



CELEBRATING THE LIFE OF

Linda Lifsey Hughes

MARCH 30, 1959 – DECEMBER 3, 2024

Bethel African Methodist Episcopal Church
Jamaica Plain, MA · December 18, 2024



—sonnet written to Linda Iris
from her eldest daughter, Sara

i will see you tomorrow
i told you

there will never be enough tomorrow's
rubber-band smile

in every picture
the moon hangs daytime

i'd like to think i understood what you last said

a teacup
a wooden giraffe
a sunflower on your door
the room awash with morning light

you once touched my arm to say
when you were young you used to rub my elbows
i'd like to think you said something about certainty

Order of Service

Processional Hughes Family
Dance Celebration..... Wyatt Jackson

"Wonderful is His Name"

Words of Welcome and Opening PrayerThe Rev. Ray Hammond
Musical Reflection George Russell, Jr.
Reading from the Old Testament The Rev. Sabrina Gray

Habakkuk 3:18-19

Reading from the New Testament..... Marcia Kimm-Jackson

2 Corinthians 4:8-9

Spoken Reflection: A Sister as FriendRaven Mills
Musical Reflection Bill Banfield
Spoken Reflection: A Friend as SisterDr. Andrea Reid
Scripture Reading.....Karl Reid

Philippians 4:4-9

Spoken Reflection: A Sister in Purpose.....Verna Myers
Tribute YaSheka Taylor

"A Life Impacted"

Spoken Reflection: A Professional With Impact.....Eric Barber
Musical Reflection Tatum Robinson

"People Need the Lord"

EulogyThe Rev. Ray Hammond
Tribute Video..... Flute rendition by Prince Charles Alexander

"Amazing Grace"

Closing Prayer.....The Rev. Ray Hammond
Recessional Hughes Family

For it is God who works in you to will and to act in order to fulfill His good purpose.

Do everything without grumbling or arguing, so that you may become blameless and pure, “children of God without fault in a warped and crooked generation.” Then you will shine among them like stars in the sky as you hold firmly to the word of life. And then I will be able to boast on the day of Christ that I did not run or labor in vain.

But even if I am being poured out like a drink offering on the sacrifice and service coming from your faith, I am glad and rejoice with all of you.
So you too should be glad and rejoice with me.

PHILIPPIANS 2:13-18



The family of Linda Lifsey Hughes would like to express our heartfelt gratitude to all who have offered their love, support, and kindness during this time. We give thanks for the following people and organizations, whose overwhelming care and compassion have brought comfort to our family in recent weeks:

- + Pastors Ray and Gloria White Hammond, Pastors Robert and Sabrina Gray, Christina R. Gray Women’s Missionary Society and the Bethel AME Church family
- + Rebecca Ridley and Davis Funeral Homes
- + Thomas Johnson and Forest Hills Cemetery
- + Dr. Britain Nicholson, Dr. Jennifer Temel, Dr. Cameron Wright and their respective teams at the Massachusetts General Hospital
- + The staff of Care Dimensions Hospice
- + Beth Minnucci, RN
- + Eric Barber, Melissa Cassel, Rebecca Kadden and the Walnut Hill School community
- + The family of Karl and Andrea Reid
- + The family of Wyatt Jackson and Marcia Kimm-Jackson
- + The family of Kwaku and Joyce Acheampong
- + The family of Carl and Susan Racine
- + The family of Stefan and Ashley Lanfer
- + The family of Susan Alves
- + The team and board of directors at Education Design Lab
- + Everyone who served in today’s program
- + All of you who, though unnamed, have etched places in our hearts for your help, care and comfort in our time of greatest need.

**MEMORIAL SITE
& PROGRAM:**





THE OBITUARY OF **Linda Lifsey Hughes**

Linda Lifsey Hughes, a radiant force of love and creativity, passed away peacefully surrounded by her family on December 3, 2024. Known to many as “Mama Linda,” she connected hearts, built bridges, inspired dreams, and leaves a legacy of joy and kindness, faith, and beloved community.

Born in Harlem on March 30, 1959, Linda’s life was a symphony of passions. From her early years in the Ralph J. Rangel Apartments, she learned ballet and flute - earning admission to the Music & Art High School. She danced with the Dance Theatre of Harlem. She played flute as a soloist at Carnegie Hall, with jazz-great Hubert Laws, and in the orchestras on Broadway. After high school, Linda studied music education at Boston University and City College of New York, where she also co-captained its tennis team.

A semi-professional tennis player, skilled photographer, mindful gardener, and ardent connoisseur of world cuisines, Linda embraced the fullness of life, plunging headlong into new challenges. She took up skiing as an adult and persisted, despite ending up on crutches after her first trip—soon introducing dozens of family and friends to new sacred places: Attitash, Bretton Woods, and Deer Valley. When the snow melted, she cherished morning walks along Martha’s Vineyard’s Ocean Avenue, chatting up strangers doing yoga. As they did their sun salutations, Linda captured the golden light of morning with her camera. Such moments of connection and wonder with people and nature were signature Linda.

Despite a shy streak, Linda had an irrepressible sense of adventure. When she finally faced her fear of whitewater rafting, she was ejected from the raft on a class 5 rapid, and broke a leg. Yet, she treasured the trip and happily recounted her exploits. After a Jackson 5 concert in Manhattan, Linda and a friend met the Jacksons, who, learning they were flutists, insisted they bring their instruments to the group’s hotel. A memorable jam session ensued. As special assistant to the president of Wellesley College, Linda was point person for commencement speaker Oprah Winfrey.

In 1985, Linda relocated to Boston, beginning a career in higher education at MIT, and later working at Wellesley. Yet, Linda discovered her true professional calling in education and diversity work at The Chestnut Hill School and Walnut Hill School for the Arts. Linda's varied roles—from music director and founder of the Chestnut Hill School for Music, to inaugural Director of Diversity, Equity, Inclusion and Belonging at Walnut Hill—allowed her to meld her passion for arts with her gift at creating spaces where everyone felt welcomed, valued, and heard.

At the center of her many passions, Linda was the heartbeat of her family, cherishing her roles as daughter, wife, mother, aunt, sister, and godmother. Married for 35 years to Bill Hughes, their steadfast love and partnership encouraged and inspired many. Together, Bill and Linda raised two remarkable daughters, Sara and Alyson—the light of Linda's life.

Linda's faith in Christ was her foundation, and she joyfully served her faith communities in myriad ways. Her jazz flute "Amazing Grace" and singing, "People Need the Lord" were standouts. At New Covenant, Linda founded a tutoring program that helped countless young people access and thrive in college.

As a non-smoker, athlete, and singer, Linda's 2014 lung-cancer diagnosis was a shock. Her team at the Massachusetts General presented hopeful yet risky ways to battle the disease—removal of a lung and experimental medicines in clinical trials. Despite harsh side effects, Linda persisted through chemotherapy.

Facing the challenges of her illness, Linda remained steadfast in living and giving. She constantly sought out how she could inspire and bless others - and allowed her story to be featured in a photo gallery of cancer challengers at Boston's City Hall. Through it all—even when the cancer resurfaced and the treatments became unbearable—Linda helped others embrace life fully, listen intentionally, and find beauty even amidst hardship.

Linda is survived by her beloved husband, Bill; cherished daughters, Sara and Alyson; devoted sister Raven Mills and brother-in-law Hampton Mills; niece Jade Mills-Little; nephews Hampton Mills, Jr. and Nigel Lifsey; godchildren and an extended network of family and friends who were touched by her warmth and wisdom. She now joins her Savior, whom she trusted wholeheartedly.

Linda taught us all to see beauty, to listen with intention, and to live with purpose. Her light will forever illuminate the path for those of us blessed enough to have known her and be known by her, to have loved and been loved.

