



## Welchia M. Stokes

October 23, 1921 - April 20, 2017

Silently a flower blooms; in silence, it falls away. On October 23, 1921, a seed, Welchia Mae Banks, was sewn into the lives of the late Welch and Jessie Banks in Bessemer, Alabama. Welchia, more affectionately known as “Me-Ma”, was one of four siblings nurtured in a household of faith, love and sacrifice. In 95 vibrant years, she blossomed into a woman who exemplified how to walk by faith, live with courage and endure with strength. On the morning of April 20, 2017, God selected our beloved flower and re-planted her roots in His perfect garden.

Like the roots of a flower need water, so does the spirit. Living life in service to God, was modeled by her mother Jessie and as a result Welchia professed Christ as her Savior at an early age. The seed of faith was planted at East Bessemer First Baptist Church in Bessemer, Alabama. The budding of her faith continued at the Mt. Airy Baptist Church in West, Virginia. Her steadfast and unmovable faith flourished for 52 years at Berean Missionary Baptist Church.

As a flower in the garden bending toward the sun, Welchia courageously strived to achieve her full potential in all facets of her life. Whether graduating from Alabama Public Schools under segregated conditions at the age of 15 or co-owning for over thirty years the La Rouge Beauty Salon in Brooklyn New York with her best friend, Frances Braithwaite, she unapologetically dared to

pursue her purpose and passion. Although she broke tradition when it came to being a woman in the workforce, she stayed true to the tradition of being a devoted wife in the household.

Welchia's petals of maturity and wisdom unfolded when Sam Alton Stokes entered her life. A 35-year honeymoon began in 1947. From this union, two children were conceived. The first child Cecil Stokes was born in 1949 and two years later their baby girl, Sirlilar was born. A wife of noble character, Welchia eagerly gave of her time to make her marriage special. In the Stokes household, her hands kneaded the bread, her quick wit filled the home with laughter and her sharp tongue served as the rod of corrections for her kids. A Proverb's 31 woman, she took pride in creating a welcoming home and being her husband's confidant, companion and caretaker. Faithful to her vows, she wore her wedding ring daily and never entertained a gentleman caller, anticipating uniting with her one true love again.

Through the birth of her children, grandchildren and great- grandchildren, the petals of unconditional love and unwavering support blossomed. There is no love like a mother's love and there was no tighter bond than the one shared between Me-Ma and her children. She challenged, embraced, loved, encouraged and supported Cecil and Sirlilar in their personal and professional endeavors. She took every opportunity to be involved as possible in the lives of her grand and great-grandchildren. To her children, she was more than a mother, she was a best friend. To her great and great-great grandchildren, she was more than Me-Ma, she was their number one cheerleader.

So faith expands its beauty until at last it grows

The beauty of a flower is its petals. The growth of a flower depends upon it being planted in good, rich soil. The petals of love, wisdom, strength and courage stemmed from Me-Ma's rich soil: a pure heart. Whether giving a word of encouragement, a word of wisdom, a silent prayer or a painful truth, she did

all with unlimited love. Her warming heart, embracing demeanor and soft, kind voice made everyone feel loved. She was a mom and grandmom to countless others—far more than just her family. While under “watch care” at Gospel Tabernacle Baptist Church since 2006, she has flowered many with her wisdom. Due to years of cultivating her faith, the thorns in her life caused tears but didn’t compromise her strength. Her trust in God, dependence upon Him and reliance upon His promises, blossomed her into a strong prayer warrior. Life experiences strengthened her belief that LOVE could and did conquer anything.

Into life’s lasting flower...the heart’s fair perfect rose

How shall we remember this flower? As a woman of grace, strength and courage. She showed us how to walk and live in God’s love. She has shown us how to live life fully and grow wiser gracefully. You were our example of God’s perfect love. Our matriarch, joy, pride and gift, you were perfect for our lives! We praise God for the seed you have sewn in our lives!

Growing from her rich soil, she leaves her children: Cecil (Laurice) of Brooklyn, NY, Sirlilar of Baltimore, MD; one sister-in-law Elise Ward of Detroit, MC; four grandchildren, seven great-grandchildren, three great-great grandchildren, three god-children and a host of nieces, nephews, cousins, family and friends to cherish her memory and to continue her legacy.

Preceding her in death is her husband: Sam A. Stokes, one sister, Viola Banks and three brothers: JD, Wilber and Tody (Robert) Banks.

# Cemetery Details

## King Memorial Park Cemetery - Grand Heritage Chapel & Mausoleum

8710 Dogwood Rd.  
Baltimore, MD 21244  
(410) 944-8300  
info@kingmemorialpark.com  
<https://www.KingMemorialPark.com>

# Previous Events

## Public Viewing

**APR 25.** 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

**APR 25.** 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

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APR 26. 10:30 AM - 11:00 AM (ET)

Gospel Tabernacle Baptist Church  
3100 Walbrook Avenue  
Baltimore, MD 21216

## Service

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APR 26. 11:00 AM (ET)

Gospel Tabernacle Baptist Church  
3100 Walbrook Avenue  
Baltimore, MD 21216

# Tribute Wall



“ *Welchia M. Stokes*

October 13, 2022 at 08:33 AM



“ *Love you MeMa, you will be truly missed.*



**shera Graham** - April 25, 2017 at 02:58 PM



“ *Zee, Pat & Cian purchased the Vivid Recollections for the family of Welchia M. Stokes.*



**Zee, Pat & Cian** - April 25, 2017 at 09:59 AM



“ *Praying for the family she was well loves*



**renee threet** - April 25, 2017 at 08:40 AM

RT

“ *I love you so much I going to miss them soft kisses*

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**renee threet** - April 25, 2017 at 08:39 AM

AD

“ *Aunt Sirlilar and family  
We offer our sympathies to the family during this time. We enjoyed spending time with Me-mom on Sundays and at many church functions. We loved her dearly and will miss that smile. Please find comfort in knowing that she was loved by so many and that she is resting in the arms of Jesus.  
--Daniel/Amy Diggins and family*

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**Amy Diggins** - April 24, 2017 at 12:50 PM

RF

“ *Renee Moore and Family purchased the Arrive in Style for the family of Welchia M. Stokes.*



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**Renee Moore and Family** - April 23, 2017 at 11:04 PM

BA

“ *With my deepest condolences to the family of Welchia Stokes. May the Almighty, the God of tender mercies and of all comfort, who comforts us in all our trials (2Corinthians1:3,4), comfort you and your family in this time of need.*

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**Barnes** - April 23, 2017 at 09:53 PM

Tammy  
Stokes  
Hewitt

“ Tammy Stokes Hewitt lit a candle in memory  
of Welchia M. Stokes



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**Tammy Stokes Hewitt** - April 23, 2017 at 09:08 AM

ER

“ Elizabeth Abbott Russell lit a candle in  
memory of Welchia M. Stokes



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**Elizabeth Abbott Russell** - April 22, 2017 at 09:47 AM

OW

“ Octavia Williams lit a candle in memory of  
Welchia M. Stokes



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**Octavia Williams** - April 22, 2017 at 09:45 AM

OW

*Remembering Aunt Welchia. I still have the wonderful handwritten  
cards she sent.*

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**Octavia Williams** - April 22, 2017 at 09:47 AM

AH

*To the family know this for certain that Me-Mom was more than a woman of God; she labored earnestly with constant prayer. She leaves you now but you will have the golden opportunity of seeing her precious smile again. Sirlilar you have arrived at a moment of sheer pang. God himself will give you the strength and diligence to go forth. Love always, Adrienne Hall.*

Adrienne Hall - April 24, 2017 at 09:08 PM



“ We extend our heartfelt sympathy to your family. Jesus spoke comforting words to help you through this sad time. John 14:27.

Harris Family - April 22, 2017 at 07:31 AM



“ *Simply Elegant Spathiphyllum was purchased for the family of Welchia M. Stokes.*



April 22, 2017 at 12:21 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.*

March Funeral Homes - April 21, 2017 at 06:38 PM