

A portrait of Reverend Doctor Deborah Ardienne Dennis, an African American woman with short, curly brown hair and glasses. She is wearing a dark blue top with a white and pink floral pattern. The background of the entire poster is a deep purple with large, stylized roses and a diagonal crease of purple fabric.

A
CELEBRATION
OF LIFE
FOR

D REVEREND DOCTOR
EBORAH ARDIENNE DENNIS

SUNRISE: AUGUST 15, 1951 | SUNSET: SEPTEMBER 16, 2026

“WELL DONE THY GOOD AND FAITHFUL SERVANT”

SATURDAY — SEPTEMBER 26, 2026

VISITATION: 10:00 AM
SERVICE: 12:00 PM

MT. OLIVET BAPTIST CHURCH
428 EAST MAIN STREET
COLUMBUS, OH 43215
DR. EUGENE L. GIBSON, JR. | SENIOR PASTOR

Obituary

Celebrating the Life and Legacy of Rev. Dr. Deborah Ardienne Dennis

The Reverend Dr. Deborah Ardienne Dennis quietly transitioned into her Heavenly Father's arms on September 16, 2026. Dr. Dennis was born in Columbus, Ohio, on August 15, 1951, to the late Valdienne Ryan and Arthur Roy Dennis, Sr. She was the oldest of seven children.

Dr. Dennis accepted Christ as her Lord and Savior at a young age on February 11, 1960. She became a faithful Christian and was baptized at the Refuge Baptist Church by the late Pastor William Calloway.

A Ministry Of Purpose And Leadership

She acknowledged her sacred calling into the preaching ministry on February 26, 1989. She was licensed to preach at the Mt. Period Missionary Baptist Church in 1990 and was later ordained by the Mt. Olivet Baptist Church in 1999. Dr. Dennis was a brilliant scholar, dedicating her life to higher education and transformational leadership. Her impressive educational background includes:

- Ohio Dominican College — Bachelor of Arts in Cross-Disciplinary Studies (1993)
- Ashland Theological Seminary — Master of Arts in Christian Education (1999)
- Ashland Theological Seminary — Doctor of Ministry in Transformational Leadership (2007)

Professionally, Dr. Dennis dedicated 30 years of excellence as a Company Advocate for the Ameritech Telephone Company.

On Sunday, December 5, 1997, Dr. Dennis united with the Mt. Olivet Baptist Church under the visionary leadership of the Reverend Dr. Charles E. Booth. In April 2001, she officially joined the staff as the Minister of Christian Education, serving faithfully in this role for 15 years. Following her graduation, she served on the Columbus Ashland Theological Seminary (ATS) Advisory Board, as an adjunct professor, and as a Professional Associate at United Theological Seminary. Breaking barriers, she made history as the first woman to serve as the Dean of the Congress of Christian Education for the E.U.M.B.A.

A gifted writer, she was honored in 2014 to contribute the chapter *“Preaching and Its Impact on Christian Education”* to the book *Living An Imposed Sentence: Imprints from the Preaching Life of Dr. Charles Booth*. That same year, she published an article titled *“Spiritual Formation: A Journey Toward Christ-Like Transformation”* in the Ashland Theological Seminary magazine.

Strength and Triumphant Faith

In October 2016, Dr. Dennis experienced a life-altering stroke. While facing physical limitations was challenging, she relied heavily on God's grace and the encouragement of others. On November 20, 2016, Dr. Booth lovingly bestowed upon her the high distinction of Minister Emeritus of Christian Education, a title she retained with honor as she continued to serve faithfully until her illness prevented her from doing so.

On May 16, 2021, God blessed Mt. Olivet with a new leader, Dr. Eugene Gibson, Jr. (affectionately called “Pastor Geno” and First Lady Shakitha (“First Lady G”). Embracing her enduring spirit, Pastor Gibson gave Dr. Dennis the beautiful opportunity on May 24, 2021, to actively participate in preaching, leading worship, and serving across several ministries. Her love, strength, and compassion truly remained her superpower until the very end.

Those Who Preceded Her in Death

Dr. Dennis was reunited in glory with:

- Parents: Arthur R. Dennis, Sr. and Valdivienne Dennis
- Sisters: Connie Dennis and Janice Blackston
- Brothers: William Dennis and Arthur Roy Dennis, Jr.
- Brother-in-law: Oliver Blackston, Sr.
- Maternal Grandparents: Sherman and Edith Ryan Browder (Columbus, OH)
- Maternal Great-Grandparents: James A. and Mioma Mae Woodfork (Bloomington, OH)
- Paternal Grandparents: James and Deborah Dennis (Nathalie, VA)
- A host of beloved aunts, uncles, and other dear relatives.

Those Who Cherish Her Memory

She leaves behind a rich legacy of love and devotion, carried on by:

- Her Beloved Only Son and Her Heart: David Lorenzo Dennis, Sr. (and her devoted Daughter-in-Love, Nikki)
- Grandchildren: David Jr., Amanda, and Devin
- Great-Granddaughter: Ka'lana Eldridge
- Brother: Jeffrey (Angela) Dennis
- Sister: Marcia Dennis
- Sister-in-Love: Rita Dennis
- A multitude of special aunts, cousins, nieces, nephews, friends, and the countless souls she touched throughout her impactful life at Refuge Baptist Church, Mt. Period Baptist Church, and Mt. Olivet Baptist Church.

Remember Me

To the living, I am gone,
To the sorrowful, I will never return,
To the angry, I was cheated,
But to the happy, I am at peace,
And to the faithful, I have never left.

I cannot speak, but I can listen.
I cannot be seen, but I can be heard.
So as you stand upon a shore gazing at a beautiful sea,
As you look upon a flower and admire its simplicity,
Remember me.

Remember me in your heart:
Your thoughts, and your memories,
Of the times we loved,
The times we cried,
The times we fought,
The times we laughed.
For if you always think of me, I will never have gone.

THE ORDER OF SERVICE

A Celebration of Life for Reverend Dr. Deborah Ardienne Dennis

Jesus said unto her, "I am the resurrection, and the life: he that believeth in me, though he were dead, yet shall he live."

St. John 11:25

Reverend Dr. Eugene L. Gibson Jr., Ph.D., Officiant

Senior Pastor, Mt. Olivet Baptist Church

The Service of Praise

- Musical Prelude
- The Processional | Clergy, Family, and Friends
- Scriptural Sentences | Reverend Dr. Eugene L. Gibson Jr.
- The Hymn of Assurance | *"O I Want to See Him"* (Congregation and Choir)

The Ministry of the Word

- Old Testament Scripture Reading | Isaiah 40:28-31
Reverend David Foster | First Church of God
- New Testament Scripture Reading | 2 Timothy 4:7-8
Reverend Dr. Charlene Watkins | First Church of God (Sister)
- The Prayer Chant | *"Precious Memories"*
- The Prayer of Comfort | Bishop Timothy Clarke, First Church of God (Brother)
- Musical Selection | *"Just When I Need Him Most"* Mt. Olivet Baptist Church Choir

The Ministry of Remembrance

- Words of Reflection | Please limit to 2-3 minutes
Sister Kim Shepherd | Caregiver & Friend, Mt. Olivet Baptist Church
Sister Kim Harris | Caregiver & Friend, Mt. Olivet Baptist Church
Deacon Ralph Gardner | Deacons Ministry & Friend, Mt. Olivet Baptist Church
Dr. Yvette Weaver | Associate Minister, Second Baptist Church
Reverend Dr. Victor Davis | Pastor, Trinity Baptist Church (Friend)
Reverend Dr. Eugene L. Gibson Jr. | Senior Pastor, Mt. Olivet Baptist Church; Officiant
- Silent Reading of the Obituary | Soft Music
- Acknowledgments, Condolences, and Resolutions
Reverend Anita Walker | Associate Minister, Mt. Olivet Baptist Church
- A Thank-You Reflection from the Family
Dr. Alisha Dennis Brinson
- Musical Selection | *"Trust in God"*
Mt. Olivet Baptist Church Choir & Brother Stephen Ballard

The Proclamation of the Word

- The Eulogy
Reverend Dr. Jeffrey Dennis | Mount Calvary Baptist Church, Akron, Ohio (Brother)
- Closing Selection | *"When We All Get to Heaven"*

"WHEN SOMEONE YOU LOVE BECOMES A MEMORY, THE MEMORY BECOMES A TREASURE."



Until We Meet Again

Unknown

We think about you always,
We talk about you still,
You have never been forgotten,
and you never will.

We hold you close within our hearts,
and there you will remain,
to walk and guide us through our lives, until we meet again.

"THE WORLD MAY NEVER NOTICE, BUT WE WILL ALWAYS REMEMBER"



"THOUGH YOUR SMILE IS GONE FOREVER AND YOUR HAND WE CANNOT TOUCH, WE STILL HAVE SO MANY MEMORIES OF THE ONE WE LOVED SO MUCH."



Interment

Forest Lawn Memorial Gardens
5600 East Broad Street | Columbus, OH 43213

Pallbearers

**David Dennis, Jr. – Devin Dennis – Michael Dennis – Tyler Arrington
Aaron Ward – Fred Dennis – Matthew Blackston – Arthur Dennis**

Flower Bearers

**Sarita Dennis – Anita Dennis – Renota Dennis-Maynus
Sonya Dennis – Alisha Dennis-Brinson – Tina Hayes-Richardson – Zoe Dennis**

Acknowledgement

The family wishes to express our deepest gratitude for your heartfelt condolences, prayers, and acts of kindness during our time of bereavement. We are profoundly grateful to Pastor Dr. Eugene Gibson, Jr., the entire Mt. Olivet Baptist Church Family, and all the participants who lent their time and love to this final service of Worship in memory of Reverend Dr. Deborah Ardienne Dennis.

A Special Thanks to:

- Barry and Kim Sheppard
- Rob and Penny Singletary
- Thomas and Yvette Weaver
- James and Roshele Walker
- Guy and Uffa Schley
- Dr. Charlene Watkins
- Steve and Linda Wyant
- Joan Tucker
- Karen Perkins
- Kim Harris
- Bishop Timothy Clarke
- Dr. James Perkins
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She will be deeply missed by all who had the privilege of touching her beautiful life.



**MARLAN GARY
FUNERAL HOME**

1 FUNERAL HOME | 5 LOCATIONS

MINISTRY OF COMFORT ENTRUSTED TO:

NORTH CHAPEL
2500 CLEVELAND AVE.,
COLUMBUS, OH 43211
614-267-8310

EAST CHAPEL
5456 LIVINGSTON AVE.,
COLUMBUS, OH 43232
614-604-8774

MANSFIELD CHAPEL
753 MCPHERSON ST.,
MANSFIELD, OH 44903
419-324-6999

SPRINGFIELD CHAPEL
823 SOUTH YELLOW SPRINGS ST.,
SPRINGFIELD, OHIO 45506
937-325-1447

CINCINNATI CHAPEL
647 FOREST AVE.
CINCINNATI OH 45229
513-221-4812

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