



Cora Jean Smith Burke

July 8, 1950 - January 10, 2012

Cora Jean Smith Burke, daughter of the late Bernard and Irene Smith, poured out an immeasurable amount of love and care for a great many people before being called by the Lord on January 10, 2012.

Cora was born in Richmond on July 8, 1950. She was the youngest of five children. Cora, known to many as “Jeannie” or “Tiombe” (which was often shortened to “Tee”), grew up in the Church Hill area of Richmond. As a child, Cora formed friendships with some people that have lasted even unto this day. She attended Richmond Public Schools, ultimately graduating from Armstrong High School in 1968.

After high school, Cora attended Virginia State University, and received a degree in Elementary Education. She began teaching after college, and later decided to return to school. Cora received her Master’s Degree in Elementary Education from Virginia Commonwealth University in 1983. Shortly after beginning teaching in 1974, Cora met Ronald Burke. They began dating soon thereafter, and married in 1977. Through this union, they had a son, Karanja. Though they eventually divorced, they remained very good friends until his passing in 2002.

Cora began her career in Richmond Public Schools in 1974 and came into her own as a teacher for younger children, spending the majority of her career

teaching kindergartner and first graders. She became a Reading Specialist in 1991. During her 36 year career in the school system, Cora touched the lives of countless children and coworkers. The love and dedication Cora held towards her craft and for the children she taught is rarely found these days. In fact, even after retiring in 2010, she continued to work in the Richmond Public Schools system.

Cora's devotion to God, like her devotion to her teaching, family, and her friends, was unwavering and awe-inspiring. She was a longtime member of St. Peter's Episcopal Church, and had been singing in the church's choir ever since her teens. Cora was the Region 9 representative to the Diocese of Virginia for several years. In addition, she was the Chair of the Gifts and Scholarship committee of the Episcopal Church Women in the Diocese. Cora still made time to be quite the social butterfly. She was also a member of the Red Hat Society, and under the title Duchess Red Velvet, she absolutely loved spending time at their meetings and functions.

Cora was preceded in death by her mother and father, as well as her brothers, William Henry Williams, Roosevelt "Sonny Boy" Williams, and Alvin Smith. She leaves to treasure and cherish many memories her son, Karanja Burke; a sister, Barbara Muhammad; five nieces, Riaccas Walker, Anika Gaines, Ola Mallory Gaines, Alvina Bey, and Paula Whalen; two nephews, Norman Gaines, Jr., and Clarence Muhammad, Jr., and a host of great nieces, great nephews, relatives, and friends.

Cemetery Details

Oakwood Cemetery

3101 Nine Mile Road
Richmond, VA 23223

Previous Events

Visitation

JAN 13. 12:00 PM - 8:00 PM (ET)

March Funeral Home-Laburnum Chapel
Richmond, VA 23222

Family Hour

JAN 13. 6:00 PM - 7:00 PM (ET)

March Funeral Home -Laburnum Chapel
2110 E. Laburnum Ave.
Richmond, VA 23222

Service

JAN 14. 11:00 AM (ET)

March Funeral Home -Laburnum Chapel
2110 E. Laburnum Ave.
Richmond, VA 23222

Tribute Wall



“ *Cora Jean Smith Burke*

October 13, 2022 at 08:33 AM



“ *Jeanie's family continues to be in our prayers.*

Peace Be With All of You,

Jusolyn M. Bradshaw and Family (Demmie's sister)

Jusolyn M. Bradshaw (Demmie's Sister) - January 08, 2014 at 06:56 PM



“ *Karanja and I were good friends in elementary school and she always took good care of us when we spent time at his house. She was a great teacher and will be missed. My condolences to your family...*

Frank Thorn - January 14, 2012 at 02:39 PM



“ *I was saddened to hear of the loss of your loved one, Cora. She will trully be missed. "For we know that if our earthly house of this tabernacle were dissolved, we have a building of God, a house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens." II Corinthians 5:1*

*God Bless
Juanita Nicholson*



Delores Banks - January 13, 2012 at 11:07 PM

FN

“ I was saddened to hear of the passing of Cora. She will truly be missed.
"For we know that if our earthly house of this tabernacle is dissolved, we have a building of God, a house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens." II Corinthians 5: 1



God Bless
Juanita F. Nicholson

for Juanita F. Nicholson - January 13, 2012 at 10:45 PM

MS

“ I'm so sorry for your loss and would like to offer my condolences to your family. Death is such a terrible thing for a family to go through, I actually lost my mom 3yrs ago. I'm truly grateful that I have the truth about death and look forward to the future when there will be a resurrection of both the righteous and the unrighteous.”—ACTS 24:15. I'm sure you would love to see your dead loved one again in the coming Paradise here on earth! Again so sorry for your loss!!

Ms Springer - January 13, 2012 at 04:57 AM

PL

“ I am so sorry for your loss. The death of a loved one is such a painful time. Only God truly understands the depth of your pain, and he offers comfort and hope to each of you at this most difficult time . Please read Isaiah 26:19, Psalm 37:29 and John Chapter 11.

Peggy Land - January 12, 2012 at 05:28 PM



“ *Family I am sorry for your loss, and I want you to know that I will be praying for strength, peace, and comfort for you. I know that your faith is strong, and I want to encourage you to hold on to it. Faith is the evidence of things unseen. Even though we can't see a reason for what has happened, we can have faith that there is a reason in God's plan.*



LaVonne James

LaVonne James - January 12, 2012 at 02:56 PM



“ *Aunt Jeanne,*

Although I have known you for a short period of time, you have showed me the true definition of a phenomenal woman. I will always cherish your memories. I will miss you! But I know you will be in the heavens above looking down on us all, and I will see you again on the other side.

Love you always,

LaVonne James

LaVonne James - January 12, 2012 at 02:51 PM

DK

“ My thoughts and prayers are with you at this difficult time. Mrs. Burke was my son, Ra'mon's first teacher at Mary Scott Elementary School. Although she only taught him for a short time (due to obtaining a new position), I can truly say that she was the ultimate professional. My family was so upset to learn that Ray would have a new teacher because Mrs. Burke was such a wonderful teacher. Throughout the years when I saw her in the community, I would hug her and thank her for the time she spent with my son. Thank you for sharing her with Ray and Richmond Public Schools. God bless you.

Deborah White Kenney.

Deborah W. Kenney - January 12, 2012 at 11:13 AM

RG

“ Gonna miss you mom ! Love your eldest son Ronnie.

Ron Grice - January 12, 2012 at 09:19 AM

MJ

“ In your sadness, may there be hope... In your thoughts, may there be peace... In your heart, may there be healing. My condolences to the family on the loss of your loved one.(Psalms 55:22)

M. Johnson - January 12, 2012 at 07:59 AM

AC

“ Jeannie, We are going to miss you. You were such a beautiful person. You have touched so many lives in such a wonderful way. Thanks for your friendship. Gone but never forgotten. Alma C. Gates

Alma C. Gates - January 11, 2012 at 06:10 PM

MG

“ We have many fond memories of Cora visiting us in Blacksburg, VA. Cora's reason for being in Blacksburg was to visit Karaja when he was attending Virginia Tech. Brad and I went with Cora several times to hear Karaja's band. Cora was such a dresser and such a lovely lady. She loved to talk about God, Karanja and her family. I have so many gifts from her, when I look at them I see her smiling face. Brad and I have been blessed by such a graciou women.
Brad and Mary Grems

Mary Grems - January 11, 2012 at 06:07 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 - January 11, 2012 at 12:34 PM