



Bernice Alma Hairston

November 17, 1931 - May 25, 2021

BERNICE ALMA HAIRSTON, the Matriarch of the Hairston Family, was born on November 17, 1931, in Baltimore, MD. She was the only daughter of four children to the late George R. Rodgers, Sr., and Helen Carter Rodgers. A lifelong resident of Baltimore City, Bernice was beyond proud of her ability to maintain her independence and be active in her family's life. She departed this life on May 25, 2021, to reunite with her late husband, Earl Eugene "Genie" Hairston, her sons, DeHaven A. Hairston and DeWitt E. Hairston, and her sisters in life and best friends, Connie Tillman, Mary Carter, and Blanche Clash, who all preceded her in death.

Accepting Christ at an early age, she received her religious foundation at Ames Memorial United Methodist Church. Upon graduating from Douglass High School in 1948, Bernice followed her love of creating to New York City, where she studied art. When she returned home, she worked as a supervisor for the Social Security Administration until her retirement in 1987, after more than 30 years of employment. Even in her retirement, Bernice was active, and she soon began working part-time for the University of Maryland Medical System, until the early 2000s. In addition to her love of art, Bernice loved cultivating flowers, was an avid fan of basketball and football, enjoyed volunteer work, and had a passion for completing crosswords and complex jigsaw puzzles.

Bernice was known throughout the city for her signature salt 'n' pepper hair, her fashionable clothes, and the way she strutted down the streets. She believed in dressing to the nines wherever she went—whether she was heading to church, shopping at her favorite department store, going to purchase flowers from the local market, or on her way to an appointment at her lifelong hairdresser, Byrd and Betty Beauty Salon. Everyone, from friends and family to passersby around town, knew Bernice for looking sharp in her red lipstick, blush, and polished nails. She thrived on feeling good—but looking even better—and believed a lady should always look her absolute best. These qualities attracted Genie to Bernice and resulted in their union on September 11, 1953.

The loving couple moved to West Baltimore, where they raised six children. Their home, on Woodhaven Avenue, was the epicenter of the neighborhood. Many will recall playing with the Hairston children or eating dinners cooked by Bernice, who they fondly called their “second mother.” Her pineapple upside-down cake, macaroni 'n' cheese, and sweet tea will go down in history as some of the best. After Genie's death in 2000 and the death of her sons, DeHaven and DeWitt, in 2002, Bernice proudly lived on her own in downtown Baltimore. However, she was never alone, because she was surrounded by her loving daughters, sons-in-law, and multiple generations of grandchildren. Bernice left a legacy of showing love and care to each and every one of her children, grandchildren, great-grandchildren, and great-great-grandchildren. Her presence at graduations, birthday parties, dance recitals, cookouts, cookie baking parties, and summer vacations will be missed, as well as her gift giving—but, most importantly, her love. Bernice's grandchildren will never forget receiving her attention, Easter candy, and Christmas gifts; her daughters will never forget receiving their mom's famous “grab bags” during the holiday season.

Bernice had high standards, and she expected nothing less from those around

her. She raised her family to have class, dignity, strong faith in God, and pride in oneself. Mourning her loss are her four daughters, Gina Curtis, Heidi Leneau, Dawn Frye, and Robbi Hairston-Flood; her 11 grandchildren, DeHaven Hairston, Jr. (Danielle), Daren Hairston (Sammi), Shaunte Hairston, Kibibi Matthews-Brown (Rianna), Teri Weathers (William), Megan Scribner (William), Morgyn Curtis, Randall Leneau, Kendall Frye, Kirstyn Flood, and Chloe Flood; 19 great-grandchildren, Marquise Hairston (Taylor), Indya Hairston, Asia Hairston, DeHaven Hairston III, DeAira Hairston, Aaliyah Hairston, Tayla Belle, Peyton Golden, Solomon Matthews-Brown, Selah Matthews-Brown, Ayasha Hairston, DeAndre Hairston, Olivia Weathers, Grace Weathers, Tyler Leneau, Iana Scribner, Ivory Scribner, Sydnee Scribner, and William Carter Scribner; three great-great-grandchildren, Charlee Preston, Skylarr Ragler, and Declan Hairston; and four loving sons-in-law, Terence Curtis, Roderick Leneau, Martin Frye, and Curtis D. Flood. Bernice is also loved by a host of lifelong friends, neighbors, fellow church members, and family in Baltimore and on the Eastern Shore.

Bernice's sharp tongue and humor are a reminder to always speak your mind; her love of the finer things are a reminder to always live up to your full potential. So, whether you knew her as "Mom," "Grandma," "GG," "Grandma Bernice," "Mrs. Bernice," "Mrs. Hairston," or "Bern," one thing is for sure: you will never forget the sound of her laughter, the smell of her perfume, or the way she answered the phone—because one of Bernice's favorite quotes, "It is better to have loved and lost than never to have loved at all," will resonate in the minds of those who were Blessed to have her in their life.

Bernice felt great pride in reaching 89 years of age—nearly a century of sharing her gift of life with her loved ones. Although we are thankful that she has returned to her Heavenly home, we will miss her dearly.

Cemetery Details

Garrison Forest Veterans

11501 Garrison Forest Road
Owings Mills, MD

Previous Events

Viewing

JUN 8. 3:00 PM - 6:00 PM (ET)

March Life Tribute Center - Randallstown
5616 Old Court Road
Windsor Mill, MD

Wake

JUN 9. 10:00 AM - 10:30 AM (ET)

March Life Tribute Center - Randallstown
5616 Old Court Road
Windsor Mill, MD

Service

JUN 9. 10:30 AM (ET)

March Life Tribute Center - Randallstown
5616 Old Court Rd
Windsor Mill, MD 21244
(410) 655-0110

Tribute Wall



“ To View the Webcast of the Funeral for Bernice Alma Hairston, Please Click the Link below.



March Life Tribute Centers - June 08, 2021 at 06:25 PM

AB

“ Mom Bernice taught me many things to love deeply no regrets to make the best potato salad and to be a better person took me places New York mama I want sing in Harlem on others day ! Helped me truly experience a mother’s LOVE



Aleasia Brown - February 14 at 03:14 AM

NG

“ Your mother, grandmother, great-grandmother was a charming lady who I was blessed to know, not well, but I saw her often in the halls of Christ Church Harbor Apartments. We chatted about our families and other things old people talk about.....hearing, knees, noise of dirt bikes, etc. I never saw her look anything but well dressed and put together. I think we all looked up to her. I know I will miss her smiling face, but not as much as you do. I am so sad for your loss.
Nelly Greene

Nelly Greene - June 09, 2021 at 11:55 AM

JT

“ Ms. Bernice touched so many of us at Christ Church Harbor Apartments as she would venture out daily strutting her high heels and impeccable style of class and integrity. She tirelessly volunteered every week assisting the rest of us. We love you Ms. Bernice and will miss you dearly but God loved you most. Enter into your Heavenly rest.



Joyce Tuck - June 08, 2021 at 11:36 PM



“ Sweet Solace Spray was purchased for the family of Bernice Alma Hairston.



June 08, 2021 at 12:42 PM



“ In 2015, I recorded a short film of Grandma for a class project in college. She talks about growing up during segregation, her family, and how it felt to live independently in her 80s. You can watch it at the link below! ❤️

<https://vimeo.com/148799239>



Kirstyn Flood - June 07, 2021 at 01:00 PM

MC

“ *Miriam Curtis-Johnson lit a candle in memory of Bernice Alma Hairston*



Miriam Curtis-Johnson - June 07, 2021 at 12:16 PM

MC

The Ames Memorial United Methodist Women has lost another link in our "chain" of women.

Miriam Curtis-Johnson - June 07, 2021 at 12:21 PM

MC

To Heidi and Family of Bernice Alma Hairston: We pray that you find comfort in your memories.

The Curtis Family: Miriam, William and Myra

Myra Curtis - June 07, 2021 at 12:33 PM

CA

“ *cynthia Marlene Anderson purchased the Small Garden Dish for the family of Bernice Alma Hairston.*



cynthia Marlene Anderson - June 07, 2021 at 12:09 PM



“ *Sentiments of Serenity Spray was purchased for the family of Bernice Alma Hairston.*



June 07, 2021 at 11:23 AM



“ *Peaceful White Lilies Basket was purchased for the family of Bernice Alma Hairston.*



June 07, 2021 at 07:42 AM



“ *The Brown Family purchased the Sentiments of Serenity Spray for the family of Bernice Alma Hairston.*



The Brown Family - June 06, 2021 at 10:30 PM



“ *Christine Cann lit a candle in memory of Bernice Alma Hairston*



Christine Cann - June 06, 2021 at 06:53 PM



“ *Tayla & Payton sent a virtual gift in memory of Bernice Alma Hairston*



Tayla & Payton - June 04, 2021 at 10:41 PM

SG

“ *Shaunte (Hairston) Golden lit a candle in memory of Bernice Alma Hairston*



Shaunte (Hairston) Golden - June 04, 2021 at 10:39 PM

-P

“ *-Tayla & Payton purchased the Pink Potpourri Bouquet for the family of Bernice Alma Hairston.*



-Tayla & Payton - June 04, 2021 at 10:37 PM

RB

“ *Rosalyn M. Burton lit a candle in memory of Bernice Alma Hairston*



Rosalyn M. Burton - June 04, 2021 at 10:33 PM

RB

“ *Ms. Bernice was a very pleasant ,seasoned funny co-worker years ago at University of Maryland Medical Systems in the Guest Relations Department. Very beautiful person. May the work you have done speak for you. GOD BLESS Rosalyn M. Burton*

Rosalyn M. Burton - June 04, 2021 at 10:32 PM

-S

“ -Shaunte, Summa purchased the Divine Light for the family of Bernice Alma Hairston.



-Shaunte, Summa - June 04, 2021 at 10:26 PM

SH

“ Shenna lit a candle in memory of Bernice Alma Hairston



Shenna - June 04, 2021 at 07:19 PM

SE

“ Ms. Bernice was a faithful friend, neighbor and volunteer at Christ Church Harbor Apartments. Her out-going spirit and energy to enjoy life will be missed. Thanks for assisting us and serving with grace and style.

Sharon Harris

Sharon Evins-Harris - June 04, 2021 at 01:53 PM

JT

*I will always remember Ms. Bernice's elegant way she carried herself and the fun times we shared when she volunteered at Christ church Harbor apartments as I worked at the front Desk. She was nothing but class from her head to her heels. My sincere condolences to her family. Always a friend and neighbor,
Joyce Tuck, receptionist*

Joyce Tuck - June 08, 2021 at 02:02 PM

SE

“ 1 file added to the tribute wall



Sharon Evins-Harris - June 04, 2021 at 01:51 PM

EF

“ We know this must be a very difficult and demanding time for you all. May the peace of God guard your hearts. Truly sorry for your loss.

Evans family - June 04, 2021 at 05:51 AM



“ Chanelle Williams lit a candle in memory of Bernice Alma Hairston



Chanelle Williams - June 03, 2021 at 03:19 PM



“ Peaceful White Lilies Basket was purchased for the family of Bernice Alma Hairston.



June 02, 2021 at 01:56 PM

CW

“ Cynthia Winder lit a candle in memory of
Bernice Alma Hairston



Cynthia Winder - June 02, 2021 at 09:36 AM

M(

“ 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 Life Tribute Center (Randallstown) - May 28, 2021 at 12:21 PM