

CELEBRATING THE NOTEWORTHY  
LIFE AND LEGACY OF

*Effie*  
LORENE DURST

JUNE 21, 1953 - MAY 8, 2026

*Celebration of Life Service*

TUESDAY, MAY 26, 2026

11:00 a.m.

WHEELER AVENUE BAPTIST CHURCH

3826 Wheeler Avenue | Houston, TX 77004

DR. MARCUS D. COSBY

*Senior Pastor*

DR. ALEXANDER E.M. JOHNSON

*Executive Pastor*



# A NOTEWORTHY LIFE *Effie Durst*

**EFFIE LORENE COX DURST** was more than a remarkable woman, she was a trailblazer whose genuine kindness, unwavering compassion, and fierce determination shaped every life she touched. Born on June 21, 1953, in Monroe, Louisiana, Effie was a cherished blessing to Janie Mae and Johnson Cox, Sr. Her spiritual foundation was laid early at Trenton Baptist Church in West Monroe, Louisiana, where she accepted Christ as her personal Lord and Savior and was baptized. This faith journey became the guiding light through her life's work and relationships.

*Effie's* academic achievements set the stage for a life of excellence. A proud honor graduate of West Monroe High School's class of 1971, she left a lasting legacy in her community. Her intellect and dedication earned her an academic scholarship, culminating in her graduating Summa Cum Laude in 1975 with a degree in Business Management from Grambling State University.

In her early twenties, *Effie* learned the true power of prayer when she was diagnosed with sarcoidosis. Facing a difficult battle, she and her family turned to God with faith and hope. Through their prayers, God answered in a miraculous way, healing her and showing His incredible grace. This experience deepened Effie's faith and continued to inspire her throughout her earthly journey.

*Effie's* professional career spanned 36 years at Dow Chemical Company, where she was much more than an executive; she was a pioneer who lived by the mantra, "Bring Others with You." From Louisiana to Pittsburgh, California, and Texas, Effie rose to the role of Regional Human Resources Manager. In this capacity, she was responsible for strategic human resources and labor relations consulting, focusing on improving individual performance and fostering organizational effectiveness with humility and compassion.

*Effie's* impact transcended corporate success. She was instrumental in the collaboration between Dow, Southern University, and Louisiana State University to create the "Great Experiences in Math and Science" program, enriching the lives of upper elementary and middle school students in Iberville and West Baton Rouge Parishes. Often the only person of color at decision-making tables, Effie fought tirelessly to ensure inclusivity and advancement of minorities, advocating relentlessly for opportunities in upper management.

Her advocacy extended to working closely with the Office of Women's Services, where she successfully convinced three Louisiana school boards to allow children to participate in the national "Take Your Daughter to Work Day," fostering early career awareness among young women.

*Effie's* leadership and vision earned her numerous accolades including Circle of Excellence awards in sales, marketing, and office management; the prestigious Genesis Award for people development; and two Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Awards (1987 and 2000) for fostering racial harmony and advancing diversity both in the



## A NOTEWORTHY LIFE *Effie Durst* continued

workplace and the broader community. She gained special recognition from the Governor of Louisiana for her work on statewide Women's Services programs. During the national breast implant panic, Effie traveled across the country, offering reassurance to women that Dow's implants were safe, a true example of her empathy and dedication to her fellowman.

Beyond her professional achievements, *Effie* was deeply involved in the civil arena, holding a Golden Life membership with the East County Branch of the NAACP and serving on boards such as the Los Medanos Foundation, Contra Costa County Workforce Development, and the National Human Resource Association. She also contributed as a past Executive Advisor to Four AC and participated in the National Urban League's Executive Exchange Program supporting historically black colleges and universities (HBCUs).

*Effie's* personal life was rich and joyful. She met her beloved husband, Thomas Durst Sr., on a blind lunch date in Lake Jackson. Their marriage of over 26 years blended four children, Thomas Jr., Ursula Durst, Mica Bass, and Zachary Durst. Together they built a life grounded in faith, laughter, and partnership.

Following her retirement in 2012, *Effie* returned to Houston and devoted herself anew to her church family at Wheeler Avenue Baptist Church. She served wholeheartedly in the Hiring Ministry, generously supported her church financially, and was known for her unwavering attendance at worship and events. Effie's passion for evangelism was evident as she seized every opportunity to share the love of Jesus with those she met.

Her personal joys included reading, listening to gospel and jazz music, writing, visiting museums, and traveling and cruising within the United States and abroad. She nurtured the dreams and goals of others, always encouraging people to reach their full potential. *Effie* channeled her love of writing into creating the family newsletter "Reflections," a testament to her desire to connect and inspire.

*Effie* Lorene Cox Durst's life was a luminous paradigm of faith, leadership, and love. A tireless advocate for diversity, education, and empowerment, a devoted wife, mother, daughter, sister and a cherished friend and mentor. She was truly a jewel crafted by God's design. Her legacy will continue to inspire generations, reminding all that with kindness, courage, and conviction; one can light the path for many others.

After fighting the good fight of faith, enduring an extended illness, on May 8, 2026, *Effie* moved from the body that could no longer hold her soul, entered into her eternal reward. She is preceded in death by her father, Johnson Cox, Sr., her siblings, Michael Cox, Bruce Cox, Steve Cox, Allen Dale Cox and Brenda Cox; her bonus daughter, Ursula Durst and other loved ones.

Her memories of life will be cherished by her husband, Thomas Durst, Sr., mother, Janie Durst; daughter, Mica Bass; bonus children, Thomas Durst, Jr. (Veronica), and Zachary Durst; her siblings, Johnny Warren (Emma), Terry Cox, Johnson Cox, Jr., Marilyn Thomas (Lawrence), Kenneth Ray Cox, Patricia Cox, Charles Cox (Charlene), Sandra Jackson (Ervin), Katherine Cox, Frankie Cox, Anthony Cox (LaQuita), Carolyn Cox, Letha Cox and James Cox; her in laws, Terry Durst, Ronald Durst, Timothy Durst, Tyrone Graves, Tony Shelman (Von), Keith Graves, Vickie Durst, Ione Ford (Collice), Jennifer Herbert (Bernard), and Susanne Durst; generations of nieces, nephews, and cousins.

CELEBRATING THE LIFE OF

*Effie Lorene Durst*

ORDER OF SERVICE

Dr. Marcus D. Cosby, *Officiant*

**PROCESSIONAL**

**HYMN OF PRAISE**.....Wheeler Avenue Music Ministry

**READING OF SCRIPTURE**

Old Testament (*Psalm 24:7-10*).....Rev. Ranyne H. Johnson

New Testament (*Revelation 14:13*).....Rev. Jalen M. Vernon

**PRAYER OF CONSOLATION**.....Dr. Lekesha R. Attuquayefio

**MUSIC OF CONSOLATION**.....Wheeler Avenue Music Ministry

**RESOLUTIONS**.....Rev. Trevor J. Banks

**REFLECTIONS** (*please limit to three minutes*)

Debbie Blue and Chris Small | Classmates

Alveda Williams | Former Colleague, DOW Chemical Company

Thomas Durst, Sr. | Husband

**MUSIC OF COMFORT**.....Wheeler Avenue Music Ministry

**MESSAGE OF COMFORT**.....Dr. Marcus D. Cosby

**RECESSIONAL**



# Declarations of Love

## *To My Dearest Effie...*

Twenty-six years as husband and wife, through sickness and health, I was fortunate enough to begin a journey with you that has filled my life with love, laughter, and endless adventure. Through all these years, we have traveled the world side by side, we discovered new places and created memories that will last me a lifetime. Each moment shared with you, deepened our bond we cherish so deeply. We were each other's partner, confidant, and joy. We experienced unexpected twists and turns with your sickness, and I did my best to be your anchor every day. I'm grateful to God for the life He allowed us to build together. We enjoyed a rich and full life. Effie, I want to say thank you for every smile, every embrace, and for choosing to walk this incredible journey with me. Although I will miss you, I know you are free from all pain in the arms of our Savior.

*With all my love,* THOMAS



## *Mom...*

Thank you for the unconditional love. I want you to rest now. I will hold on to the memories of you. You've done so much, given so much, and loved so deeply. You will be missed, but I will carry you in my heart.

*Love,* MICA

## *My Loving Daughter...*

Effie, there are no words that can fully hold what you have meant to me. From the day I held you for the first time, you brought light into my life. You grew into an intelligent woman of faith, strength, and integrity. You have always shown me respect. You carried yourself with honor, and you carried your family with endless love. Watching you become a woman, you have been one of the greatest joys of my life.

*Love,* MAMA

## *My Sister Effie...*

Of all the special gifts in life, however great or small, to have you as our sister was the greatest gift of all. May the winds of love blow softly and whisper in your ear, "We love and miss you, sister and wish that you were here." Deep in our hearts, your life is kept to love and cherish, not forget. No more tomorrows we can share but yesterdays are always there

*Love,* MARILYN (PEARLIE)



# Declarations of Love

continued

## *My Sister Effie...*

Effie was a strong believer in the importance of education and the value of developing the mind. I recall occasions when my nephews would mistakenly say "sandmich," and she would kindly correct them to say "sandwich." Whenever a family member was recognized or celebrated, Effie made it a point to attend the event. From her example, I learned the importance of perseverance regardless of obstacles. I also remember a quote she wrote in my high school graduation card: "Strive for the top; the bottom is full." I will continue to honor her memory by aspiring to reach new heights. I love and cherish my sister always.

*Love,* PATRICIA

## *My Sister Effie...*

Effie had a spirit that could never be ignored, full of life, love, laughter, and warmth. She was more than my sister; she was a treasured part of my heart and my life. Effie had a presence that could change the atmosphere of any room she entered. Her smile carried joy; her laughter brought comfort, and her energy made people feel seen and loved. She had a way of lifting spirits without even trying. I will deeply miss our talks, the laughter we shared, and the way her presence brought healing to the soul. Some people leave memories; Effie left an imprint on the hearts of everyone blessed enough to know her. Though our hearts are heavy, I find peace knowing that Effie is now resting with her Heavenly Father. Her journey here on earth may have ended, but the love, lessons, and memories she gave will remain with me forever. Until we meet again, Effie, you will always be loved, always remembered, and forever missed.

*With love,* YOUR BROTHER ~ PASTOR JOHNNY WARREN

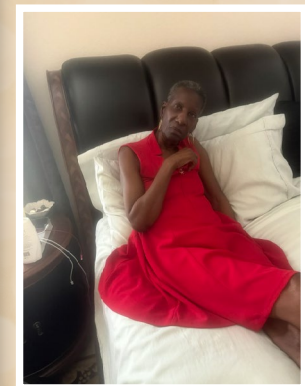
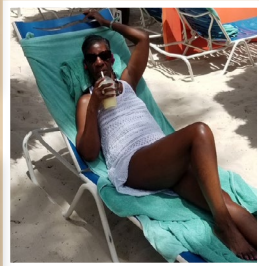
## *Our Sister...*

You gave your all in everything you did for our family. You valued us individually and collectively; there was never a time when we needed you, and you were not there for us. God blessed us to have you as our sister. You were selfless when it came to our family. The impact you have left with each of us will live on in our hearts. Our sibling bond is broken again. You are now healed and free from pain. Heaven must be sweeter with you there. We will forever hold you close in our hearts. We thank God on today for the gift of your life. Enjoy your rest, our dear sister, we will see you when we get there.

*Love Always...* TERRY, JOHNSON JR., KENNETH, CHARLES, SANDRA, KATHERINE, FRANKIE, ANTHONY, CAROLYN, LETHA, AND JAMES



# Loving Memories



## *Active Pallbearers*

Nat Gregory      Lorenzo Williams  
William Kempt    Zachary Durst  
Maurice Stewart   Brian Wilson

## *Honorary Pallbearers*

Johnny Warren    Kenneth Ray Cox  
Terry Cox        Charles Cox  
Johnson Cox, Jr.   Frankie Cox  
Anthony Cox      James Cox

## *Expressions of Gratitude*

We wish to express our heartfelt gratitude for every act of kindness, love, and support shown during this time of bereavement. Your prayers, cards, visits, calls, and other expressions of condolence have strengthened and uplifted our hearts.

*The Family of* **EFFIE LORENE DURST**

## *Final arrangements entrusted to*

**TROY B. SMITH PROFESSIONAL SERVICES**  
9013 Scott Street | Houston, Texas

## *Interment*

**HOUSTON MEMORIAL GARDENS**  
2426 Cullen Boulevard | Pearland, Texas

## *Repast*

**WHEELER AVENUE BAPTIST CHURCH**  
Christian Education Complex | Room 205/206/207

PROGRAMS COURTESY OF  
WHEELER AVENUE BAPTIST CHURCH

