



C. Odessa Coates

April 2, 1936 - June 30, 2024

ODESSA HOWIE COATES lived with selfless devotion to her family and faith. Her witness and her works speak to us as we celebrate her life and honor her memory. Today let us listen to the words her life has spoken. Cleopatra Odessa Howie Coates was born on April 2, 1936, in Baltimore, Maryland to the late Willie Cleo and Mary Elizabeth Howie. Odessa's early years of watching her father and mother would forever shape her outlook, her fierce devotion to family, her strong work ethic, her unwavering love for Jesus Christ, and her indefatigable passion for Christ's Kingdom.

Odessa completed her education in the public schools of Baltimore, graduating in February 1954 from the Frederick Douglass High School.

May the service I give speak for me! When I've done the best I can, and my friends don't understand, may the service I've given speak for me!

In 1955, Odessa began her federal career at the Army Intelligence School in Fort Holabird. On December 1, 1961, Odessa married Bishop Johnny Coates, who preceded her in death. During her almost 20 years with Army Intelligence, she served as Clerk Stenographer and secretary to the Chief of Security.

In 1974, Odessa left the Army Intelligence School and began working with the

National Science Foundation (NSF) in Washington, DC. During her tenure at the NSF, Odessa worked in numerous positions: head secretary with the Office of the International Decade of Ocean Exploration (“IDOE”); division secretary in the Division of Earth Sciences; administrative officer; center manager, and editorial officer in the Division of Teacher Preparation and Enhancement, and administrative manager in the Division of Research, Evaluation and Communication in the Directorate for Education and Human Resources.

While at NSF, Odessa also accepted additional duties, including as an EEO Counselor and Investigator; a word processing course instructor; president of the Women’s Council; vice-president for Education and Cooperative Activities for the NSF Employees’ Association (NSFEA); a member of the Black History Month Committee, and coordinator for NSF’s Bring Your Daughters and Sons to Work Day.

Odessa retired from the NSF in 1997 after 42 years of federal service.

May the works I’ve done speak for me... there’s nothing more to be said; may the works I’ve done speak for me.

Odessa’s passion for the Kingdom was evident in her commitment and dedication to the life and health of Wayland Baptist Church. “Active” does not adequately describe her involvement in every aspect of the church. She gladly and quietly served the ministries of Wayland, which included involvement on the Equipping Council, Children’s Baptism Class, the Church-Wide Institute, Children’s Day, Heritage Sunday, Church Anniversary, Ushers’ Ministry, the Convention Ministry, and Thanksgiving food distribution. She was a Sunday School teacher and at one point served as its Superintendent. Odessa also cheerfully worked “beyond” the walls of Wayland. She volunteered for the Maryland Food Bank. Additionally, Odessa trained usher boards in Maryland

and beyond, ensuring that they understood the significance of their role in the worship service and that their work was characterized by the military precision she calmly demanded of all ushers.

For Odessa, family was central. She never missed a birthday, anniversary, picnic, or family celebration. When in person gatherings were impossible, she ensured that family members kept in touch through Zoom meetings. Family craved her early morning/late evening email messages to keep abreast of significant events and prayer concerns.

She “volun-told” her nieces and nephews (you could never say ‘no’) all their family assignments; she often drafted them for work at Wayland, even when they were no longer members.

More importantly, she ably trained the next Howie generation to treasure family and faith.

Following a brief hospitalization, Odessa transitioned to her heavenly reward and next assignment on Sunday, June 30, 2024.

If she had to speak to us again, we believe that this is what she would say:

From: Odessa Coates Sent: Sunday, June 30, 2024, 6:24 a.m.

To [undisclosed recipients]

Dear Howie Family Members and My Wayland Family:

I trust this will be a blessed, safe week for you. There is a song that says, “It Is No Secret What God Can Do. What He’s Done For Others, He’ll Do For You.”

We know that we are never alone. Let us continue to lift each other up with our prayers. We do not want to forget to pray also for our children and youth. It is so gratifying to know that the Howie Family is a praying family. God has blessed The Howie Family. God has blessed Wayland Baptist Church. Let us not forget to be thankful for each day and remember that It Is No Secret What

God Can Do. This will be my last email to you, but I do not leave you alone, I leave you in God's Hands.

Odessa (Aunt Odessa) (Sister Coates)

May the life she's lived, the service she's given, and the work she's done all shout to the heavens.

Odessa also leaves to speak of her work, her service and her life: her devoted Howie Tribe; siblings, Michael Barry Howie, Sr. (Anne), James; sister-in-law, Alba Howie; nephews, Michael Barry Howie Jr. (Rochelle), Dale Clark, Reverend Myron Howie (Jules), Mark Howie; nieces, Elisa Howie, Kim Howie-Downs, Margaret-Ann Howie, Kimberlyn (Aaron) Gross, Donna (Don) Bridges, Paulette Howie; and a host of great nieces and great nephews.

Cemetery Details

Woodlawn Cemetery

2130 Woodlawn Drive
Baltimore, MD 21207

Previous Events

Public Viewing

JUL 11. 4:00 PM - 7:00 PM (ET)

March Funeral Home - West
4300 Wabash Avenue
Baltimore, MD 21215

Wake

JUL 12. 10:30 AM - 11:00 AM (ET)

Wayland baptist Church
3200 Garrison Ave
Balto., MD 21215

Funeral Service

JUL 12. 11:00 AM (ET)

Wayland Baptist Church
3200 Garrison Boulevard
Baltimore, MD

Tribute Wall

AB

“ Ms. Odessa was a wonderful next-door neighbor. I enjoyed chatting with her when she and I were both outside. My favorite memory was when she told me to come over and surprised me with dozens and dozens of hand warmers, water bottles, and face masks all labeled with my name for my political campaign. It was so clever and unexpected!

I also worried over her when she was going to the food bank during covid and she kindly let me know she was going to do what she wanted and I should mind my own business. Her generous heart is an inspiration to me and every life she touched!



Amy R Brooks - July 12, 2024 at 09:17 PM



“ Divine Peace Bouquet was purchased for the family of C. Odessa Coates.



July 10, 2024 at 09:41 PM

JF

“ Jeff Wright, Lloyd McWhorter-UMI Family purchased the *Simply Elegant Spathiphyllum* for the family of C. Odessa Coates.



Jeff Wright, Lloyd McWhorter-UMI Family - July 09, 2024 at 05:46 PM

JF

“ Jeff Wright, Lloyd McWhorter-UMI Family planted a [Memorial Tree](/store/Product.aspx?ProductId=4518) in honor of C. Odessa Coates.

Jeff Wright, Lloyd McWhorter-UMI Family - July 09, 2024 at 05:46 PM

LS

“ Love, Tori Stephens purchased the *Enchanted Cottage* for the family of C. Odessa Coates.



Love, Tori Stephens - July 09, 2024 at 01:42 PM

LS

“ Love, Tori Stephens planted a [Memorial Tree](/store/Product.aspx?ProductId=4518) in honor of C. Odessa Coates.

Love, Tori Stephens - July 09, 2024 at 01:42 PM

RA

“ *Renay C Alexander lit a candle in memory of C. Odessa Coates*



Renay C Alexander - July 08, 2024 at 03:30 PM



“ *A sympathy card was purchased for the family of C. Odessa Coates.*



July 08, 2024 at 12:13 AM

TW

“ *I Love and Miss you like crazy!! The Best Auntie In The Entire Universe!!!*



Tanika Wright-Aldridge - July 05, 2024 at 06:36 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 - July 01, 2024 at 12:30 PM