



Ellen M. Abdunafi

September 8, 1944 - April 6, 2020

Ellen Maudell Abdunafi was the eldest daughter and second eldest of nine children born to the late Ellen Martha Roach Robbins and the late Preston Robbins, Sr. in Jersey City, NJ on September 8, 1944. After spending part of her early years being raised and educated in the Jersey City Public School System up until the middle of junior high school, the very proud Robbins family moved to a small residence located at 76 South Park Street in Elizabethport, NJ. As a result of this relocation, Ellen completed her eighth & ninth grade education at Grover Cleveland Junior High School. After graduation, she attended Battin High School, which in the early 1960s was a high school for girls.

She loved to sing. She was so good that she sang in Battin High School's All-State Chorus. She was also a good student who believed in the importance and value of education. She chose to pursue a career in nursing and took the preparation courses offered at Edison High School, passed her exam and became a Licensed Nurse Practitioner. After graduation from Battin High School in 1962, she became a resident nurse at John Reynolds Hospital in Berkeley Heights, NJ.

During her residency, she met and fell in love with Wakil Abdunafi, a former US Army soldier, laborer and devout muslim man. She converted to Islam and they married in 1968. They moved into a little house at 1035 William Street in Elizabeth. From this union they had two sons and one daughter. During those early years on William Street she worked as a nurse and he worked as a laborer. Eventually, her husband's fight for equal opportunity for work assignments and fair treatment for himself and other African American laborers out of Local 394 took its toll on the family. As a result, they relocated to their new residence at 19-C Migliore Manor in Elizabethport where Ellen continued to support her husband and her children while he continued to fight the good fight for equality until his very last breath. In spite of the extreme hardship placed on her shoulders, she managed to survive and overcome through the grace of God, with support from her friends, family, the Elizabethport Presbyterian Center and the Presbyterian Church.

Ellen accepted a job as a taxicab driver and worked for a few different companies for over

17 years in order to support her three young children—each of whom managed to later attend and graduate from college. As it turned out, she loved to drive and to socialize with her customers. Even though she didn't make a lot of money, she took great pride in her work. She was also a very passionate amateur photographer of people and places in the Elizabethport community. She was committed to helping other people at all times. She loved her family and others so much that she opened her home for some youth in the community to live with her when they needed a place to live. Her love and commitment to others eventually led to her appointment as a Commissioner of Public Housing. Later, she served the City of Elizabeth in the Department of Health & Human Services as a Public Health Investigator—a position she enthusiastically served with pride, strength and dignity until her retirement. She was a member of the National Council of Negro Women (NCNW), the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP) and the historic First Presbyterian Church, in Elizabeth, NJ, where she became a Church Elder. Upon her retirement, she relocated to Baltimore, Maryland and spent the rest of her days enjoying the company of her family watching her favorite television programs, cooking and shopping. She had awesome and unforgettable experiences traveling to Paris and the Bahamas with her daughter. She also loved spending time with her new friends in the local area while maintaining close ties with her family in New Jersey, Pennsylvania and other parts of the country and, especially, with her lifelong best friend, Brenda Brown.

After a struggle with personal illness, she entered into eternal rest at home on Monday, April 6, 2020 surrounded by family.

She is predeceased by her parents, her husband, her brothers—Frederick Paul Robbins, Robert Adam Robbins, Preston Robbins, Jr., & William Henry Oliver Robbins and, on the same day, her brother-in-law James Franklin Simmons.

She leaves to cherish her memory her brother Charles Rene Robbins & Sister-in-Law, Paulette Robbins, Cerise Lorraine Simmons, Gerard Earl Robbins & Sister-in-Law, Luz Santa Cruz, and Robin Eve Graham; her children—sons Amir M. Abdurahman & Malik Abdunafi, daughter Sabourah A. Abdunafi, her adopted son/nephew William Robert Robbins, and adopted daughter Erica Henrietta Campbell; eight grandchildren I'Jaz McCallum, Kareem Abdunafi, Rabia Abdunafi, Zahira Abdunafi, Sundiata Adisa Campbell Abdunafi, Lemar Davis, Anisha Ariel Robbins, and William Ricky Robbins, and a host of nieces, nephews, cousins, other relatives and friends.

Comments



“ Kim L Hunter lit a candle in memory of Ellen M. Abdunafi



Kim L Hunter - April 19, 2020 at 11:17 PM



“ Ellen, thank you for the fond everlasting memories. You have earned your wings. To Infinity. You shall Be Remembered.

Kim L Hunter - April 19, 2020 at 11:27 PM



“ I feel so fortunate to have called you my friend Ms Ellen. You were greatly loved and will be greatly missed. Rest in Paradise. Until we meet again. Love you

Carlette Lane - April 16, 2020 at 04:15 PM



“ Forever grateful for you being in my life. I love you. Til we meet again.



Sydnei SmithJordan - April 15, 2020 at 09:37 PM



“ I miss you My Beloved Friend and Big Sis Ellen I looking forward to talking your ears off in heaven. Agape Love Sis Jenn.

My continued prayers and condolences to Ellen Family during this time, May God keep you all in the Comfort of His Loving Arms in Jesus Name Amen. P.J.L



jennifer - April 13, 2020 at 07:19 PM



“ Rashon Hammonds lit a candle in memory of Ellen M. Abdunafi



Rashon Hammonds - April 13, 2020 at 03:23 PM



“ I love you with all of my heart. I am you. You will always be with me.

Rashon - April 13, 2020 at 03:28 PM



“ Nabiliah Ismail lit a candle in memory of Ellen M. Abdunafi



Nabiliah Ismail - April 12, 2020 at 07:43 PM



“ Rest Easy my dear sister friend. May Allah forgive you for your sins and bless you with a spacious grave.

Nabiliah - April 12, 2020 at 07:44 PM



“ Sabrina Toliver lit a candle in memory of Ellen M. Abdunafi



sabrina Toliver - April 12, 2020 at 07:29 PM



“ Ellen was such a sweet spirit who will be truly miss she was part of a beautiful family for which we are sisters always.her dedication and love for the wonderful new life we found,and the sponsor we shared was beautiful ,Rest Peacefully my Sister

sabrina Toliver - April 12, 2020 at 07:35 PM



“ Denise Day sent a virtual gift in memory of Ellen M. Abdunafi



Denise Day - April 11, 2020 at 03:37 PM



“ Ellen had a sweet and gentle spirit, yet in her strength and determination was a shining example for many. She will be sorely missed

Denise Day - April 11, 2020 at 03:42 PM



“ Ellen is an intricate part of my 2nd chance at life. Through her guidance I've learned how to allow peace to be my center by tapping into my spirituality. Very soft spoken, well versed way of educating. I remember going to her office very emotionally dismantled picked up a meditation book it was Oct 18th forget what year and it was “letting go of chaos” if it wasn't coming from her it was around her. I left in a different space I'm just so grateful she was and will continue to be a part of my life. The retreats we attended together was so spiritually up lifting. She will truly be missed. May you be at rest because your spirit lives on. With love

stella - April 11, 2020 at 07:25 AM



“ Wow! I am truly saddened by the news of Ellen passing. I have many fond memories Growing up in 4 Court Miglorie Manors. Ellen & her Husband Wakil we're pillars in our community. To the family have comfort in knowing she helped many families in poverty. May her soul rest in eternal peace. Rip Ellen



Angie Rodriguez - April 10, 2020 at 10:18 PM



“ I love you cousin Ellen. You were so full of joy, love, and life. I am so glad that we were able to capture a moment together. My Facebook feed will never be the same. Thank you for always being my supporter. Thank for all of the memories that you shared with me about my mother. I know that the two of you will get to laugh and enjoy each other again. Please give her a hug and a kiss for me. I love you with all of my heart. Rest easy. Your life was well lived.



Shonette Sullivan - April 10, 2020 at 05:38 PM



“ My deepest condolences to Ellen's family. Ellen was a great and strong fighter for life. She also was a really beautiful person. Stay strong.

P. Ledakis MD

PETER LEDAKIS MD - April 10, 2020 at 09:27 AM



“ God bless you all during this difficult time! Love you all! Sleep in Peace, Ellen!!



Kim Washington - April 10, 2020 at 08:18 AM



“ I remember Mrs Ellen being a smart well spoken woman. When she showed up the power she held radiated through her. To the family be strong in knowing your mom truly made a difference on this earth. Rest well queen.



Suzette Hobbs - April 10, 2020 at 04:21 AM



“ Prayers of comfort to to the family & friends during this time. Peace Be Still. Your parents were friends with mine. May they all R.I.P.
Simone Taylor
Elizabeth , N.J.

Simone Taylor - April 09, 2020 at 08:36 PM



“ I just spoke to my Auntie/Cousin Ellen on last Thursday. We were laughing and talking and she was filled with so much life, light, and joy for all the years she survived so many struggles and so many more victories. My heart was so broken when I learned that she had suddenly passed. It took me nearly the entire week to realize that the most comforting part of her passing away was that HER SOUL WAS READY TO MEET GOD! This doesn't erase the hurt, but it does give me so much peace knowing that she left a HUGE LEGACY IN THIS EARTH of JOY, LOVE, and her CARE FOR ALL MANKIND. To her ALL OF HER GIFTED CHILDREN...May you and the entire family find peace during this time and know that we the Jamison family are praying much for your strength.

Love,
Rasheen

Rasheen Jamison-Richardson - April 09, 2020 at 07:56 PM



“ Mae Gore lit a candle in memory of Ellen M. Abdunafi



Mae Gore - April 09, 2020 at 05:57 PM



“ My deepest condolences to the family from my family. Mrs. Ellen was my friend and confidant...she helped to guide me in my dark moments...her smile brightened up a room...always positive...love you..see u when we meet again...love you Mama Ellen

Cynthia Savage - April 09, 2020 at 05:17 PM



“ My Condolences to the Family Ellen you were a Beautiful Black Intelligent Well Spoken Caring Women You Fought your fight but God knew you was tired and called his child Home I'm glad we had the chance to meet and I learn from you you will forever be in my heart a well depply be missed SIHP I loved you but God love you Best
Vannessa Harris



vannessa harris - April 09, 2020 at 04:54 PM



“ My heart is broken. I think about Ellen and I have fond memories way back when her husband was alive and well. They were a great team. RIH Ellen

Jean Grady - April 09, 2020 at 04:47 PM



“ Ms. Ellen will miss you. Your support and your love. Will be miss. Thank you for your friendship.

Earnestine Smith - April 09, 2020 at 06:59 PM



“ I have so many memories with Ms Ellen. Her telling me I was an extension of her energy. We used to have a sign on my desk that said "If you can't hear it from the horse (Ms Ellen) the pony is just as good (me)". I will forever cherish our memories!

Julie Muldrow - April 09, 2020 at 04:24 PM



“ Shalana Hammonds sent a virtual gift in memory of Ellen M. Abdunafi



shalana hammonds - April 09, 2020 at 04:19 PM



“ We the March Family and Staff wish to extend our deepest and heartfelt sympathy in the passing of your loved one. Our prayers go out to you and your family in your time of loss. We know and understand that you have received many expressions of love and we will continue to lift you up in prayer. May the memories you cherish of brighter and happier days help to ease your sorrow and comfort you always.

March Funeral Homes - April 07, 2020 at 02:37 PM