



## Merlene E. Adair

August 23, 1936 - February 10, 2015

"Who can find a virtuous woman? For her price is far above rubies." Proverbs 31:10 Proverbs 31 speaks of the virtuous woman, a woman who lives valiantly, with moral and ethical excellence. Proverbs 31 speaks of our beloved Merlene Elmira Day Adair.

On Tuesday, February 10, 2015, after a challenging illness and hospitalization, Merlene, at the age of 78, went to be with the Lord.

Throughout her vibrant life, Merlene was known as a virtuous woman - in her home, her church, her career and her community.

"Many daughters have done virtuously, but you excel them all." Vs. 29 On August 23, 1936, Merlene made her entrance into the world, joining the Day family as the precious baby girl. She was born in Heathsville, Northumberland County, Virginia, the sixth-born child of the late James Day and Elmira Conaway Day. As a young girl, she was a Daddy's Girl, and loved and admired her older siblings Alvin, James, Catherine, Laverne, and Eloise, while "mothering" her baby brother Robert, affectionately known as Gene. Gene has fond memories of walking with his big sister down the dusty roads of Heathsville to her piano lessons.

"Charm is deceitful, and beauty is vain: but a woman that fears the LORD, she shall be praised." Vs. 30 Merlene's faith in Christ began at an early age, and that faith was nurtured at First Baptist Church in Heathsville, the family church

that her Great-grandfather, the Reverend Daniel Payne, founded. During her youth, Merlene directed First Baptist's Youth Choir, played piano for the choir and attended Sunday School. She was also a member of the Northern Neck Baptist Training Union and was a Northern Neck Youth Missionary.

"...With the fruit of her hands she plants a vineyard." Vs. 16 The seeds of educational excellence were planted in Merlene early in life. She began her education at Howland Graded School in Heathsville, the first school to educate African American children in Northumberland County. A diligent student, she also attended Julius Rosenwald High School in Northumberland County and Virginia State College in Petersburg Virginia, where she prepared for a career in education and also met her soul-mate, Carl Merton Adair.

"The heart of her husband does safely trust in her, so that he shall have no lack of gain." Vs. 11 Merlene and Carl met at a school dance at Virginia State, and he quickly boasted to his brother and friends about the pretty girl he'd met on campus. Her effortless beauty and timeless sense of fashion most certainly caught Carl's eye, and he'd often speak of her loveliness in the many years to come. After Merlene's graduation, the college sweethearts married on July 6, 1957 in her hometown. After their nuptials, the newlyweds followed Merlene's older siblings to the "big city" of Baltimore, Maryland to pursue their respective careers.

"She looks well to the ways of her household, and eats not the bread of idleness. Her children arise up, and call her blessed; her husband also, and he praises her." Vs.27, 28 A few years into their marriage, God sprinkled Carl and Merlene's home with a little "sugar and spice and everything nice" - three little girls that joined the family one-by-one. Merlene diligently raised her daughters Lori, Sherri and Carla, and managed her household with meticulous care. She even sacrificed several years of her career to commit to raising her girls full-time. As a Momma, she encouraged her daughters to remain committed to the church, excel in their studies, nurture a passion for the arts and pursue great dreams.

"She opens her mouth with wisdom; and on her tongue is the law of

kindness." Vs. 26 Merlene never lost her love for serving the Lord through His church. In 1959 she joined Douglas Memorial Community Church hand-in-hand with Carl, and attended faithfully for 56 years. Over the years, she served as a member of the Chancel Choir, "the friends" women's group and the Women's Christian Fellowship. A faithful advocate to the pastor and ministers of Douglas, she took the helm of Chair of the Board of Stewards in 2009 and served loyally until the very day of her passing. Whenever her leaders called upon her to share a word, her Douglas family marveled to watch her stride from that front-row pew to the pulpit to deliver a prayer or proclamation. When Merlene spoke, we all listened, as God had appointed her as a genuine leader."She seeks wool, and flax, and works willingly with her hands." Vs. 13 Merlene enjoyed an esteemed career in education that spanned four decades. She began teaching in the Baltimore City School system as a Business Education teacher at Southern High School and Northwestern High School. Having earned a Master's Degree in Education from Coppin State College, she soared through the ranks of Adjunct Professor, Assistant Professor, Program Coordinator, Department Chairperson and to her last post as Dean of the Business and Technology Division at Baltimore City Community College (BCCC), the former Community College of Baltimore.

Dean Adair left a beautiful legacy at BCCC until her retirement in July 2007, consistently elevating her Business and Technology Division to higher heights. In 1994, she was instrumental in attaining national accreditation with the Association of Collegiate Business School and Programs, distinguishing her program as the first two-year Business program to become nationally accredited in the State of Maryland.

"She stretches out her hand to the poor; yea, she reaches forth her hands to the needy. " Vs. 20 Perhaps Merlene's brightest star at BCCC shines as the founder and ten-year Chairperson of the annual Scholarship Breakfast. The funds garnered through this effort provided thousands of scholarship dollars to

BCCC students for many( years. Yet her servant-leadership extended beyond her workplace, her compassionate heart moving her to sit beside a family member or friend suffering with illness, death of a loved one or an overwhelming need. With nary a thought, she would step forward, with empathy and grace, to provide physical care, resources and love to any soul who needed her.

Merlene's benevolence, likewise, drove her vast community involvement. She was a life member of Zeta Phi Beta Sorority, Inc., and led her Alpha Zeta Chapter as Basileus from 1987 to 1992. Appointed by former Mayor Sheila Dixon in 2006 as a commissioner with the Baltimore City Commission on Aging and Retirement Education and the Myrtle Tyler Faithful Fund, Inc., she served ten years as the co-director of the Foundation's and Zeta Phi Beta Sorority's "Zeta Center For Healthy and Active Aging", which opened in 2009. Merlene held membership and served in leadership positions in many other community and service organizations: the Baltimore Metropolitan Chapter of the Coalition of 100 Black Women; the Baltimore County Chapter of Pierians, Inc.; the Baltimore Chapter of the Virginia State University Alumni Association; the Baltimore Chapter of the Carats, Inc.; the Baltimore Chapter of the Silhouettes of Kappa Alpha Psi Fraternity, Inc.; the African American Steering Committee of the Walters Art Museum; the Community Outreach Committee of the Baltimore Symphony Orchestra; the Baltimore Chapter of the First Baptist Church of Virginia Building Fund and the NAACP as a life member.

"Give her of the fruit of her hands; and let her own works praise her in the gates." Vs. 31 Merlene's walls are covered with recognition she received throughout her lifetime. A sampling of her numerous awards: BCCC's Excellence in Leadership Award, the Harlow Fullwood, Jr. Service Above Self Award, Walter Art Gallery's recognition of her devotion and outstanding service as trustee, the Douglas Memorial Community Church Award of Appreciation and Service and several Zeta Phi Beta Sorority, Inc. Awards, including 1993 Zeta of the Year.

Even with this illustrious list of accomplishments, Merlene's impact on her family, friends, church and community could not be fully capsulized in this small tribute. She has left a legacy of love, care, passion and dignity that will never be forgotten. Her bond of love with Carl, which endured 57 years, will live on in our hearts forever. Just weeks before Carl's passing, he smiled at a picture of Merlene reclined in her hospital bed, and said, "Pretty as a peach." With mutual feelings for him, Merlene promptly followed him to heaven, exactly three weeks after his passing on January 20, 2015. They just could not live without one another.

She leaves to honor her life and legacy: her three daughters Lori Chambers, Sherri Adair and Carla Adair Hendricks; two sons-in-law Ralph Chambers and Anthony Hendricks, eight grandchildren; one grand-son-in-law; one sister Catherine Harris Flythe; one brother Robert (Gene) Day; two sisters-in-law Mary Day and Dorothy Adair; and a host of nieces, nephews and cousins.

# Cemetery Details

## Garrison Forest Veterans

11501 Garrison Forest Road  
Owings Mills, MD

# Previous Events

## Public Viewing

FEB 20. 8:30 AM - 8:00 PM (ET)

March Funeral Homes - West Baltimore  
4300 Wabash Avenue  
Baltimore, MD 21215  
(410) 542-2400  
info@marchfh.com

## Family Hour

FEB 20. 5:00 PM - 7:00 PM (ET)

March Funeral Homes - West Baltimore  
4300 Wabash Avenue  
Baltimore, MD 21215  
(410) 542-2400  
info@marchfh.com

## Wake

FEB 21. 10:00 AM - 11:00 AM (ET)

Douglas Memorial  
1325 Madison Avenue  
Baltimore, MD

## Service

FEB 21. 11:00 AM (ET)

Douglas Memorial  
1325 Madison Avenue  
Baltimore, MD

# Tribute Wall



“ *Merlene E. Adair*

October 13, 2022 at 08:33 AM



“ *I am extremely sorry for your loss. I can not imagine the pain you have had to endure. May the God of comfort be with you now and in times to come. God's Word the bible promises the hope of seeing our dead loved ones again. That promise is at John 28,29 and also at Revelations 21: 3,4*

**Shane Briscoe** - February 26, 2015 at 10:26 AM



“ *To family of Merlene Adair God bless and keep each of you in his care. You will continue to be my prayers.  
Ethel YerbyChristian, Julius Rosenwald High Class 1953*

**Ethel Christian** - February 22, 2015 at 04:11 PM



“ *God bless and comfort you at this time.  
Marlene Lewis*

**Marlene Lewis** - February 21, 2015 at 10:39 PM

DC

“ To Lori, Cheri & Carla,

*My deepest and most heartfelt sympathies on the lost of your Mom. She was really sweet to me & Billie. I will keep all of you in my prayers.*

*Lori, it would really be great to talk to you. If you can get contact with my mother, Jean Cox, you give her your phone number and she can give you mine.*

*Daryl Cox-Eaton*

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**Daryl Cox-Eaton** - February 21, 2015 at 08:35 PM

JC

“ *My sincere deepest sympathy to each of you. Your Mom was such a sweet lady. I will always cherish her memory.*

*Jean Cox*

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**Jean Cox** - February 21, 2015 at 08:54 AM

JC

“ *To the Adair family,  
May you find peace and love in the memories you cherish.  
Our deepest sympathy,  
Sylvester & Judy Cox  
Joy & Jill Carter*

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**Judy Cox** - February 20, 2015 at 12:06 PM

KM

“ Sorry for your loss. I am praying for the Adair family that will continue to comfort and watch over you. I will always remember her elegance grace and loving spirit. Kay Merrill

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**Kay Merrill** - February 20, 2015 at 10:45 AM

MM

“ I'm sending sincere condolences to you Lori, Sherri, Carla and the entire Adair family. Both your dad and mom were stewards to me and my family when I first joined Douglas Memorial Community Church, but my memories and experiences with them go back more than 30 years. They were so attentive to us when my father passed away more than 12 years ago. Carl was a generous supporter of the Alysia C. Curtis Memorial Scholarship because of Lori's involvement with our organization. Subsequently, Merlene was my predecessor as Chair of the Bannister, Lewis, Tanner Circle (the former African American Steering Committee) at the Walters Art Museum, as well as a founding member of the Auxiliary for the Community Concert Choir of Baltimore, Inc. I have many memories of their visits with us in Virginia with my Aunt Ruth, for birthday's and holidays -- we would have a great time! Words can never suffice for the loss you must feel, but I'm grateful for the indelible memories your parents have left with you all and the many people whose lives they have touched forever. May each of you feel the same love and care your mother so graciously shared with those she warmly and so eloquently comforted.

As ever,  
Marco K. Merrick

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**Marco K. Merrick** - February 20, 2015 at 08:11 AM

DG

“ Sherri,Lorie and Carla  
*I cannot find the proper words to express our sadness. Merlene was not a cousin in-law. She was our cousin and we loved her as much as we loved Carl. We are going to miss them so much. We pray and know that they will be waiting to greet us by and by.I just can imagine what a festive time it will be. Merlene had a touch and smile that made Minnie smile every time we met.Even though Minnie could not call her name, she knew Merlene was special.That was a gift that only God can give..Make no mistakes Merlene knew God and God knew her. .We have lost two wonderful people here on earth,but God has a better place for them.We must continue the love and conversation that they were so passionate about. God Bless Love,  
Cousin Donald and Minnie George, Atlanta, Georgia*

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**donald george** - February 19, 2015 at 09:09 PM

HW

“ *Merlene was a wonderful friend and neighbor. She will truly be missed. My sincerest prayers are with the family. May God continue to keep you in His care. Sis. Juanita Wells & Family*

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**Helen J. Wells** - February 19, 2015 at 06:10 PM



“ *Sentiments of Serenity Spray was purchased for the family of Merlene E. Adair.*



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February 19, 2015 at 10:48 AM

MH

“ *The Julius Rosenwald Graduating Class of 1953 remembers Merlene as a lovely ,kind and academic strong classmate. We will miss her beautiful smile. May you find peace during this difficult time. With Sympathy, The JRHS Class of 1953*

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**Marlene Howard** - February 19, 2015 at 08:46 AM

CR

“ *Dear Lori, Sherri, and Carla, I find it difficult to find adequate words to express my deepest sympathy to you and your family on the loss of dad and now your mom. I wish I could be there with you, but know that my thoughts, prayers, and spirit will be there. My life is that much richer for having known Carl and Merlene Adair.*

*Celestine T. Reid  
Charlton, MA*

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**Celestine Reid** - February 18, 2015 at 09:25 AM

MI

“ *To the Adair family:  
I'm sorry for your loss. May you find peace and comfort knowing that our Creator is saddened to see us fall asleep in death. (John 11:35) God has given us such a marvelous hope of living forever in a paradise earth. (Ps. 37:29; Luke 23:43) What a joy it will be for the Adair family to be reunited again!  
Please accept my condolences.*

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**Michael** - February 17, 2015 at 07:24 AM

GM

“ *To the Family*

*What a great loss to the Douglas Memorial family. Merlene was an avid supporter of the ministries at Douglas. She will be sorely missed. She was an elegant lady; full of class and style. May you rest in peace.*

*Fondly!*

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**Gary L. Myers** - February 16, 2015 at 11:03 PM

GB

“ *Georgia H. Brown lit a candle in memory of Merlene E. Adair*



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**Georgia H. Brown** - February 16, 2015 at 01:35 PM

GB

“ *Rest in Power Soror Adair.*

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**Georgia H. Brown** - February 16, 2015 at 01:35 PM

LF

“ *Our condolences and prayers are with your family.*

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**linn family** - February 15, 2015 at 08:52 AM

EJ

“ *Merlene was a dear friend and a very gifted educator. To work with her was to admire her abilities and keen desire to move students forward. She was a true Trojan. Prayers to her wonderful family of whom she was so very proud.*

*Elizabeth Lambert Johns  
Alexandria, VA*

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**Elizabeth Lambert Johns** - February 14, 2015 at 09:55 PM

SS

“ *SHERRIE SCOTT lit a candle in memory of  
Merlene E. Adair*



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**SHERRIE SCOTT** - February 14, 2015 at 01:43 PM

BL

“ *Bernard W. Lewis lit a candle in memory of  
Merlene E. Adair*



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**Bernard W. Lewis** - February 14, 2015 at 05:37 AM

BL

*My prayers go out to Lori, Carla and Sherri, may God bless you all in this time of lose.*

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**Bernard W. Lewis** - February 14, 2015 at 05:41 AM

LJ

“ Dear Lori Sherry and Carla  
I am so sorry to hear about the passing of your beloved mother. Aunt Merlene was the epitome of finer womanhood, a regal woman, a caring spirit and loving lady. She was also a strong woman. She shared a great love with Uncle Carl which I admired. You are a tremendous legacy of your great parents. You are in my prayers. I love you. Lisa Gary Jackson

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**Lisa Gary Jackson** - February 14, 2015 at 12:00 AM

SM

“ Lori, Sherry&Carla, I am so sorry to hear about Aunt Merlene .She was a beautiful person.My heart goes out you and the family.I will continue to pray for you and the family in your time of sorrow.Aunt merlene will definately be missed, but never forgotten.R.I.P.Aunt merlene until we meet again.Peace Be With You..  
Love always,  
Syranda, Timmy, Amiya &Khloe Mitchell



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**Syranda Jones mitchell** - February 13, 2015 at 11:11 PM

DR

“ Dr. Pamela Rice lit a candle in memory of Merlene E. Adair



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**Dr. Pamela Rice** - February 13, 2015 at 10:10 PM

DR

*Mrs. Merlene Adair was a wonderful person who touched the lives of many people. I worked with her while I was an active member of the Virginia State University Alumni Association. She will be missed by all of the individuals who loved her.*

*Dr. Pamela Rice*

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**Dr. Pamela Rice** - February 13, 2015 at 10:57 PM

DI

“*Soror Merlene was a wonderful woman. She and I served on the Zeta Organizational Leadership team in the early 2000's. We were often roommates when we traveled to training meetings. To her children, you have a very compassionate, kind, and loving mom. May God bless each of you.*

*With sympathy  
Dr. Nell Williams Ingram  
Zeta Phi Beta Sorority, Inc.  
Dallas, Texas*

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**Dr. Nell Ingram** - February 13, 2015 at 12:49 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** - February 13, 2015 at 10:55 AM