

CELEBRATING THE

*Life &
Legacy*

OF



Gertrude
COPELAND

JULY 8, 1953 - JUNE 12, 2026

Saturday, June 20, 2026 - 11:00 a.m.

Liberty Technology High School, Jackson, Tennessee

My Letter From Heaven

Hey Darlings, please don't worry about me, because I am alright. Heaven is so beautiful! Oh, these streets of gold! I want you to see this for yourself, and one day, if you've accepted Him, you will. I've been welcomed by those who went before me, Mommy, Daddy, family and friends, classmates, former students, and so many loved ones. And yes, my Darlings, I still see you. So dry your tears, quiet your fears, and smile because I am at peace, finally resting in perfect love.

Please live well. Love deeply. Keep God in your heart and let Him guide your steps, for nothing is beyond Kind Master's sight or outside His grace. I know you miss me, and believe me, I miss you too. But don't let grief steal your joy. Remember me with laughter, stories, and love. To my family and friends, thank you for being such a blessing in my life. I was truly loved, and now I rest safely in my Kind Master's hands.

Until we meet again...

With all my love,

Gertrude

To Copeland, My Final Words of Love

My Son,

If you are reading this, know that although I am no longer beside you, my love never left. I loved you more than you will ever know. You were one of God's greatest gifts to me, and being your mother was one of my life's greatest blessings. I know this goodbye came sooner than we expected, and there is so much I wish I could still say. So hear these words and carry them with you - Seek God in everything. Trust Him when life is clear and when it is not. Let your faith guide your decisions and your heart. Be kind. Be honest. Work hard. Love deeply. Forgive quickly. Protect your peace and never lose who you are by trying to please others. Do not let grief keep you from living. Continue to laugh, dream, grow, and enjoy life in a way that brings you joy and honors God. Remember, you never had to be perfect to make me proud. And whenever you wonder if I still love you...The answer is yes, more than you will ever know. Always!!

Love,

MOMMA

Life Reflections

Born on July 8, 1953, Gertrude Copeland was the 4th child of the late Elijah and Emma Louise Copeland. Gertrude was an outgoing little girl who visited all over Jackson and made friends with many of them throughout her life. She loved talking, laughing, and being around people from all walks of life. At an early age, she accepted Jesus as her Savior and was baptized at Home Missionary Baptist Church, where she developed an early understanding of Christian life. She participated in all aspects of her church as a youth and as an adult. At Home Baptist, Ms. Rosa noticed her God-given speaking abilities.

Gertrude attended Jackson City Schools and was a member of the first graduating class of Jackson Central-Merry High, the Class of 1971, where she played basketball. She continued her education at Lane College. There, she began her love for working with children. She began that career with the Jackson Recreation Department and the Lane College National Youth Sports Program, working for over thirty (30) years and touching the lives of many young men and women from all over West Tennessee. She had a special love for each of them, and they all knew it. In 1975, she graduated from Lane College with a Bachelor of Science degree in Health and Physical Education. She then began her teaching career, which spanned over fifty (50) years, not only touching the lives of her students, but she also worked as Youth Directress in her church and the Tennessee Baptist Missionary & Education (Tennessee BM&E) convention, working with her children, as she called them, to develop their various God-given gifts and talents.

Gertrude was a Delta Dear of the Delta Sigma Theta Sorority, Inc., a member of the Lane College Alumni Association, where she is the 2026 Alumnus of the Year, and a proud member of the Society for African American Cultural Awareness (SAACA). Gertrude leaves a legacy of love, compassion, selfless sacrifice, and a Firecracker Spark that will live with all of us for the rest of our lives.

Gertrude's two oldest siblings, Evelyn and Atiyah, and nephews, Kareem and Ali, preceded her in death. She leaves to honor and cherish her memory her only child, Copeland Elijah White, Jackson, TN; one brother, Wm. Terry (Deborah) Copeland, Nashville, TN; and three sisters, Phyllis (Duane) Farmer, Hopewell, VA; Maxine Harris, Jackson, TN; and Shelia (Jeffrey) Smith, Denver, CO. The apples of her eye, her nieces and nephews, C. Victor, Michael, TaWanda, Terrence (Lawanda), Candice, Chere', Ashley (Jerrell), Brittany Jaleela, and Jeffrey; great-nieces and nephews, Victoria, Carl (Gabrielle), Carlton (Jasmine), Carlson, Valencia (Jabari), Rashad (Pamela), Kalen, Kelsei, Londyn, Elijah, Emmanuel, and Khylie; and great-great nieces and nephews, Makaila, Trey, Aubrey, A'Miya, Zoe', and Paizlei.

ORDER *OF* SERVICE

PROCESSIONAL

"I'll Trust You"

Richard Smallwood

SCRIPTURE

Mr. M. Rashad Randolph

Great-Nephew

PRAYER

Mr. Carlton Randolph

Great-Nephew

FAMILY TRIBUTE

Mr. & Mrs. Jeffrey T. and Shelia Smith

Sister and Brother-in-law

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

Mr. Terry Copeland – Brother

Ms. Chere Smith and Ms. Jaleela Copeland -Nieces

SELECTION

Mr. Eric Price, Jr.

"That Will Be Good Enough For Me"

REMARKS

Dr. Donald W. Comer, President Lane College

Ms. Amaris Johnson, Southern Regional Director,

Delta Sigma Theta Sorority, Inc

Carl V. Randolph, Oldest Nephew

SELECTION

Dr. TaWanda Randolph

Niece

VIDEO PRESENTATION

THE EULOGY

Pastor William L. Watson

Historic First Baptist Church, Senior Pastor

RECESSIONAL

"If You Could See Me Now"

Bishop Paul Morton

To My Nieces & Nephews

Never forget that I loved each of you more than you will ever know. Life may bring moments when you feel discouraged, defeated, or as though you have failed, but please never give up on the beautiful dreams placed in your heart. Keep believing in yourselves as much as I always believed in you.

If there ever came a day when we were no longer together, I wanted you to remember this:

You are braver than you believe,
stronger than you imagine,
smarter than you think,
and loved more than you will ever know.

Walk with faith, trust God through every season, and never let fear keep you from becoming all you were created to be.

Carry my love with you, hold tight to your memories, and continue living a life filled with purpose, kindness, and joy.

Forever in my heart.

Love, "THAT" Auntie,

AUNTIE GERTIE

Teachers- Real, Devoted Teachers

Teach with everything within you.

Great teachers never forget: “You have to reach them before you teach them.” Reach the student who lashes out because they believe no one cares. Reach into the hearts and minds of those who feel unseen, unheard, or intellectually abandoned, and help them discover the greatness within themselves.

Teaching is more than delivering lessons. It is showing up, believing in students before they believe in themselves, and refusing to give up when the work gets hard. So reach.

Encourage. Inspire.

Teach despite the complaints, the headaches, and the obstacles. Teach despite the bureaucracy, the paperwork, the disobedience, and the disinterest. Teach because your words matter, your presence matters, and your influence can change a life.

Real teachers do more than educate; they ignite hope, awaken potential, and leave footprints on hearts forever.

GERTRUDE

Acknowledgement

The family of Gertrude Copeland sincerely appreciates the love and support shown during our loved one's life and after her passing. We especially thank our family, friends, church families, the medical team at West TN HealthCare, the Neuroscience ICU at Vanderbilt, and everyone who has been praying for us. Your visits, meals, calls, flowers, words of encouragement, and every act of kindness have meant so much. Your compassion has truly been a blessing.

Special Gratitude

To Geraldine Copeland, Dr. Marlon King, Dr. Donald W. Comer, Attorney Phillis Rambsy, and Michael "Doc" Herron, words cannot fully express the depth of our gratitude. During one of the most difficult seasons of our lives, you stepped in and helped carry burdens that at times felt too heavy to bear. Your kindness, support, generosity, guidance, prayers, and acts of love have been a source of strength and comfort to our family. On behalf of the family of Gertrude Copeland, please know that we are forever grateful and deeply indebted to you for the many ways you have stood beside us and helped lighten our load. Your compassion will never be forgotten, and your presence during this time has reflected God's grace and love.

Our prayer for each of you is:

May the Lord bless you and keep you; may His face shine upon you and be gracious to you; may the Lord turn His face toward you and give you peace. May His favor rest upon you for a thousand generations, upon your family, your children, and their children, and their children.

With heartfelt love and endless appreciation,

~The Family of Gertrude Copeland~

Casket Bearers

C. Victor Randolph	Michael Randolph
Terrence Copeland	Jeffrey Smith, II
Carl Randolph	M. Rashad Randolph
Carlton Randolph	Cedric Randolph

Interment

Parkway Memorial Gardens
2841 Paul Coffman Drive
Jackson, Tennessee 38301

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IN HONOR OF

Gertrude Copeland

A LIFE OF LOVE, STRENGTH,
AND UNWAVERING FAITH



Please Donate

Your gift honors Gertrude's legacy
and continues the impact she made
in the lives of so many.

DONATIONS SUPPORT GERTRUDE'S BELOVED ALMA MATER
— LANE COLLEGE —

THANK YOU FOR YOUR SUPPORT