



## Joan Laverne Copeland

September 17, 1934 - April 25, 2026

### Life's Legacy

Joan Laverne Copeland (lovingly known as “Gon Gon”) peacefully entered into eternal life on Saturday, April 25, 2026. She was born in Richmond, Virginia, on September 17, 1934, as the only child of the late Josephine Williams. She was united in marriage to the late Samuel Columbus Stokes, and from this union, God blessed them with three sons. She later united in matrimony with James Copeland until her transition.

Joan confessed Christ at an early age and was a devoted member of Saint Paul’s Baptist Church for 70 years. Before her health declined, she was an active member who loved the Lord deeply. She found great joy in singing and served faithfully in the choir for many years.

She was educated in the Richmond Public School system and attended Maggie L. Walker High School. Joan was a loving and devoted mother who took great pride in her dedicated sons, ensuring they always knew how deeply they were loved and valued.

Cooking was one of Joan’s greatest passions. She was well known for her sweet potato and coconut pies, cakes, and her delicious homemade rolls. Her savory greens and southern potato salad were favorites among family and

friends. For many years, loved ones eagerly anticipated her weekly batches of freshly baked rolls. Her kitchen was always filled with warmth, love, and something special cooking. Whether it was a holiday, family gathering, or special occasion, Joan could always be counted on to prepare and bring what everyone else may have forgotten. For Joan, preparing meals was more than cooking—it was her heartfelt expression of love.

She also loved gospel music, often singing along and praising the Lord. In her later years, she found comfort in prayer and cherished moments when family and friends would pray with her and speak words of encouragement over her life. One remarkable trait about Joan was her incredible memory—she never forgot a promise made to her, a testament to her sharp mind and attentive spirit.

Joan was preceded in death by her beloved son, Christopher Stokes. She leaves to cherish her precious memories: her devoted husband, James Copeland; two sons, Samuel Stokes (Susan) and Sterling Stokes (Patrice); stepchildren, James Copeland, Jr., OBrian Copeland, Serlester Copeland, Brenda Phipps, Bryant Phipps, and Lorraine Phipps; grandchildren, Chandra Wright, LaFonya Scott, Sterling Stokes, Jr., Christy Stokes, Kevin Stokes, Shanelle Stokes, Christopher Stokes, Jr., Kimberly Stokes, and Lauren Stokes; sisters-in-law, Robinette Hubbard and Deloris Hubbard-Satchell (Caleb); brothers-in-law, Ronald Copeland and Gary Copeland; twelve great-grandchildren; close cousins, Loretta Uzelle, Carlton Smith, Keith Smith, Judith Smithers, Linda Mitchell, and Gwen Harris, and a host of other loving relatives and dear friends.

# Previous Events

## Funeral Ceremony

MAY 13. 11:00 AM (ET)

St Paul's Baptist Church  
4247 Creighton Rd  
Richmond, VA 23223

# Tribute Wall



“ Our thoughts and prayers extend to all of you who are faced with the displeasure of losing a loved one to our worst enemy called Death, in these critical situations it's normal to feel helpless not knowing where to turn. However, our heavenly creator has assured us in HEB: 6/11 that it is impossible for him to ever forget us, He also stated in John:5/28/29 that all those who have fallen asleep will here is voice , So GOD is given us all his promise of hope of us being together once again. Meanwhile we can give our thanks to the funeral directors: for their perfectional assistance and their heartfelt concern toward the unfortunate friends and families; THANKS.

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**Joseph Jones** - April 30 at 02:27 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.

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**March Funeral Homes** - April 28 at 05:09 PM