

RELIGION

A Life Centered on Church, Family

Opal Thresa Johnson



A funeral service for Opal Thresa Johnson, who died March 6, 2011, was held last Saturday at the Highland Christian Center.

She was born on April 20, 1926, to Herbert and Mary Ella Webster in Atlanta, Texas, the youngest of eight children. Her family called her Boots.

At the age of 18, when her mother passed away, she moved with her oldest sister, Leola Lawson and her family, to Oregon; first to Vanport in 1944, then to LaGrande. In 1946, she moved to Portland where she lived with her sister, Lula Mae Cook. Later, her sister Melvina Giles moved to Portland, followed by many of her oldest brother's children, her father Hebert, and finally her brother O. L. Opal began working in the Oregon shipyards as a young woman. She later became a housekeeper and ended her working career with the Portland Progress House where she cooked for over 25 years.

In June 1961, Opal married Rev. Samuel Johnson, then Sergeant Johnson of the U.S. Army who was stationed at Fort Lewis, Wash., and served in the Korean War. To this union brought three children. Whatever the kids did, she was involved with—good or bad. Neither she nor Sam believed in sitting idle so the family was always on the go; trips to Tacoma, the St. Paul Rodeo, the Oregon Coast, family gatherings, and church.

Church and family was Sister Johnson's life and in most cases one couldn't differentiate between the two. When first moving to Portland she became a member of Mt. Olive Church of God in Christ where she was saved and filled with the Holy Ghost under the leadership of Pastor H.D. Williams.

As Mt. Olive grew, she moved into the "big church," Williams Temple, where she continued to

serve under Pastor Williams, Pastor Rand, and Pastor Walker. There were not too many positions in the church that Sis. Johnson did not hold—Sunday School teacher, kitchen committee, choir president, musician, church clerk, and Women's Day coordinator.

When Rev. Johnson was called to pastor Highland United Church of Christ, Sis. Johnson did not want to leave Williams Temple and for over 10 years she (and the children) attended both churches and participated in all the church activities. Even after moving to Highland full time, she always let it be known that she held dual memberships at both churches.

At Highland, she worked as the youth choir director, served on the kitchen committee, was a Sunday School teacher, church custodian, served on the UCC Women's Board, and coordinated the community Thanksgiving Dinners.

When her husband passed away in 1981, Mother Johnson mourned her loss, then got started again. She served faithfully under Pastor Dorsey and Pastor Prescod and worked to make the cornerstone programs at Highland stronger. The Thanksgiving Dinner thrived; she led the Mission and Outreach Department, and the Sam Johnson Memorial Scholarship Fund was created. As a member of the Highland Executive Board she was a supporter of Pastor Hardy's appointment and was a true follower of his leadership until her death.

She leaves to love and treasure her memories, two sons, Samuel Jr. (Connie) and Richard; daughter, Vera Watson (Leonard); grandchildren, Michael Lee (Sarah), Robert Lee (Kesha), Chris Jones II, Nicole Atkinson (Seth), Jeremy Johnson, December Watson; and great grandchildren Reyshawn Atkinson, Neela Thresa Atkinson, Lynsi Lee, Laci Lee, Josie Lee, and Jake Lee.

She also leaves her niece, sister and best friend Ruth Peoples; loving in-laws George & Ophelia Murry, Bernis & Betty Dorsey, Rebecca Griffith-Ross; Godchildren Zoe Wilson-Price, Chris Fridge, Daniel Martin, Dennielle Martin, Robert Martin; two church families; four generations of nieces and nephews; and the Lord only knows how many folks that called her friend.

Arrangements entrusted to Terry Family Funeral Home.



Members of the gospel, R&B and jazz group E. D. Mondainé & Belief.

Gospel Group Dinner Theater

E.D. Mondainé & Belief will bring a blend of gospel, soulful R&B and contemporary jazz during a dinner theater night on Saturday, March 19 at 6 p.m. at Wave Productions' Dinner Theater, 8131 N. Denver Ave., in the Kenton district.

The event will showcase several live performances as well as delicious menu options served up by Po'Shines Café De La Soul.

The live entertainment is family-friendly and free to all.

Deacon Loved his Church Family

Phillip 'PJ' Jarrett

Phillip Irwin Jarrett was born on Aug. 3, 1951 in Anderson, S.C. to Zadie M. Jarrett-Gilmore and the late James T. Jarrett. He died on March 6, 2001.

As a child, he attended public schools in Hillsborough County in Tampa, Fla. He graduated from G.S. Middleton Senior High School in Tampa in 1970 where he played varsity basketball. After graduation, he attended Hillsborough Community College for one year. He later enlisted in the Air Force where he served six years.

In 1993, Phillip moved to Portland. He was employed by Freightliner Corporation, ITR Corporation, Job 1 Security and Greater New Hope Family Ser-



vices.

At an early age, Phillip was baptized at St. John Missionary Baptist Church and was a member of the youth choir. In his later years, he joined and faithfully served at Cal-

vary Missionary Baptist Church (Greater New Hope) in Portland. This year, under the leadership of Dr. Alvin B. Ellerby he was ordained as a deacon. Phillip loved his church family!

Survivors include his wife Karen Jarrett; children Anthony and Adrienne Jarrett (fiancé of Jamison Ross); stepchildren Edreece Phillips and Rochel Davis; grandchildren Maurice Garrett, Seantinae Pearson, Brandon Jarrett, Latasha, Rochell Jr., Jaden Davis, Edreece Jr., Israel and Savannah Phillips, Michael Washington Towner III and Breatnce Minnieweather; mother Zadie M. Gilmore; as well as a host of nieces, nephews and friends.

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Celebration of Life

A celebration of life and fundraising benefit in honor of Linda Clark, a Portland woman who has been diagnosed with a life changing illness, will be held Saturday, March 19 at 6 p.m. at the Fellowship Missouri Baptist Church, 4027 N. Missouri.

The event will include songs of praise and testimonials. Refreshments will be served. All are welcome to attend. For more information, call 503-914-7494.