



Emma Louise Thornton

June 16, 1946 - May 22, 2023

Emma Louise Thornton (“Ms. Emma”) was called to her heavenly home to rest, on May 22, 2023, at 5:22 PM with Laurence (her son); Dr. LaRhonda Borum (her great niece); Joan Borum (niece); and two sisters -Ruth and Joyce Thornton- at her bedside. On June 16, 1946, Ms. Emma was born to the late Hamilton Garland and Lucile Harrod Thornton in York County, Virginia, Ms. Emma was the second to youngest of ten siblings, of which, she was preceded in death by Virgie Watkins, Gloria Tate, Hamilton Thornton, Delores Epps, and most recently, her eldest sister, Theresa Borum.

After graduation from James Weldon Johnson High School, Ms. Emma enrolled at Smith-Madden Business College in Richmond, Virginia. Shortly thereafter, on November 30, 1965, Ms. Emma enlisted into the United States Army as one of its now distinguished and historic Women of the Army Auxiliary Corps (WAAC) and entered the Vietnam War. On November 4, 2018, because of her honorable service with the WAAC, Ms. Emma had been recognized at the U.S. Army Women’s Museum in Camp Lee, Virginia.

While in training at Fort Benning, Georgia, she met Patrick Eugene Henderson. Such a torrid romance escalated that led to Mr. Henderson changing his orders from Washington, D.C. to reunite with Ms. Emma in Saigon (Vietnam). Later, they married on May 2, 1967. Six months later, their first and only child, Laurence Edward “Woody” Henderson was born. Fourteen

years later, on June 26, 1981, Ms. Emma would divorce amicably. In addition, and despite her divorce, Ms. Emma would always foster the healthy and sustaining relationship between her son and his father.

As a single mom, who had relocated to Washington, D.C., Ms. Emma enhanced her passion for cultural awareness, many times over. In turn, she would educate and expose young Woody to the multitude of cultural and theatrical venues of Washington, D.C. Meanwhile, always seeking to self-improvement, Ms. Emma enrolled at Federal City College (now the University for the District of Columbia) for general business administrative skills used to matriculate her tenure within the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission in Washington, D.C. where she retired her illustrious career after thirty-plus (30+) years of federal civilian service.

Ms. Emma was a loving and devoted mother, grandmother, sister, aunt, friend, and confidant. She is survived by her son, Woody; granddaughter, Peyton McKenzie Henderson, and her expected great grandson, Jaxson Reece; sisters, Retha Whitley, Joyce Thornton, who donated her kidney to Ms. Emma seventeen (17) years ago, and Ruth Thornton, whom she especially loved. She will surely be missed by a plethora of nieces, nephews, and cousins, and of course, her goddaughter, Essence Moore. Special thanks to Mr. Robert Andoh, who assisted Ms. Emma's mobility and independence during her latter years. In addition, special thanks to her former companion, Mr. Casper Sedgwick. So many others that should be included, but Ms. Emma loved everyone so equally that you would believe that you were her "favorite".

At an early age, Ms. Emma accepted Christ as her personal Lord and Savior and was an active lifelong member of Grafton Baptist Church, Harris Grove. There is no doubt that Ms. Emma loved her church family. Ms. Emma honored the Lord with her gifts and tithes as she selflessly served as a member of the Life Changing Church in Maryland and held the esteemed position as 'Mother

of the Church', an honor that her dearest mother Lucile Harrod Thornton also held. Ms. Emma aspired to be the true and living testimony of her faith and trust in God. Ms. Emma's legacy would have been for everyone to have an intimate relationship with the Lord and live accordingly. In her latter days, while afflicted in the hospital, Ms. Emma would echo continuously, "Holy Spirit, come for me!" Well done thy good and faithful servant. So, mote it be.

No words could adequately convey how much we all will miss her physical presence on earth, her resonating warm and loving smile, her candor and effervescent spirit, and her compassionate wisdom and joy for life. Her favorite words of encouragement to her son, and to others, were: "This too shall pass" and "Trust in God!"

On a personal note, as she was peacefully transitioning, a tear fell upon her face as she listened to "Shall Not Want" (as sung by Elevation Worship & Maverick City Music). This gospel group was among her favorites. Thank you for your kind words of condolences and prayers. A private military tribute with honors will be held on August 31, 2023, at Grafton Baptist Church, Harris Grove. No videotaping or photographing will be permitted. Interment of her cremated ashes to follow in the church's cemetery.