



Irene Cooper

September 14, 1954 - April 19, 2025

Irene C. Cooper was born to the late Iphagenia Hinton Long and George Sprueil on September 14, 1954, at John Hopkins Hospital in Baltimore, MD. Irene was an avid student as she matriculated through Baltimore City Schools. Upon her graduation from Eastern High School in 1972, she received a full scholarship to attend Hampton Institute (later Hampton University in Hampton, VA) where she majored in Biology. After two years of attendance, Irene met and married James T. Craig. To this union Jonelle Niche Craig was born on November 16, 1977. Promising herself that she would return to college to obtain her undergraduate degree, Irene left Hampton Institute and began her career in law enforcement by joining the Baltimore City Police Department Crime Lab. There she proudly specialized in Forensic Sciences. Irene was always eager to tell stories of the many weird and gruesome crime scenes she documented. The most infamous were of “the coleslaw worker” and “the witch”. You can ask either of her daughters about the stories and they can recite them in elaborate detail.

In 1980, Irene met Carlton Jerome Cooper. After just three dates, he proposed. They later married in the spring of 1982 in Raleigh, North Carolina where they had moved to raise their young family. Irene was determined to provide a better livelihood for her family and began her BLET (Basic Law Enforcement Training) to join the Wake County Sheriff’s Department which she accomplished in 1983. Irene was extremely proud of being the 2nd black

female officer to join the force. Immediately after joining she realized she was pregnant with her second daughter. Candice Jillian Cooper was born on January 13, 1984. Irene raised both of her daughters to have an immense respect for law enforcement. The Sheriff's Department became their second family. Irene continuously had support from the late Sheriff John H. Baker, Jr. and the entire Wake County Sheriff's Department. On various occasions you would see the girls being babysat by the many judges, deputies, and clerks that worked alongside her. Being a part of the Sheriff's Department was an enormous part of Irene's life.

After two decades Irene retired and made good on her promise to herself and began her undergraduate studies at Saint Augustine's College. She graduated Summa Cum Laude (3.9 GPA or higher) in 1998 with a Bachelor of Science Degree in Organizational Management. She used her degree to further her catering business, "Your Catering Company." Irene had a true love for cooking and put her heart and soul into every dish she prepared. Her infamous deep dish apple pie will be long remembered. While owning her own business Irene also began preparing lunch meals every Wednesday with her Aunt Lillian for her church's Senior Ministry. Their success with the Senior Ministry led to her becoming the Chairperson for Kitchen Ministry at Poplar Springs Christian Church. Irene and Aunt Lillian will always be remembered for their delicious fried chicken and their closeness. For many years you would not see one without the other. The bond between the two is everlasting. Irene also took pride in her gardening. Irene would toll for hours in her front yard making sure that her garden of roses, hydrangeas, and various other flowers were perfect.

On Saturday, April 19, 2025, Irene reunited with her mother, Iphagenia and aunt Lillian Hinton. Her father, George Sprueil, brother, George Sprueil Jr (Little Man), two aunts, (Vivian and Ellis) and four uncles (James, Woodrow, Albert, and Thurso).

She leaves to mourn two daughters, Jonelle Craig (Sean) of Baltimore, MD and Candice Cooper-Goretski (Tony) of Virginia Beach, VA. Three grandchildren, Azariah, Isabella, and Jameson. One brother, Eric Brown (Willene) of Baltimore, MD. Three nieces, Lexus Johnson (Chris) of Baltimore, MD, Nydia Brown, and Latoya Cooper. Three nephews, Eric Brown Jr. (Brittany) Baltimore, MD, Michael Cooper, and Jimmy Butler (Laura) Baltimore, MD. Brother-in-laws, Carroll Cooper (Tina) of Whitman, MD and Benny Cooper (Lanelle) of Havana, FL., and two aunts, Mary Hinton of Tulsa, OK and Joanne Hinton of Garner, NC. Along with two special cousins and caregivers, Jana Watts (Cliff) of Baltimore, MD and Lenny Maulsby (Dale) of Baltimore, MD.

Irene had countless adopted children, cousins, and lifelong friends that will surely miss her exceptional home cooking and kind spirit.

Cemetery Details

Private

Previous Events

Wake

MAY 2. 11:00 AM - 11:30 AM (ET)

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

Memorial Service with live streaming

MAY 2. 11:30 AM (ET)

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

Tribute Wall

BA

“ To Jonnelle & The Cooper Family, A heartfelt condolences is extended to you on the loss of your dear sweet mom. I will continue to lift you, Azzariah and your family in prayers. It was amusing we met at the Ale House Gathering and had no idea your mom and I attended the same church. Mrs. Irene was an inspiration to everyone she encountered. Her kindness and beautiful smile will always be remembered to many of us at Poplar Springs. Just know Mrs Irene is resting in the arms of God now and she will continue to watch over all of you. Be encouraged and let Mrs Irene's legacy continue to live within you. I know how much you loved your mom and how much she meant to you and Azzariah; therefore, I'm sending you prayers, a big hug and kisses on your forehead. I'm here if you need me Sis 🌹



Love Always,
"Ms. B" aka Brenda Alston

Brenda Alston - May 08, 2025 at 12:48 PM



“ Simply Elegant Spathiphyllum was purchased for the family of Irene Cooper.



May 02, 2025 at 10:12 AM



“ A [Memorial Tree](/store/Product.aspx?ProductId=4518) was planted in honor of Irene Cooper.

May 02, 2025 at 10:12 AM



“ Tiffany Banks lit a candle in memory of Irene Cooper



Tiffany Banks - May 01, 2025 at 11:30 PM



Sending our deepest condolences in the passing of your mother. Ms. Irene will be missed dearly.

The Finger (Banks) Family

Tiffany Banks - May 01, 2025 at 11:32 PM



“ Words cannot express the sympathy and condolences I have for Jonell, Candice , grandchildren, family and friends. I've been blessed to have had Irene in my life. She was part of my family and I was definitely her family as well. She was a great cook and very creative with anything she placed her hands on. I miss the dinners at my home with her and Aunt Lillian. My prayers are fervent and continuous for you all, in love,

Jacqueline Branch - April 29, 2025 at 04:02 PM

MN

Was so sorry to hear of Irene's passing. I had the privilege of working in the kitchen with her and Aunt Lillian. They're both making delicious meals meals in heaven.

Marilyn Sanders, Raleigh, NC - May 08, 2025 at 03:01 AM

AP

“ *AUDREY PHILLIPS-HUNTER lit a candle in memory of Irene Cooper*



AUDREY PHILLIPS-HUNTER - April 28, 2025 at 02:47 PM

DW

“ *Delois Whitaker lit a candle in memory of Irene Cooper*



Delois Whitaker - April 26, 2025 at 09:05 AM

JH

“ *Joyce Baker Harris lit a candle in memory of Irene Cooper*



Joyce Baker Harris - April 24, 2025 at 02:21 PM

TS

“ *T Crews Sr lit a candle in memory of Irene Cooper*



T Crews Sr - April 23, 2025 at 06:46 PM

GC

“ *To my extending family from NC. I am so heartbroken about my good friend & cuz. May your hearts always know that her family was her life. I will miss her deeply. My sincerest Condolences, Love, Thoughts & Prayers to each one of you..... Cookie*



Gladys Crowder - April 23, 2025 at 04:42 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 23, 2025 at 01:02 PM