



Mother Rita Coleta Davis

April 17, 1943 - June 22, 2019

"So also is the resurrection of the dead. It is sown in corruption; It is raised in incorruption: It is sown in dishonour; It is raised in glory: It is sown in weakness; It is raised in power: It is sown a natural body; It is raised a spiritual body. There is a natural body, and there is a spiritual body." I Corinthians 15:42-43

The war once brewing in my flesh between the forces of life and death- (the battle you must continue to fight), has finally ended for me in victory. Now I rest from all my labor to reward. My Witness is in heaven and my record will be there. The Providence of God is indeed a soft pillow.

Rita Coleta Davis, affectionately known as "Rita" was born the eldest child, April 17, 1943, to loving parents, Julian Johnson and Mabel Parker-Johnson of Washington, D.C., where she also attended grade school and in 1961 graduated from John Harris Senior High. She is preceded in death by her husband, Kenneth L. Davis and stepson, Eric Brian.

Even as a young single mother dedicated to raising her daughter, Sonya Palmer, in a well-rounded culturally diverse and spiritual home, (according to her upbringing), Ms. Davis could attest to the faithfulness of God. Even when times were tough, she and Sonya were never homeless or hungry.

In her early years, Rita employed administrative skills acquired in several private sector jobs. She was active in all the communities in which she resided. Domestically, she enjoyed holidays and other special events, even if it was just her and Sonya. Ms. Rita never failed to decorate her home for festive occasions, cooking a bounty of food, anxiously anticipating guest to arrive. Anyone who knew Rita, also knew that on Sunday it was all you cared to eat for her devoted and most cherished cousin, Charles "Butch" Stewart and a bunch of his rowdy friends to watch a day of football; die-heart Washington Redskins fans. Afterward, the evening usually ended with going to the Washington Coliseum to see the Washington Cats Roller Derby. She shared her love for music with all her company, never failing to buy the latest records. Billy Holiday's "The Sunny Side of the Street," was the first song she sang to her grandchildren instead of Patty Cakes. Her style for fashion in her younger years was second to none. Rita was an Orange Hats Neighborhood Coalition Volunteer Watch Captain, patrolling the streets of her community.

Finally, in 1991 Rita retired as the office manager for the practice of an orthopedic surgeon in Washington, D.C. so that she and the family could relocate to Harrisburg, Pennsylvania where she would be primary caretaker for her ailing mother who she refused to register in a nursing facility despite her mother's doctor's recommendation.

A worker by nature, upon settling in Harrisburg, Rita's activism continued in that community as well. She served on the Girl Scout Counsel of Harrisburg, Pennsylvania as an assistant leader on the Brownie and Junior levels, and as assistant summer travel camp leader and treasurer.

Grace, charm, beauty and sheer elegance form the encapsulated combination of sharp wit and awesome character this dear sweet lady possessed. She leapt right into all our hearts, embracing us in a kinship, an affinity, regardless of family barriers. The medicine and healing at the heart of this home going

service is a thought-provoking affirmation to the fact that there is a reality in serving the true and living God. It is both refreshing and appropriate to express kind and meaningful sentiments about someone's journey through life, especially when they obtained the salvation of their souls. This becomes a valuable use of time as it provides a sobering message that living in sin robs all of eternal peace, and that message is worth hearing. Rita obtained that salvation in this life so that the closing chapter in her life will not culminate in just another emotional moving mix of fallacy and haunting doom reserved for the wicked.

Ms. Davis, a self-proclaimed "Baptist for life," was introduced to Holiness through the acquaintance and marriage of her son-in-law, now pastor, Bishop Winston R. Palmer and his wife, her only daughter, First Lady Sonya Palmer. Once she moved to Harrisburg, Ms. Davis slowly began to establish a faithfulness to her son-in-law, daughter and their young ministry prior to ever accepting the right hand of fellowship as a member of the Bethuel Temple Churches of Christ Apostolic, No. 2. This, she did by frequently attending services and special events as well as with her financial support.

In multiple services that our late founder and apostle preached of which Ms. Rita was in attendance, Apostle Palmer prophesied directly to her in the presence of the entire congregation declaring, "Rita, if you keep hanging around all of this word, I am going to take you down (baptize you) in the name of Jesus Christ before long." A few years later, Ms. Rita acknowledged publicly that she wanted to be saved in a service during then, Elder Winston R. Palmer's Pastoral Anniversary in the month of February. Elder Palmer, although being her pastor, graciously relinquished his pastoral prerogative to his father and bishop, honoring the word of prophecy which came forth from his mouth. Ms. Davis, the new candidate, repented of her sins and subsequently baptized in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins

(according to Acts 2:38), and filled with the precious gift of the Holy Ghost as she went straightway out of the water, speaking with other tongues as the Spirit gave her utterance.

From that day forward as a new convert in Christ, Sister Rita Davis continued steadfast daily according to the apostles' doctrine. She became the first Church Mother of Bethuel Temple Church of Christ Apostolic, in Harrisburg, Pennsylvania, serving dutifully as a servant in good standing until her passing. She labored tirelessly in the vineyard; in any capacity she was asked to serve simply because she loved the Lord. She demonstrated selfless love for her church, family and community; and she always did it with a smile. Up until the time she was no longer physically able, she served Bethuel Temple well and told anyone that she was an avid lover of Sunday School and Bible Study. She held several offices in the church, namely, secretary/treasurer, Pastor's Aide president, Women's Auxiliary secretary and chairperson of the Birthday Club.

Typical of her acts of kindness, Mother Rita Davis, along with Mother Cheryl Wright and First Lady Sonya Palmer, in preparation for the annual Christmas programs, not only made bags of candy, fruit and other holiday treats for the children, but they made extra bags for their elderly neighbors and left them in their doorways to be found the following morning. You could sometimes hear her echoing the sentiment of the psalmist, "I was once young but now I'm old, yet have I not seen the righteous forsaken, nor His seed begging bread. (Psalm 37:25) Mother Davis enthusiastically says, "thank you Jesus for being there for me all the time, and though the task was often great and difficult, it was worth it all." She loved her family and until her passing, enjoyed her grandchildren and great grandchildren who constantly delighted her with cheer.

Mother Rita Davis heard the harmonious sounds of the clarion shrill calling her

to glory Saturday, June 22, 2019, and as family stood by her bedside our godly Mother of Pearl departed this life. While transitioning there was simultaneous gathering of angels heralding from God's habitation high above the cloud, "Lift up your heads O ye gates; heavenly host applaud the glorious majestic mystery of hastening beauty; usher the death of His saint with celestial heights and depths of love so true; Jesus Christ our Blessed Lord and Redeemer has rent the veil of suffering in two; losing the soul's Adamic curse from all human view as she enters her heavenly home awaiting Him eternal praises due."

Sonya, Winston, James, Darlene, grand and great grands, church, friends and loved ones, there has been so much turmoil in this mortal existence. The Lord has given my body, mind, soul and spirit sanctified rest. Sleep... not death, is now my temporary reward, where even dreams are forbidden companions, so don't worry about me. Let me rest, I'm finally at peace. Not another dark and disturbing night will you have to be awakened because of my twisting and shifting. I'll do no more stirring in "this" sleep- only effortless perfect rest. In my brief moment of affliction, I trust to have demonstrated an example of grace, patience and endurance.

The late morning before I took flight, the spirit of suffering and deliverance personified the pre-law patriarch, Job, within my spirit in the final moments of my life. Amidst that blissful transition, I was travailing in what Job and every believer's confidence is while departing this world. Did you hear my departing sentiments? Did you at least sense my farewell benediction? "Oh, that even "My words" were now written! Oh, that they were printed in a book! That they were graven with an iron pen and lead, in the rock forever! For "I know" that "My Redeemer" liveth, and that He shall stand at the latter day upon the earth: And though after "My skin worms" destroy "This body," yet in "My flesh" shall "I see" God: Whom "I shall see" for "Myself," and "Mine eyes shall behold," and not another; though "My reins" be consumed within "Me." (Job:19:23-27)

Mother Rita Davis leaves to cherish her memory and rejoice in the consummation of hope, her faithful daughter, Sonya Palmer of Harrisburg, Pennsylvania, whose living example helped lead her to Christ, the center and darling of her human existence. Baby, Momma gave wholeheartedly and freely all that I ever had to you. Your best friend is gone now but Jesus will never leave nor forsake you. Love Him first and love Him best. Your love battled to keep Momma alive, but God's prevailing love is beyond the glory of this world. Sonya, you were a good daughter to Momma and my greatest human joy in this world. I can't come back to you, but you can come to me. I'll see you on the other side.

Bishop Winston R. Palmer, my son-in-law and unique gift from God. You too helped lead me to Christ. You're a brilliant gem of many colors, a snappy but authentic voice, a faithful pastor, the best pastor I ever served under and wise counselor, a brave protector, good husband to my daughter, good father and grandfather to my grands and great grands; I say thank you. Just think, you will present me before the Lord. Fare ye well, I'll see you in the morning, Bishop.

Granddaughters, Krystin, Krystle, Krystina, Krystianna, Malikah and Grandsons, Kenny, Shawn and Trey and all your children, you were unquestionably beloved and cherished all the days of my life. What wonderful, poignant, witty, warm and delightful sweethearts with whom I shared so many memories and a great bond. All of your warm kisses and unforgettable hugs that comforted me, the many talks we had, the small, delicate hands you touch me with were so topically skillful at providing tender care that brought wellness back to me many, many times but finally took my breath away, literally, lol. Grandma loves you.

Mother Davis also leaves to honor her memory her stepson, James Philip Holton, Jr. (Harrisburg, Pennsylvania; her sister, Darlene Ferguson (Lawrenceville, Virginia) her beloved Bethuel Temple Church Family and a host of relatives and friends.

Previous Events

Flower Delivery

JUL 1. 8:30 AM - 9:00 AM (ET)

Faith Refuge Church of Christ
1016 N. 17th Street
Harrisburg, PA 17103

Viewing

JUL 1. 10:00 AM - 11:00 AM (ET)

Faith Refuge Church of Christ
1016 N. 17th Street
Harrisburg, PA 17103

Service

JUL 1. 11:00 AM (ET)

Faith Refuge Church of Christ
1016 N. 17th Street
Harrisburg, PA 17103