

# Acknowledgements

The family of Mrs. Barbara Ann Bursey Williams would like to thank everyone for their kind expressions. Thank you for being with us in our time of sorrow and sharing our prayers. God gives us comfort in the form of family and friends, and we are grateful for you.

Sincerely,  
The Family Members of Mrs. Barbara Ann Bursey Williams

## PALLBEARERS

Sixth Avenue Deacons Ministry  
Sixth Avenue Sunday School Members  
Mason City Neighborhood Association Members

Lionel T. Williams II  
George Williams  
Quan Adams  
Richard Drake  
Jamal Atofau-Barber  
Ilan Douglas  
Luqman Barber

Atty. Mark Young  
Julius Pleasance  
Charles Jordan, Sr.  
Dr. Julian Owens  
Asante Atofau  
Jordan Pinkett  
Shaulqan Barber

## FLOWER BEARERS

Sixth Avenue Deaconess Ministry  
Southside Matrons  
Sixth Avenue Sunday School Members  
Spelman National Alumnae Association, Birmingham Chapter  
Mason City Neighborhood Association Members

Quashana Atofau-Caskey  
Sumaeyya Barber  
Chasley Daniel  
Tiffany Davis-Hubert  
Reba Trammell

Emi Noelle Douglas  
Zaariyah Barber  
Quen Daniel  
Toya Davis-Stevenson  
Semoine McCray

## INTERMENT

Elmwood Cemetery

## PROFESSIONAL SERVICES ENTRUSTED TO



Bushelon Funeral Home, Inc.  
800 – 14th Street S.W.  
Birmingham, Alabama 35211  
(205) 786-3449

# HOMEGOING CELEBRATION OF LIFE AND LEGACY



# Barbara Ann BURSEY WILLIAMS

Sunrise  
MARCH 14, 1942

Sunset  
OCTOBER 31, 2024

## Service

Wednesday, November 13, 2024 | 11:00 a.m.

SIXTH AVENUE BAPTIST CHURCH  
1101 Martin Luther King Jr. Drive Southwest | Birmingham, Alabama 35211

Dr. Reverend John L. Cantelow III, Officiating

# Obituary

*"Favour is deceitful, and beauty is vain: but a woman that feareth the LORD, she shall be praised."*  
- Proverbs 31:30 KJV

**M**RS. BARBARA ANN BURSEY WILLIAMS, age 82, was born on March 14, 1942, in Lee County, Marianna, AL; the first child of John Henry Bursey, Sr., and Winnie Lee Brantley Bursey (Anthony). Preceding her in death were her loving parents, John Sr. and Winnie Lee; grandparents, Lafayette and Annie Bell Smith Brantley of Dublin, GA; grandparents-in-love, Willie Leon, Sr., and Celia Lightfoot Williams of Birmingham, AL; a devoted second father, Charles Wesley Anthony (Winnie Lee); an endearing uncle, Benjamin Anthony, Sr. (Carrie); and a fearless nephew, Carey C. Anthony, (USA Army) all of Marianna, AR; a jovial, caring brother, John ("June") H. Bursey, Jr., of Memphis, TN; sisters-in-love, Cleola Reese Bursey of Marianna, AR, Betty Jean Burley (Robert L. Barber, brother) of Atlanta, GA and Maevaga Elama Tuana'itau Lago-Vaivao (Atofau) of Seattle, WA via the Samoan Islands; an aunt, Viola Brantley Anderson and a first sister-cousin, Dorothy ("Doll") Jean Anderson Stiggers (Abraham) of Chicago, IL; a sweet, stillborn son, Jo-El Barber of Atlanta, GA; a beloved husband-in-Christ, Atty. W. L. Williams, Jr. of Birmingham, AL; brothers-in-love, C. Darrell Williams (Joyce) of Chatsworth, CA, Lionel T. Williams, Sr. (Doris) of Hoover, AL, Charles J. Douglas (Chatta) of College Park, GA and Danilo Robles (Adeline) of San Fernando Romblon, Philippines; a great-aunt, Helen McGhee Williams of Jackson, MS; cousins, Harriette Skinner of Cleveland, OH and Rufus Llyod (CSM, Retired US Army) of Memphis, TN; a cherished grandson, Hakeem R.E. Atofau-Barber of Seattle, Washington; a spirited niece, Leah Williams Burke (John) of Hoover, AL; a beautiful bonus son, W.L. Williams III of Birmingham, AL; and several treasured relatives and friends spanning the vast Continental United States and abroad.

Barbara Ann accepted Christ at an early age. She was baptized as a faithful member at St. Luke African Methodist Episcopal Church in Marianna, AR. Sharing a similar rural educational upbringing, Barbara Ann once recalled fellow Lee County, Arkansas native's Professor James A. Banks' article, "Remembering Brown: Silence, Loss, Rage, and Hope, 1954." Specifically, Barbara Ann often reminisced Banks' writings detailing that in "Marianna and Lee County, Arkansas epitomized the institutionalized discrimination and racism that existed throughout the Deep South in the mid-1950s. The conspiracy of silence about Brown in Lee County among whites was probably caused by fear that news of Brown might disrupt the institutionalized racist system of segregation that had been established in Lee County in the years after Reconstruction. That system was never publicly challenged or questioned by whites or blacks. Black resistance to racism was deep but covert."

Despite the virulent times of her youth, Barbara Ann remained steadfast, serving as an obedient, intelligent daughter guided by her faith and the prayers of her mother, Winnie Lee. After the death of her father, John, Sr., Barbara Ann, age 12, began working the cotton fields in Marianna, AR, including working as a "hair curler" for white women to help her family to stay afloat. Also to ensure she would not have to drop out of school. To that end, Barbara Ann entered the prestigious Robert Russa Moton High School in 1955 where legendary Anna Mae Paschal served as Principal. Notably, R.R. Moton was a protégé of Booker T. Washington, later becoming the head of Tuskegee Institute. Young Barbara Ann's school mornings were led by recitation of "The Pledge of Allegiance" followed by singing both, "Lift Every Voice and Sing" and "The Star-Spangled Banner," respectively. Akin to Professor James A. Banks, Barbara Ann shared his perspective that their, "Black teachers taught [us] to be citizens of both the black community and of American society - without any focus on Brown or school desegregation." While in high school under Principal Paschal's leadership, Barbara Ann, and fellow classmates, such as longtime friend, Mrs. Danella Perkins Fogle (Johnny) were introduced to black excellence meeting Mary McLeod Bethune, The Harlem Globetrotters, Jesse Owens, and the likes of affinity ally, First Lady Eleanor Roosevelt. In 1959, Barbara Ann matriculated as Salutatorian from the all-black Robert Russa Moton High School in Marianna, AR.

Following high school, Barbara Ann earned a scholarship to attend the esteemed Spelman College in Atlanta, GA where she earned a B.S. degree in Biology (with honors) graduating alongside The Freedom Riders' Class of 1963. During a destined season, Barbara Ann married college sweetheart, Robert Lee (Bobby) Barber from Morehouse College in August of 1963. Through that union, three children were born at Southwest Hospital in Atlanta, GA; eldest, Yosef Zaccheus Barber (Joanne), Eastvale, CA; Jo-El Barber (deceased), and youngest, Yashica Robrelle Laeta Barber Douglas (Charles Jordan, Sr.), Atlanta, GA. Thereafter, Barbara Ann enrolled at Atlanta University (now, CAU) earning a M. Ed. in Science (with honors) in 1965. Maintaining her devout beliefs in education and educating others, Barbara Ann began teaching Biology and Physical Science at the fifth African American high school built in the Atlanta Public Schools District, formerly Luther Judson Price HS in the late 1960s. At Price HS, Barbara Ann met longtime family friends, Annette Huffman, SC'64 (Herman), Azira Gonzales Hill (Jesse, Jr.) and Pauline Baxter Washington (William, Sr.).



# Beautiful Memories



Destined for a lifetime, in November of 1979, Barbara Ann was betrothed to her beloved husband of 34 years, Civil Rights Attorney, Willie Leon Williams, Jr. at the Hillside International Truth Center, Inc., a New Thought, inclusive, healing ministry open to all people, headquartered in Atlanta, GA. In 1980, Barbara Ann, alongside her two children, Yosef and Yashica, relocated to W. L., Jr.'s hometown of Birmingham, AL to which a beautiful new family was born and subsequently flourished. Upon arrival in Birmingham, Barbara Ann began a career as the Science Education Director and Curator at The Red Mountain Museum. Developing enriching science curriculum for youth and curating various exhibits on the Native American Tribes indigenous to Birmingham, AL (Creeks, Cherokee, and Chickasaw), Barbara Ann trailblazed new, unchartered territories for the city's historic Red Mountain Museum.

After a successful career at Red Mountain Museum, Barbara Ann set her sights on civic community engagement and development, a true passion of her heart. Barbara Ann became a Community Resources Representative with the City of Birmingham to which she faithfully served part of the West and Southwest neighborhood and communities within the city. In this role, Barbara Ann worked alongside fellow CRR's, Alice Jones and Bill Conway. As a Community Resources Representative, Barbara Ann assisted neighbors in eliminating blight from within their communities. In this capacity, not only did she and Alice Jones help neighborhoods in need, collectively, they also assisted individuals within those neighborhoods going beyond the call of duty. Barbara Ann was a faithful and productive member of the Community Development Department through her retirement in December of 2006 after many years of service. Due to her resolute, tireless efforts on behalf of the West and Southwest neighborhood citizens, Barbara Ann was honored by the City of Birmingham with a Proclamation upon retirement.

Simultaneously while employed with the City of Birmingham, Barbara Ann furthered another passion of hers by becoming one of the founding members of The Academy of Fine Arts, Inc. Initially born as an offspring from the Cultural Arts Committee at Sixth Avenue Baptist Church, Barbara Ann became president of this notable non-profit organization designed to mentor youth in the community through the arts. Barbara Ann established a partnership with the Birmingham School System to allow interested, talented youth led by their dedicated art teachers to showcase their artistic talent during annual art showings held at the Birmingham Public Library. Over the span of 10 years, The Academy of Fine Arts, Inc. grew to include meaningful field trips throughout the year and summer drama camps for youth. Additionally, Barbara Ann coined and trademarked "Southern Roots," an avenue for seasoned artists from the South with extraordinary talent to present their unique pieces at annual exhibits bringing exposure and notoriety not only to the artists, but to AFA's youth artists and the City of Birmingham. Developing grants to fund The Academy of Fine Arts, Inc., Barbara Ann's vision was incredibly successful with showcases starting out in the libraries, advancing to the Birmingham Botanical Gardens, later culminating with Artists in Residence exhibiting their pieces housed at the Birmingham Civil Rights Institute for three months or more. Through her work with The Academy of Fine Arts, Inc., Barbara Ann sat on boards affiliated with the Birmingham Museum of Arts and The Arlington House, respectively. Barbara Ann's work spoke for her character, passion, dedication, talent, service, and her ultimate goal in life -- to help people advance through various means of faith, education, access, agency, culture, and exposure.

Barbara Ann B. Williams was a proud and faithful member of Sixth Avenue Baptist Church for over 50 years where she served as a Deaconess, Southside Matron, member of the SABC choir, Culinary Ministry, Cultural Arts Committee, an avid Sunday School participant and scholar, and various other capacities. Barbara Ann provided an annual scholarship to graduating high school seniors at SABC in honor of her late husband, Civil Rights Atty., W.L. Williams, Jr. As a lifelong member of the NAACP, Barbara Ann voiced and exercised her right to vote in every political election for the advancement of equal rights for all. A recipient of many awards received within her lifetime, Barbara Ann's mission was to encourage others, to serve, to uplift, to support causes, to dutifully pay her tithes and contribute to over 16 charitable organizations annually, and most of all -- to pray without ceasing, believing and trusting God without doubt.

Left to cherish her memory are her children, Yosef Z. Barber (Joanne) of Eastvale, CA and Yashica Barber Douglas of Atlanta, GA; adopted Birmingham daughters and sons, Vivian and Richard Drake, Jean and Grady Baker, and Karen Butler Hatcherson; adopted Atlanta son, Charles Jordan, Sr., sister-in-love, Joyce Jefferson Williams of Chatsworth, CA, sisters-in-Christ, Gwendolyn Cook-Bibb of Birmingham, AL, Deborah McCollum (Dr. William) of Birmingham, AL, Adeline Robles of Eastvale, CA, Pauline Baxter Washington of College Park, GA, Azira G. Hill of Atlanta, GA, Nancy Hill Cooke of Atlanta, GA, Brenda Owens of Birmingham, AL, Alice Jones of Birmingham, AL, Barbara Huntley (Dr. Horace) of Birmingham, AL, Willie Ruth Hill of South Carolina, Y. Clorie Robinson of Roswell, GA, Chatta G. Douglas of College Park, GA, Caroline Beal of Atlanta, GA, and Roberta Hampton of Buford, GA; grandchildren, Jamal Atofau-Barber of Seattle, WA, Quashana Atofau-Caskey (Robert) of Pasadena, CA, Asante Atofau of Seattle, WA, Emi Noelle Douglas of Decatur, GA, Ilan Charles-William Douglas of Riverdale, GA, Luqman, Shaulqan, Sumaeyah, Zaaryiah, and Ishmael Barber of Eastvale, CA; bonus grands, Chasley and Quen Daniel of Atlanta, GA, Jordan Pinkett of Decatur, GA, and Caiden, Kaleb and Kalil Robinson of Powder Springs, GA, great-grandchildren, Corie Barber Flynn of Indianapolis, IN, Hakeem Barber of Seattle, WA, Pharaoh Abdul-Hakeem Caskey and Robert Caskey, V of Pasadena, CA; nieces, Joy C. Williams, J.D., M.B.A. of Chatsworth, CA, Tamora Bursey Woods of Marianna, AR; great-nieces, Jada Sharda and Torrie Dukes of Marianna, AR; nephew, Lionel T. Williams, II of Hoover, AL, "cousin-son," Quan Adams (Cicely) of Chicago, IL; cousins, Charlette Anthony Lloyd of Memphis, TN, Rev. Chekibe A. Holman (Sy'reeta) of Athens, GA, Loneva Wolfolk of Las Vegas, NV, Jackie Skinner of Cleveland, OH, Atty. Mark and London Young of Cleveland, OH, Julius and Bettye Pleasance of Oklahoma City, OK, George Williams of Jackson, MS, Delores Crenshaw Singleton and Barbara Singleton of Atlanta, GA, Kim Burley (Patrice) of Knoxville, TN, Mia Burley (Sean) of Atlanta, GA, Kele Jordan (Antwon) of McDonough, GA, and a host of other relatives, loved ones and close friends.

# Order of Service

Piano Prelude .....	Mr. Byron Thomas
Processional .....	Ministers, Pallbearers, and Family
"Amazing Grace" (John Newton) .....	Mr. Julius Pleasance (Cousin), Harmonica
The Invocation .....	Dr. Reverend John L. Cantelow III, Senior Pastor
Scripture Reading .....	Dr. Reverend Roosevelt Morris, Congregational Minister
Old Testament.....	Psalms 91: 1-10
New Testament .....	1 Thessalonians 5: 12-18
Reflections .....	<i>Two Minutes, Please</i>
Education and Arts .....	Mrs. Deborah McCollum, Family Friend and Past Vice President The Academy of Fine Arts, Inc., "Southern Roots,™ African American Artists with Alabama Ties"
Community and Civic .....	Mr. Arron Jackson, President   Mason City Neighborhood Association City of Birmingham Proclamation by Mayor Randall Woodfin
Family and Loved Ones .....	Yosef Z. Barber, Yashica Barber Douglas, and Joy C. Williams, J.D., M.P.A.   Children and Niece
Church and Spirit.....	Reverend Yolanda McMillan, Congregational Minister   Sixth Avenue Baptist Church
"Come Jesus Come" (CeCe Winans) .....	Dr. Vickie Stokes, Soloist   SABC Choir
Eulogy.....	Mr. Ken Perry, Sunday School Instructor   Sixth Avenue Baptist Church
"His Eye Is on The Sparrow" (Mahalia Jackson) .....	Dr. Vickie Stokes, Soloist   SABC Choir
"Better Days" (Dianne Reeves ) .....	Mrs. Barbara B. Williams Memorial Montage
"The Spelman Hymn" (Eddy Money Shivery C'34) .....	The Birmingham Chapter, NAASC
<i>All Spelman Alumnae are invited to sing The Spelman Hymn (2nd version) in honor of Sister Barbara Ann Bursey Williams, C'63 as it is played by pianist, Mr. Byron Thomas</i>	
Pastoral Message.....	Dr. Reverend John L. Cantelow III, Senior Pastor
Final Commendation and Farewell .....	Dr. Reverend Roosevelt Morris, Congregational Minister
<i>(Read in Unison)</i> <i>Those who are in Christ are with the Lord, and the Lord has promised to be with all who trust in His Son, Jesus Christ. If they are with Him and He is with us, our loved ones cannot be far away. May Barbara B. Williams be at peace. She will forever be with the Lord and on the day of judgment hear God say, "Well done, my good and faithful servant." AMEN</i>	
Recessional .....	Reverend Yolanda McMillan, Congregational Minister "So Amazing" (Ricky Dillard and New Generation)

## Beautiful Memories

