by one, The chain will link again.



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