

TRUE ESSENCE

EXCLUSIVE
MAGAZINE
COVER

QUEEN MOTHER'S
HOMEGOING

JULY 10, 1948 -
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**NORMA
BROWN**

2024



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TRUE ESSENCE

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LIFE, LOVE, LAUGHTER

Norma Eleanor Lewis Brown was born on the 10th of July, 1948, at Hargreaves Memorial Hospital in Mandeville Manchester. One of ten kids, she attended Mile Gully School, where she excelled academically and received a scholarship in June 1962. Norma's commitment to her education and love for her

country was evident from a young age and she was honored to be involved in the planting of a tree at Mile Gully school on the 6th of August 1962 to celebrate Jamaica's independence.

Norma attended Holmwood Technical High, and following her passion for teaching children, furthered her education at Cainwood Teachers College and Moneague Teachers College. She dedicated her life to education, working at various schools including Happy Grove in Saint Elizabeth, Middle Quarters in Saint Elizabeth, Comfort Hall in Manchester, New Green in Manchester, Lime Hall in St. Ann, and Claremont All Age School in St. Ann.

In 1973, she embarked on the journey of marriage to Floyd James Oliver Brown and this union brought about three children: Gail, Kevin and Jada.

Norma's journey led her to eventually migrate with her family to the United States in 1986, where they initially settled in New York before officially making Boston their home. It was here that her family later grew to include another daughter, JoAnn (Kevin's wife) and two beautiful grandchildren, Olivia and Quentin.

Despite the challenges of relocation, Norma embraced her new surroundings with resilience and determination and made a spiritual home for her family at Community Gospel Chapel. Each year, the family celebrates this milestone in small ways, often expressing gratitude for her bravery and the sacrifices she made to pave a path for us all, including extended family.

Loves

Known for her impeccable fashion sense, Norma was lovingly referred to as Queen Mother by her church sisters. She had a knack for dressing to perfection, paying attention to every detail. Her favorite color palette included parrot green/sage and purple, but she appreciated all hues. She often had a hat and jewelry to match almost every outfit.

A lover of music and a natural harmonizer, Norma loved music: a-cappella, gospel, contemporary Christian music and hymns.



Figure 1

Norma loved going to the beach for any and every reason

This passion extended to her participating on her church's praise and worship team as well as the Voices of Praise ensemble, holding down the alto section for special programmings at Community Gospel Chapel for over 25 years. She also enjoyed the soothing sounds of light classical, Caribbean and contemporary Christian music. She would not hesitate to cut a rug to the familiar rhythms of her home, teaching her kids and grandkids dance moves from back in the day, like the penguin shuffle.

Norma, lovingly referred to as Mama Brown, also found joy in cooking and for a while hosted college students for sit down meals at her home after church on Sundays. While she cooked many American dishes well, she introduced many people to Caribbean dishes like oxtail, ackee and saltfish, rice and peas and curry goat. Her baking was also legendary and she would often take orders from her Community Gospel Chapel family and other friends for Jamaican Bun at Easter time and black cake during the Christmas season.



She would often be seen picking mint and thyme from the front yard and found solace in sipping on peppermint or ginger teas. She often harvested pumpkins, tomatoes and squash from the backyard and made sure that all the family would partake in the bounty. The smell of lavender and perfectly ripe fruit often filled her home with the unmistakable warmth of the Caribbean.

She loved watching sports (especially her home teams) and it was not uncommon to hear her passionately cheering them on and then reaching out to hold your hand as she laughed excitedly - often then changing the station when the suspense was too much. She also not only cheered on her grandchildren on the soccer field but was a part of the action taking part in Yangge, Tai-Chi, Senior Olympics and Fourth of July Parade with the Randolph Intergenerational Community Center. She loved to laugh, and movies like Christmas Lampoon and Coming to America always left her in stitches. A lifelong teacher and learner, Norma enjoyed word games like Wordscapes and Scrabble, many times teaching us all words we never knew existed. She was also an avid traveler, taking cruises to places like Cozumel, Bermuda and Grand Cayman. She had often dreamed of visiting Israel someday.

Norma's love for life shined through in her appreciation for simple joys and cherished moments. Her infectious laughter and cheerful demeanor brightened the lives of all who knew her. Her heart overflowed when surrounded by the warmth of her family which included immediate and extended family members, long-time friends and in-laws.

Her gentle and caring nature endeared her to children and babies as she often showered them with love and affection. The kids she taught at Community Gospel Chapel remember her as loving, welcoming, encouraging AND "the lady with the hats". One child shared how her kind words completely turned around a horrible start to her day. She was truly gifted with the ability to make everyone feel like family and like they were the only person in the world that mattered.

Norma's acts of kindness knew no bounds, as she consistently went above and beyond to help others without seeking any recognition. She embodied a humility and generosity that is unparalleled. Her legacy lives on through the cherished memories shared by her loved ones. Though she may be physically absent, Norma's spirit continues to inspire and uplift those who were fortunate enough to know her and experience her love. She was the perpetual mother taking care of everyone around her and paying attention to everyone's needs, faves and otherwise. She loved all people (kids and adults alike) and made it a point to make sure that each person knew that they were loved by her and by God.

As we bid farewell to Norma Brown, we honor her life and the indelible mark she left on our hearts. We believe she is at home finally in the arms of her Heavenly Father, knowing that she was deeply loved and will be profoundly missed.

"We have come this far by Faith, leaning on the Lord. Trusting in His holy word. He's never failed us yet. Oh...we can't turn around. We have come this far by faith."

- Family Song

She would occasionally even send them to her sisters and friends through the mail.

Norma loved nature. She could often be found watching National Geographic (sometimes hiding her eyes for portions) and sharing all the things she learned with family. She also loved taking care of her house plants and her skills in doing so extended to her various outdoor gardens in both the front and back yards.



**Love your
Sister like you
love Yourself**



Sister extraordinaire, nothing too good to give her sisters... From firm godly advice to the latest fashion, cooking, baking, vegetable planting techniques to name a few. The auntie high in command to every niece and nephew. I remember back in 2020 when I was sitting my nieces (the twins, Aunt Phyllis' grands) and they wouldn't eat or comply to my commands, I'd just say that Aunt Norma says to eat, and in a split second, all food is gone and tummies are overfull. Norma the entertainer. I remember me and her dancing to Elizabeth's serenade, pretending we are rich and we are getting married and that music was our wedding march. I love you sister. Rest in Peace. May the light perpetual shine on you. - Aunt Faye

My beloved sister Norma... I love you! I miss you! I will never forget fond memories of our childhood. Words cannot express how your passing has affected me. However, I will find solace in the precious memories which I hold dear to my heart. Sleep in heavenly peace, my sister. I love you! - Aunt Cherry

To my beautiful, kind, fashionable, loving and most of all, very humble sister Norma. One thing I can say about you is that you were very fashionable. You could dress and match everything to the "T". You were a very good cook and baker. We always had our coffee every morning at 9:00 or so, and would still talk during the day. I admired how we treated each other with respect, greeting each other in the mornings by our married names and asking how was our nights' rest. My love, I am really going to miss you badly. - Aunt Judith

STANDING ON THE PROMISES OF CHRIST MY KING, HE HIDETH MY SOUL AND DAY BY DAY AND WITH EACH PASSING MOMENT....are three songs I will ALWAYS remember my DARLING SISTER NORMA with.... If GOD had to pick 10 kind people on this earth my sister Norma would easily be in that 10....Norma only needed a hint that you wanted something and in no time she would make SURE you got it ... if you knew Norma Lewis Brown you could NEVER forget her....the first thing you would see were the two front teeth laughing and the cheerful happy person never ever wearing her pain on her face. Rest my Sister Norma in GOD'S CARE. - Aunt Paulette



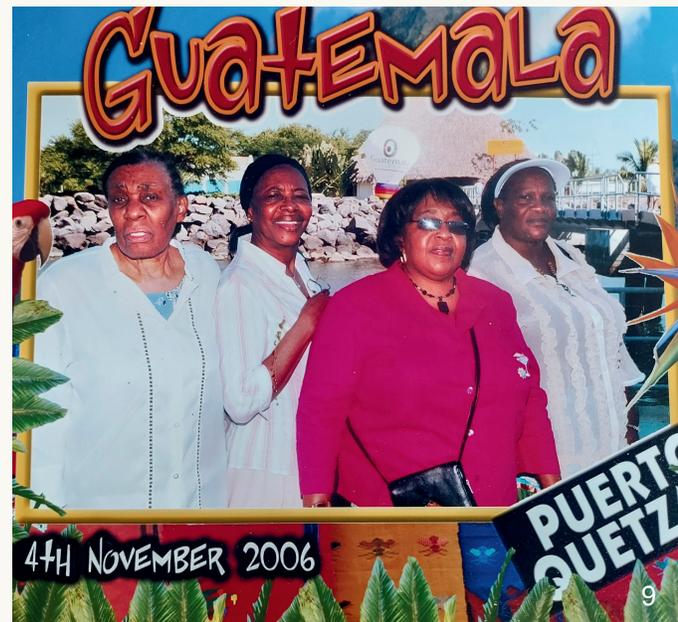
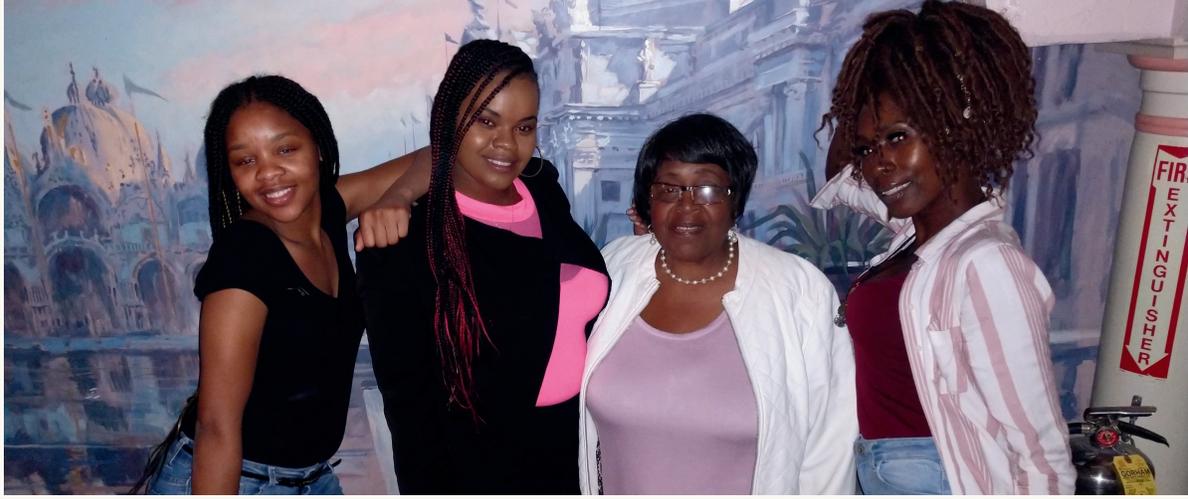
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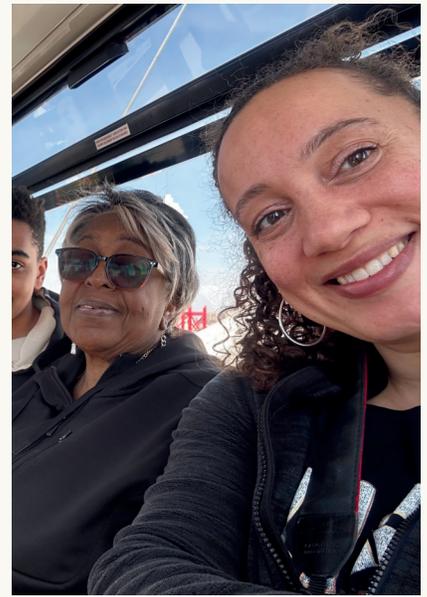


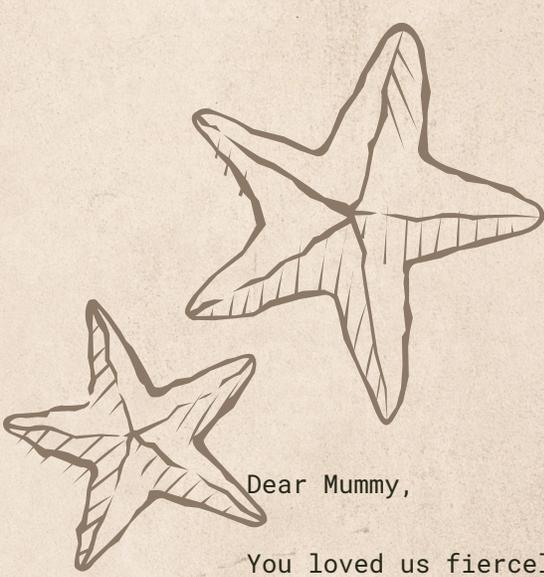
In 1,000 Words











Thank You



Dear Mummy,

You loved us fiercely!! You fought with wisdom... you fought through prayer! You defended your family like the lioness you were, ever willing to wear that proverbial Orange jumpsuit. You truly trusted God to fight your earthly battles and you encouraged us to do the same.

We have come this far by faith!

You were so approachable yet private and encouraged us to be wise when sharing. You gave wise advice both to married and unmarried alike. Your arms were open, free from judgment. Your mission was unity and your heart would break if any family or friendship was torn apart. You were a mender and a connector. You were gifted that way... a super special gifting.

I am a friend of God.

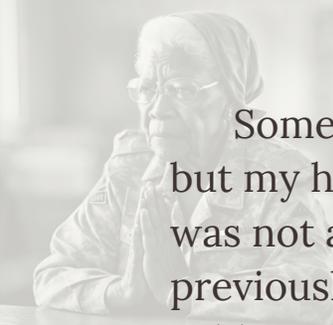
You loved God's creation, especially the beach. You were always in awe of just how small we were and how big our God is. You loved gardening, cooking and were committed to sharing everything you grew or cooked. You loved Him so and taught us that having that same humility, love and appreciation for Him, His love, His people and His creation is what will make all the difference.

All to Jesus I Surrender.

I will miss you here, Mummy ...our talks, lunches, beach runs, park visits... BUT we will meet again.

With all my love,
Gail





Some heroes wear capes and others have tool belts of gadgets, but my hero wore a wig and occasionally an Easter church hat. She was not a veteran of the U.S. armed forces, but at the drop of the previously mentioned hat, she would let you know that she was a soldier in the Army of the Lord. There was nothing that she ever did in life that made me doubt that she was. I am not sure how heaven's army is structured, but I believe she was Special Ops because you could throw that lady anywhere and she would leave with friends despite of age or language barrier.

My mom was full of life and was laughing more times than not. Her energy and joyful outlook were infectious as told by family, friends, and even new acquaintances. Her life, to coin the phrase from Langston Hughes, was “no crystal stair”, it had a lot of sad parts, but that did not make it a sad story. She did not make it a sad story. My mom forgave others like no one I have ever met. She would never let hate take hold and taught us to live like that. Her love was sacrificial, and she would take the blows, insults and betrayals of all and not transfer it to us.

She was my evidence that God was real because she lived her faith and we all got to see it. When rent was due and no money was there, God would provide, and he actually would through something miraculous. When I needed an MRI and subsequent surgery in high school, she said God would provide and he did so miraculously. To steal from David's story in the Bible, she provided my bear and my lion and was evidence that God would be with me to fight any Goliath.

Thank you Mummy for your example of faith in God because without you, who knows where or who I would be.

Love,
Kevin



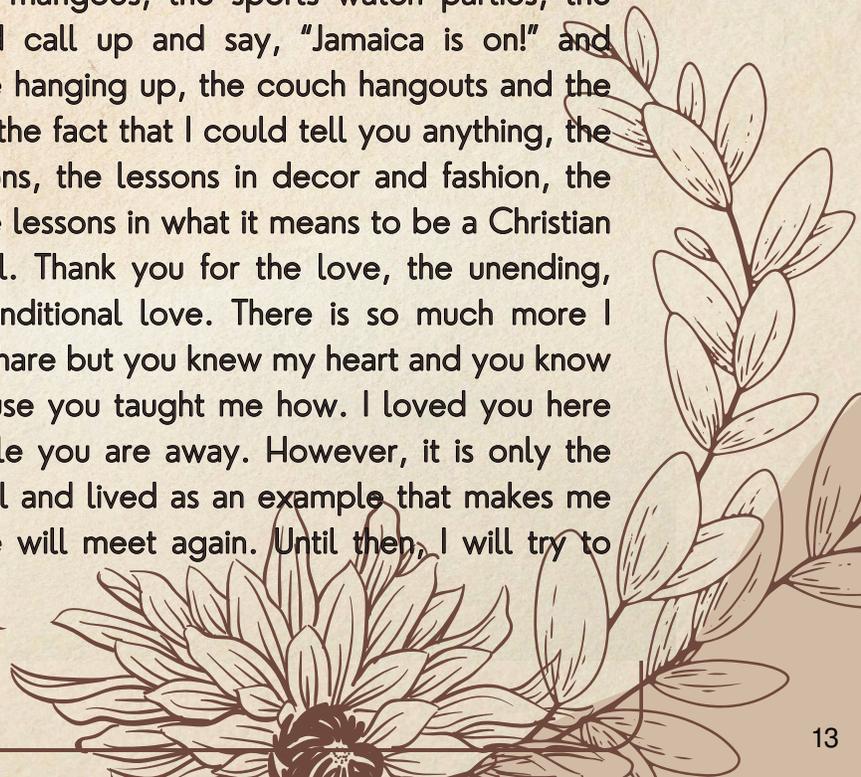


Dear Mommy,

All I can say is Thank You! Thank You! Thank You!

Thank you for being a good example of God's love, not just to your family, but to everyone you encountered. Thank you for the profound sacrifices you have made on our behalf, the ones we know and the ones we don't. Thank you for loving me unconditionally even when we disagreed, being patient in waiting for me to see that you were in fact correct and then not rubbing it in my face when I finally saw what you did. Thank you for being my best friend, my confidant, my ride-or-die, the passenger in my car every morning going to work and coming home. Thank you for feeding me both physically and spiritually over the years. Somehow you always knew the right thing to hit the spot. Thank you for being my consummate cheerleader even when I had no strength left to believe in myself. Thank you for praying for me every moment of every day, knowing that God's strength is what I needed to get me through. Thank you for being my rock and the prayer warrior for all my friends, especially when they lost a loved one. Thank you for always thinking about how to help at work, at home and in life, securing us a spiritual foundation, a physical home and a church home in CGC. Thank you for the advice, the discernment, the silly moments, the harmonizing, the stories of your childhood, the jokes. Thank you for the lessons you've taught me throughout the years, the ones you knew you were teaching me and the ones that you just lived. Thanks for the ackee and saltfish, the fritters and the pone, the bun and cheese and Christmas cake, fried dumplings, bami and roasted breadfruit, the dance parties and mangoes, the sports watch parties, the sporadic phone calls when you'd call up and say, "Jamaica is on!" and listening to you cheer them before hanging up, the couch hangouts and the track walks the soul melting hugs, the fact that I could tell you anything, the cooking lessons, the farming lessons, the lessons in decor and fashion, the lessons in forgiveness and trust, the lessons in what it means to be a Christian and the lessons in how to be real. Thank you for the love, the unending, never ceasing, all forgiving, unconditional love. There is so much more I could say. So much more I could share but you knew my heart and you know how much you were loved, because you taught me how. I loved you here and will continue to love you while you are away. However, it is only the faith that you have instilled in us all and lived as an example that makes me KNOW that you are okay and we will meet again. Until then, I will try to make you proud in life and in faith.

Love,
Jada



Miss you

Dear Mummy,

Your warm hugs

Your words of wisdom

Your unwavering love

Your grace and humility

Your jokes and wittiness

Your calls to keep us abreast of the latest breaking news or impending weather forecast

Your stories and life lessons

Your faith in our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ

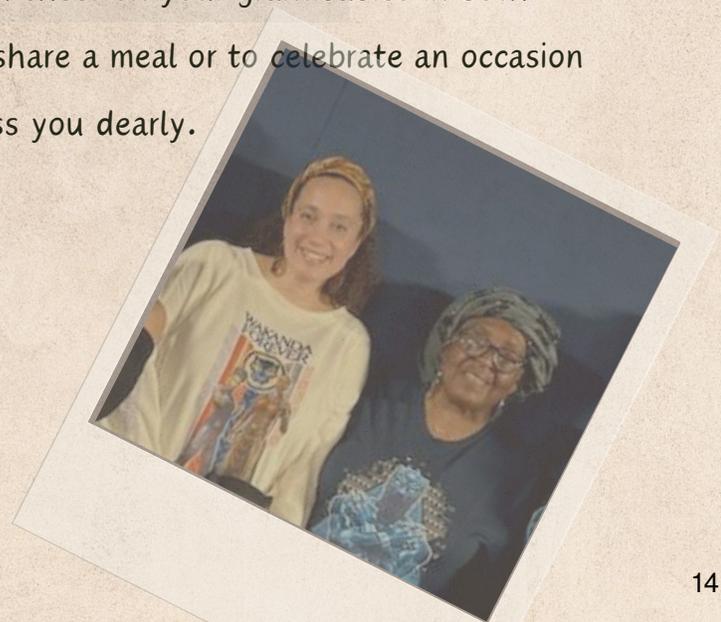
Your legacy

All of these will live on in my heart.

It was truly a pleasure to call you Mummy and to know your love as a daughter. What a blessing it was, that you were a praying grandmother, covering Olivia and Quentin and the entire family with prayers. Thank you for being a living example of a Proverbs 31 woman for me, "clothed with strength and dignity; she can laugh at the days to come. She speaks with wisdom, and faithful instruction is on her tongue." Prov. 31: 25-26. I will truly miss our talks, hearing you cheer on your grandbabies in both academics and on the field and gathering to share a meal or to celebrate an occasion with you. Thank you for being you. I will miss you dearly.

Love always,

JoAnn



Dear Grandma,

I am grateful that I got to be a part of your wonderful life. I loved listening to your stories of going to high school in Jamaica and the funny jokes you shared. Thank you for constantly loving and taking care of me. From picking me up from school when I was sick to dropping off assignments that I left at home. When I reached out, I was always reminded that you loved me. Even when you cautioned me to stay close to my parents, it was always filled with love. You always encouraged me to be the best version of myself and to continue to nurture my faith. I'll miss your long silly hugs, but your legacy of love and care will continue to live through me.

Love,

Olivia



Dear Grandma,

When I think of you, one word come to mind: love. Not any watered-down version of the term but true, genuine, and passionate love. Every single time we pulled up in your driveway, you had a meal or a snack prepared for us. You showered me with gifts and reached out whenever I had accomplished something.

One thing that you did that I'll never forget is your sending of the birthday messages and cards. They were filled with love and blessings and were so consistent that I couldn't help but smile when I read them.

I have never met someone like you: so brave and bold, but maintaining a level of elegance and power that someone could feel as soon as you walked in the room.

I miss you, but I know you're having an amazing time in heaven. Say hi to God for me.

Love,

Quentin



WE WILL MISS YOU, 'TIL WE SEE YOU!



Family Acknowledgements:

Our family extends heartfelt gratitude to everyone who has reached out to us near and far by text, calls, emails, and in person. It is comforting to know that we are loved and cared for by so many people. We would like to extend special thanks to our Grace Church family, our Community Gospel Chapel family and our close family and friends for their support during this difficult time. We appreciate your presence here today as we celebrate a life well lived. Our hearts may be sad, but we take comfort in knowing that she is with her Heavenly Father.

The Brown Family ~ Gail, Kevin, Jada, JoAnn, Olivia, and Quentin