



Raymona P. Robinson

March 5, 1929 - November 1, 2018

RAYMONA AGNES PICKENS was born on March 5, 1929 in Mobile, Alabama to Eloise (Johnson) and Raymond Pickens. Her siblings Mary, Esther, Zepherine, Marie, Rita, and Raymond enjoyed a family life in which art, craft, sewing, culture, literature, music, and education were highly cherished. The Pickens family lived on Monroe Street in Mobile and Raymona was a quick student of her mother and father's commitment to family, education, work, and southern decorum. A devout Catholic, Raymona and her siblings attended St. Peter Clavier Elementary School and graduated with highest honors from Most Pure Heart of Mary High School.

Throughout her childhood, Raymona found joy in her close relationship with her sister/best friend, Rita, and great solace in reading books. She wore her book worm moniker proudly and enjoyed sketching characters to bring her readings to life.

During her high school years, she fell in love with the Purest Heart of Mary's star football player, Ralph Robinson, and eagerly joined the cheerleading squad to be near him. After graduation, Raymona worked for an insurance company to save to begin an independent life. Later, she and Ralph married and started a family with the birth of their son Ralph and daughters Sharon and Raymona.

During their early marriage, Raymona and Ralph relocated from Mobile, Alabama and moved north to Baltimore, Maryland seeking better opportunities. She sought and secured work as a program analyst with the Social Security Administration. Unbeknown to Raymona and Ralph, their relocation from the south in 1953, made them part of the largest migration in American history...the migration of African Americans from southern states to the north. As the Robinsons settled into Catonsville, MD, their family increase by one more with the birth of their last son, Raymond.

Keenly aware of the constraints placed on her while living in the Jim Crow era, Raymona endured the indignities of restrictions on where she could sit on a bus, eat in a restaurant or live. However, she found her own way of expressing her civil rights. In 1956, she attempted to integrate St. Marks Elementary by enrolling her eldest child, Ralph, in the first grade. The parish monsignor let he know that they were not quite ready for a child-of-color. Undeterred, the next year, Raymona returned and enrolled her five-year-old daughter, Sharon, in the school and succeeded in pushing through her agenda.

Not one to sit on the sidelines, Raymona advocated for civil rights and proudly boarded the bus in Baltimore to join Dr. Martin Luther King in the 1963 March on Washington. She encouraged her children to stand up for civil rights and demonstrate for fair housing, educational access and employment opportunity.

Raymona's career as a computer analyst for the Social Security Administration spanned nearly four decades as she became one of their earliest computer programmers. Her intellectual acumen and penchant for excellence merited recognition for her accomplishments and she was awarded the agency's High-Quality Increase Award in 1976 and a Sustained Superior Performance Award in 1983. In 1970, Raymona attended evening classes at the University of Maryland and took courses in English. Later, in

1974, she attended John Hopkins University and excelled in her extension classes in computer science and management.

Raymona became a young widow at the age of 40, when her husband of twenty years, Ralph, passed of cancer. After a period of mourning, she embraced her new role as a single woman by investing her life's energy in her grandchildren, public speaking, art, voter registration, politics, hosting foreign exchanged students, and her beloved St. Bernadine Roman Catholic Church.

One of the things, which Raymona ("Granny", as she was affectionately known) loved most in life was having fun with friends, family, church family, and those privileged to share her zest for living. Her sense of humor was only surpassed by her sense of style as, she enjoyed collecting hats of all variety of shape, color and panache for attending Sunday Mass. Her love of music and the Gospel Choir was complete, and she'd watched the Church evolve from the formal ritual of her childhood to the culturally diverse rhythms of today. An active promoter of St Bernadine, she's often purchase a table and donate tickets to friends and loved ones for church events and parties, trips to New York and celebratory occasions. She also invested her leadership in numerous church clubs including being one of the founders of the Women's Club and of the Catholic Daughters of America, and a member of the Legion of Mary, the International Training in Communication (ITC), and Annie Young Memorial Club. In addition, she was active in politics and the League of Women Voters and made it a point to work the polls at more than 30 elections in Baltimore City.

Raymona so enjoyed public speaking and the pleasure of encouraging others to actualize and express themselves in the world, that she became active in Social Security's Toastmistress organization. Her love of the spoken word drew her to the International Training in Communication (ITC), where she was

president of ITC's Blue Ridge Region in 1998 and 2003. The recipient of 2006 Emma "Tweet" Hubb Award, Raymona was elected Treasurer of BRR (2008-2010), Secretary to Council Security Club (2008-2010), chaired the International Writing Contest Committee (2007-2009), and was Treasurer to Council 1 Point Breeze Club in 2008. All-in-all, she attended more than fourteen ITC Conventions including California, New Mexico, Ontario, Canada, Bahamas, Durban, South Africa, and the Convention Cruise to Alaska in 2009.

After raising her children and retiring from a career of public service with the Social Security Administration, Raymona began earnestly pursuing her passion for art. She enrolled in art courses at Waxter Center for Senior Citizens in Baltimore and enjoyed working in various media. Her use of rich color and brilliant tones is well displayed in her florals in oil on canvas and numerous watercolors of the waterways around her beloved Baltimore, Maryland. As she evolved as an artist, several of her works were exhibited at various local venues, including the Maryland State House in Annapolis. She won the Grand Prize on Mondawmin's African American Heritage Art Contest for her oil on canvass, Don't Cry My Baby.

One of the first African American docents at the Baltimore Museum of Art, Raymona enjoyed the museum's Jazz in the Sculpture Garden series in the summer and its African installations and permanent collection. She eagerly shared her passion throughout her life, worked to draw more diverse people to the museum's offerings and always felt that income, race, social status, and gender should not be barriers to appreciating the wonders of artistic creations.

Raymona sketched, sculpted and painted more actively in her seasoned years and her work captivated audiences with its wide array of watercolor and oils. She generously donated many of her artistic works to non-profits to benefit low income individuals and to advance women's causes. In 2013, her family

honored her artistic legacy with a surprise donation to the Baltimore Museum of Art in her name. She was thrilled to tears to see her name engraved in brass on the Museum's Donor wall at the front entrance. Her family also presented her with a compendium of her body-of-work as an artist in a book entitled, *Raymona Pickens Robinson: The Life of an Artist*, which is still in demand on [Shutterstock.com](https://www.shutterstock.com) today.

In 2012, Maryland's Catholic Daughters of the Americas (CDA) presented Raymona with the "Catholic Daughter of the Year" Award and she became their national parliamentarian. She was lauded for her organizational skills, talent in parliamentary procedure and penchant for mentoring and training others. In addition, she was honored by CDA members of the Maryland Court for her dedicated work in the State Court and was a charter member of the local CDA Court #2387 at St. Bernadine Roman Catholic Church. She shared CDA's common spiritual sisterhood and worked hard for their many charities and scholarship programs to raise money to alleviate pain, poverty and suffering.

An avid traveler, Raymona, loved learning different cultures and visited some of the world's most exotic places. From chanting with the Tibetan monks in Nepal to climbing the Great Wall of China, she was always eager for an adventure. She travelled extensively on educational tours with Elderhostel to Paris, Monaco, Israel, Egypt, Greece, Spain, China, Samoa, Fiji, Tonga and many other places with friend and family. She once told her daughter that she had not lived until she visited the market Marrakesh on Saturday night.

Raymona spent her final years dealing valiantly with the challenges of a brain tumor and crippling spondylosis. Never-the-less, her spirit remained undaunted as she moved from her wheel chair to the warm water pools of University of Maryland Rehab and practice water aerobics. When it became too difficult for her to move her arms and legs, she found joy in the kindness of

others, the warmth of the sun on her face, the taste of crab cakes, the wetness of her kid's kisses, the sounds of Nat King Cole, and an occasional hot oil massage. She lived her final years at Serene Homestead assisted living facility and was under the outstanding medical care of Dr. Sakaliba Mines. Even, in her decline, Raymona was always a gentile southern lady and expressed the sweetest and sincerest gratitude for each gentle touch, careful feeding and words of comfort.

Raymona is survived by her brother, Raymond A. Pickens; four (4) children, Ralph (Beverly), Sharon (Andrew), Raymona, and Raymond; fourteen (14) grandchildren, Kellie, Kareem (Msiba), Tara (Patrick), Maryann, Yusef, Damon (Tori), Angelisa (Danny), Raymond, Monique; Antoine (Ingrid), Andrea, Sherry, Jasmine, Mya; twenty-one (21) great grandchildren; and, nine (9) great-great grandchildren. Additionally, she is survived by a host of nieces, nephews, sister-in-law, friends and her large and loving extended family in the parish of St. Bernadine Church.

Cemetery Details

New Cathedral Cemetery

4300 Old Federick Rd
Baltimore, MD 21229

Previous Events

viewing

NOV 7. 2:00 PM - 8:00 PM (ET)

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

Family Hour

NOV 7. 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

NOV 8. 9:30 AM - 10:30 AM (ET)

St. Bernadine Roman Catholic Church
3812 Edmondson Avenue, MD 21229

Service

NOV 8. 10:30 AM (ET)

St. Bernadine Roman Catholic Church
3812 Edmondson Avenue, MD 21229

Tribute Wall



“ *Raymona P. Robinson*

October 13, 2022 at 08:33 AM



“ *Willie & Rochelle Currie lit a candle in memory of Raymona P. Robinson*



willie & Rochelle Currie - November 06, 2018 at 12:36 AM



Ralph. we are so sorry for the lost of your mother. you and your family are in our prays.

willie - November 06, 2018 at 12:42 AM



“ *Full Of Love Bouquet was purchased for the family of Raymona P. Robinson.*



November 05, 2018 at 08:57 PM

LM

“ *Lois Mcrae sent a virtual gift in memory of Raymona P. Robinson*



Lois Mcrae - November 03, 2018 at 06:41 PM

LS

I'm sending my love and prays to you and your family on the passing of your mother.

Lois Mcrae of bennesville S.C. - November 06, 2018 at 12:46 AM



“ *Arrive in Style was purchased for the family of Raymona P. Robinson.*



November 03, 2018 at 06:22 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 - November 03, 2018 at 03:07 PM