

V. Sam

2-3-2022



Viola Kennedy

Viola Kennedy was born Annie Viola Davis on December 2, 1928 in Blair, South Carolina to Cleve and Annie Byrd Davis. Her mother Annie died when Viola was one year old, and her father Cleve remarried to Ruby Williams whom Viola knew as her mother. Viola departed this life on Saturday, January 8, 2022.

Viola was baptized at the age of ten at Purity Baptist Church in Blair. During her elementary school years, she attended Purity School, a one room, first through seventh grade African American school in Blair. At the age of 13, her father sent her to live with her Aunt Gertrude Johnson in Columbus, Ohio to attend middle school. She gained many friends before returning to South Carolina to graduate from Boylen Haven Mather Academy High School in Camden, South Carolina, a private boarding school for African American students.

She attended Benedict College and accepted a position as secretary and part-time typing instructor at Camp Liberty High School in Jenkinsville, South Carolina. During that time, she

met James Kennedy, Jr. from Winnsboro, South Carolina. One year and four months later, they were married in Winnsboro where she made her home for over 70 years.

In 1955, she started working in the Fairfield County School System at Gordon Elementary School as a food service manager and part-time secretary. She held those positions for fifteen years. In 1970 when Fairfield Junior High School opened, she became its food service manager. After seventeen years there, she returned to Benedict College and received her teacher's certificate. She then moved to Fairfield Career and Technology Center where she started the school's first food service program as its first Culinary Arts instructor. She won the 1987-1988 outstanding first year teacher award for the school district of Fairfield County. In 1991 Viola retired from the Fairfield County System after forty years. After retirement, she regularly served as a substitute teacher at the County's middle and high schools and career center where she was in high demand by school administrators because of her influence on the quality of life of the schools' students. Her last year as a substitute teacher was in 2007 at the age of 78.

Food prepared in the Southern tradition was one of her fortes and she was widely known throughout the county for this gift, which she used as a service to others in her Christian work. She was a member of St. Paul Missionary Baptist

Church where she started attending when she moved to Winnsboro in 1950. During more than sixty years as a member of St. Paul, she served on key committees and programs that worked to implement the Christian philosophy of helping ones fellow man. Three such programs that she faithfully served on were the church's Senior Citizens Ministry, the Food Service Committee and the Soup Kitchen. As a member of the Soup Kitchen committee, she worked with others in the community to provide nourishing food for the homeless and hungry of Fairfield County.

St. Paul recognized her in 1983 as Mother of the year and again in 2002 with a Certificate of Appreciation for Faithful Service, Dedicated Mother and Church Worker. After having served St. Paul for so many decades, she became known as one of the "mothers" in the church, providing inspiration to many of the younger adults. Her services to the community extended beyond the church. She was a member of the local American Red Cross where she worked with this and other agencies to provide relief and assistance to people impacted by natural disasters. She was also a member of the local chapter of the National Association of Negro Women, and a Mother of the Year nominee for the State of South Carolina.

There are many wonderful memories for those who loved, respected and

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admired her. She left an impressionable legacy for all the lives she touched and changed throughout her blessed journey. She leaves to cherish her precious memories: three sons - Donald Robert (Pam) Kennedy of Hollywood, SC; Ronald James (Diane) Kennedy of Summerville, S.C.; Tony (Sybil) Kennedy of Columbia, SC; four daughters - Inga Dianne (Ricky) Blackwell of Fairburn, GA; Awilda Pearl (Robert) Kight of Lanham, MD; Sonya Kennedy of Winnsboro, SC; Leeshu

Kennedy, Atlanta, GA; a sister Betsy Hopson; twelve grandchildren; and twenty great-grandchildren. She also leaves special friends Debra McDaniel and Tony Armstrong.

In addition to her parents, Viola was preceded in death by her husband (James Kennedy, Jr.), one son (Stanley Winslow Kennedy), one sister (Ida Copeland), three brothers (Charles, Clarence, and Cleve Davis, Jr.), and a special aunt (Gertrude Johnson).