



## Margarine Bethea

September 13, 1930 - August 8, 2023

On the evening of August 8, 2023, MARGARINE “KITTY” BETHEA peacefully transitioned to her heavenly home at the tender age of 92 years and 11months.

She was born on September 13, 1930 in Cheraw, South Carolina to Albert and

Eliza Wilson. She is the last of her siblings (i.e., Bernice Hudley, Edna McKnight,

Roberta Howard, Alfonso Wilson, and Albert Wilson).

Kitty, as she was affectionately called by close friends and family received her education in Chesterfield County, South Carolina and soon after, relocated to Baltimore Maryland. In Baltimore, she met the love of her life James Bethea who

was ironically also from South Carolina. They met while working at a restaurant

in “Little Italy.” They married in 1952 and to this union, three children were born:

James, Albert, and Darlene. They purchased their first and only home in West Baltimore and have resided there for greater than sixty years. Kitty was employed and retired from the Baltimore City Public School System (BCPSS) after thirty years.

Kitty was a faithful member of First Apostolic Faith Church for more than forty years under the tutelage of Bishop Cornelius Showell, Sr. Pastor. She was an obedient servant leader. She served as a Cooperative Usher and was also a communion server. Kitty utilized her time and talents to assist in the growth and development of First Apostolic. Everything she did was done in excellence as she served in myriad capacities throughout her church membership. She always had a positive word of encouragement for those seeking guidance and she provided wisdom to many. Her life's testimony is illustrated in those she mentored along the way.

Kitty was adamant about promoting home ownership and was a member of the Edgecombe Improvement Association and its umbrella group named Park Heights Neighborhood Association for many years. She served as the neighborhood block captain and instructed all the children who dwelled or frequented the community to keep it clean. She was an avid gardener and loved planting flowers and anything that emulated beauty. Each spring, she embarked on planting flowers anywhere she could find dirt. Up to her death, you could find her on her patio, porch or garden admiring and planting flowers. Her participation was particularly instrumental in The Strand winning the Afro American Newspaper Clean Block Award. She also had a great love for trees. Often, when sitting on her back porch she would marvel at the canopy of tall trees that grace her rear patio. She would often say the view reminded her of her childhood home in Cheraw. It was not unusual for her to call you to the nearest window or door to comment on how beautiful she found the trees.

Kitty was a wonderful bowler and she was competitive. She was a member of the Merry Makers Bowling Club at the Woodlawn Bowling Center for many years. She bowled into her late eighties and still threw strikes consistently, often to the dismay of her competitors. Invariably, she would return home from her games exclaiming with glee "I tore them up today, you hear me? Mom tore them up today." Kitty loved bowling and her league members loved her and her game.

Further, she was a walker, and she was physically fit. She never tired of walking extremely long distances, or for long periods of time. Additionally, she was a member of the Reisterstown Road Plaza walking club for several years. She was a memorable life force.

Family was of paramount importance to Kitty. She was married for seventy-one years to her beloved husband James. On the occasion of their 50th wedding anniversary, she was queried by family as to what would she like to do to celebrate. She was offered a European trip or a Caribbean adventure, but she stubbornly told her family the following: "No! I want to celebrate my 50th anniversary with family and friends." This event eventually became one of her most memorable moments.

In the early years; often in the spring or fall, with delight she would pack up the family car, wait for Pop to get off from work then head out with kids in tow to visit family members (in-state or out-of-state). They would travel to

South Carolina, Florida, Georgia, New York, Virginia and the Bahamas, and their travels were always full of adventure, laughs and lots of fun.

Christmas was Mom's favorite holiday. The house would be beautifully decorated and the tree would be loaded with gifts for the expected and unexpected guests. In her mind, it would be almost sinful for someone to leave her house during the holidays without a Christmas gift. She was fastidious about decorating the house and it had to be done just right. When she would ask you to decorate her fireplace, she expected it to include copious amounts of garland, lights, berries, pine cones and ribbons. Invariably, she would call later and confess that that she would sit for hours mesmerized by the beauty of the holiday. And don't let her favorite song come on the radio, as she was quick to unabashedly launch into her happy dance and expect everyone to join.

However, her greatest gift was her culinary abilities. She could cook anything and it was always delicious. Her specific expertise was in baking. She would make cinnamon raisin buns that would literally melt in your mouth. It was always a great treat to have her call and tell you to come pick up something she made for you. You could start smacking your lips because whether it was a vegetable, meat, starch or cookies, it was going to be good. Her signature bake good was pineapple/ coconut cake that was so moist, tasty and mouth-watering it would make you cry. She would prepare five full layers with ample coconut and pineapple between each layer, and it was simply delicious. There wouldn't even be crumbs left on a plate. In retrospect, her food always made you feel as if you were consuming love. Her food tasted like love, and we were fortunate to have her prepare it.

She leaves to cherish her memory, a wonderful husband of seventy-one years Mr. James Bethea; a loving daughter Ms. Darlene Bethea; a devoted Daughter in-law, Dr. Brenda Pridgen; one grandson, Mr. Darryl Anthony Bethea; one granddaughter, Ms. Niki Bethea; and one great grandson, Ethan James Bethea. Kitty also leaves a host of nieces and nephews; great nieces and nephews; and great-great nieces and nephews, cousins, friends, and neighbors. Additionally, she maintained lifelong friendships with Julia and Major Evans and the Stacy Tinner family. Kitty is predeceased by two sons: Albert Bethea and Lt. James E. Bethea.

Kitty had a heart twice the size of her statute. She was loved--and we were loved. As a family, we are left with a truckload of great memories to sustain us during this transition. We pray that the Ancestors gently guide her home. She will be missed. Whenever we greeted each other in person or on the phone, if you would ask her how she was doing. She would often respond "I'm blessed by the best." She was right.

# Cemetery Details

## Arbutus

1101 Sulphur Spring Rd.  
Baltimore, MD 21227

# Previous Events

## Wake

AUG 16. 10:30 AM - 11:30 AM (ET)

1st Apostolic Faith Church  
27 S. Caroline Street  
Baltimore, MD

## Funeral Service

AUG 16. 11:30 AM (ET)

1st Apostolic Faith Church  
27 S. Caroline Street  
Baltimore, MD

# Tribute Wall



“ *Margarine T. planted a [Memorial Tree](/store/Product.aspx?ProductId=4518) in honor of Margarine Bethea.*

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**Margarine T.** - March 10 at 11:43 AM



“ *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** - August 11, 2023 at 01:02 PM