

Celebration of Life for
Gladys Adell Fowler (VanHook) Watson



Sunrise:
February 7, 1928

Sunset:
December 26, 2022

Service
December 30, 2022
12:00 Noon

West Durham Baptist Church
1901 Athens Avenue
Durham, NC 27707
Rev. Dr. LaMont J. Johnson, Sr. - Pastor

OBITUARY



On the early morning of December 26, 2022, angels from heaven gently accompanied Gladys Adell Fowler (VanHook) Watson on her journey to be with the Lord.

Her earthly journey began in Wayne County, NC in 1928. Governmental documentation during the era of segregation left a lot to be desired, thus, a life-long dispute was waged with officials as to whether February 7 or September 15 should be listed on her birth certificate. The latter became a part of the official record.

Gladys' parents were Ed Fowler and Lula Shadding Fowler. She moved to Durham at an early age to live with her aunt, Mamie Allen. Thus, Gladys attended Lyon Park Elementary School in Durham's famous West End community. She enjoyed being a member of the Class of 1949 at Hillside High School. Later, Gladys earned another diploma from Lincoln Academy High School.

Although she was living in Durham, Gladys stayed connected with her family in Goldsboro and Wayne County. She prized her family members and her roots in Eastern North Carolina.

At an early age and under the influence of her neighbors, Earl and Rosa Artis, Gladys joined West Durham Baptist Church, which was in the Brookstown section of Durham. She was enormously proud to have been baptized by Rev. T.C. Graham, who was a long-term pastor of that congregation.

During her early adulthood, Gladys met and married Walter Clarence VanHook, who had been reared in the Bahama community in northern Durham County and who was a veteran of the Second World War. From this marriage, two children were born, Otto Wagner VanHook and Greta Harriette VanHook.

Gladys embarked on a long and fruitful career in health care at McPherson's Eye, Ear, Nose, & Throat Hospital. Although her marriage to Clarence VanHook ended in divorce, Gladys was always proud of the wonderful mutual relationship that she maintained with the VanHook family. To this day, Gladys is gloriously referred to as "Aunt Mae." She continued to be invited to BBC reunions of that family.

In 1979, Gladys married Willie (Bill) Watson and moved to Glenarden, Maryland, which is a suburb of Washington, DC. This was new and unfamiliar territory, but she quickly adapted and became an integral part of that community. Gladys continued her career in health care and worked at the George Washington University Hospital.

Gladys joined her husband's church and became an active choir member of Washington's First Rising Mt. Zion Baptist Church. Her voice was an important part of the Senior Choir of that church, which performed at many religious and political events in the nation's capital.

Upon the passing of Bill Watson in 2007, Gladys returned to Durham and re-affiliated with West Durham Baptist, where she worked with the Mature Members Ministry, the Pastoral Support Ministry, and the Adult Women's Sunday School class.

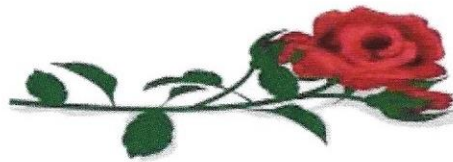
She also was an active member of the National Council of Negro Women and the W.D. Hill Senior Citizens Council.

Throughout her adult life, Gladys was affiliated with the Order of the Eastern Star, the Golden Circle and the Daughters of Zafa Temple.

Gladys is survived by her children, Otto Wagner VanHook (Rachel) and Harriette VanHook Davis (Eddie). She has two grandchildren, Christopher H.R. Taylor (Ketha) and Jessica C.A. Taylor Williams (Glenn). She also had a special granddaughter, Frankie Boxley Cozart.

In addition, Gladys has several great-grandchildren: Nykoia Brewington Taylor, Keenan St. Clair, Alabi Orisadele, Isaiah Newton, Lola Williams, and Langston Williams.

Gladys is also survived by a host of cousins and other relatives in Durham, Goldsboro, Washington, and beyond, including Jean Fowler and Alease Fields.

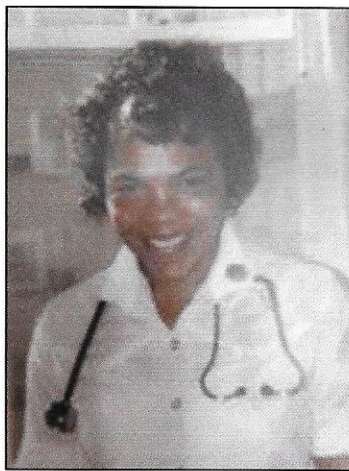


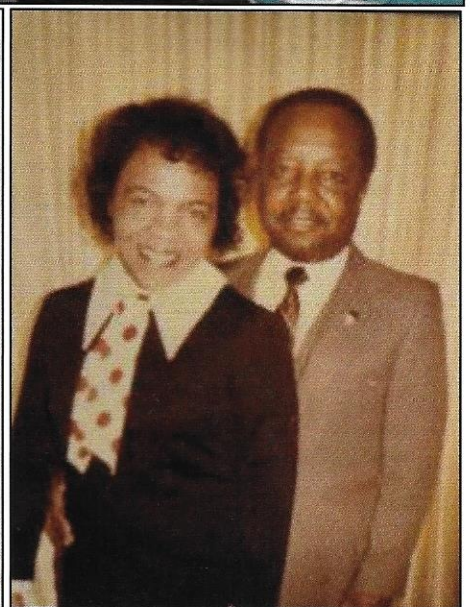
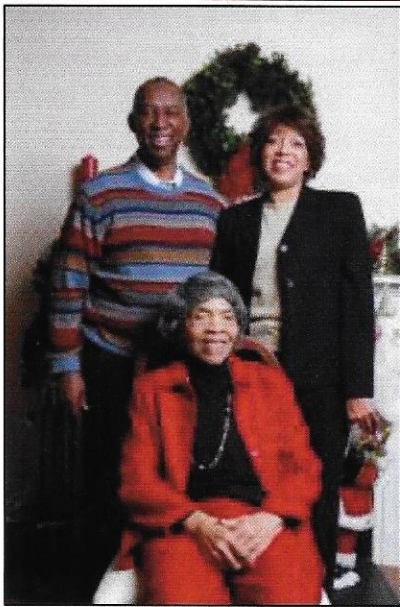
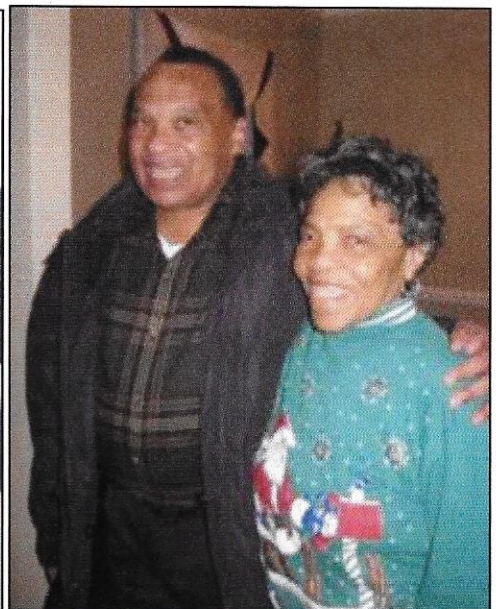
Farewell Dear Mama

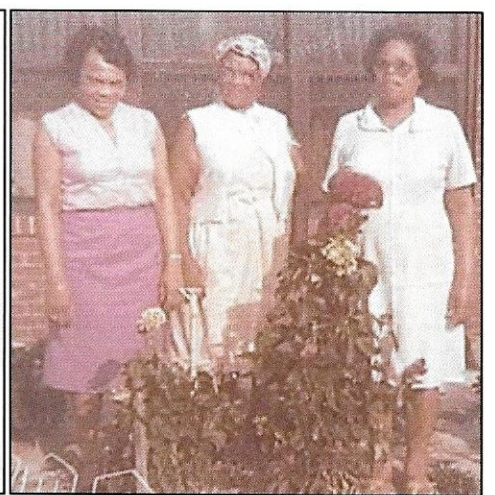
By an Unknown Author

*Somewhere in my heart beneath all my grief and pain,
Is a smile I still wear at the sound of your dear name.
The precious word is 'Mama', she was my world you see,
But now my heart is breaking cause she's no longer here with me.
God chose her for His angel to watch me from above,
To guide me and advise me and know that I'm still loved.
The day she had to leave me when her life on earth was through,
God had better plans for her, for this, I surely knew.
When I think of her kind heart and all those loving years,
My memories surround me and I can't hold back the tears.
She truly was my best friend, someone I could confide in,
She always had a tender touch and a warm and gentle grin.
I want to thank you Mama for teaching me so well,
And though the time has come that I must bid you this farewell.
I'll remember all you've taught me and make you proud you'll see.
Thank you my Dear Mama for all the love you showed me.
Although you have left this earth and now you have taken flight,
I know that you are here with me each morning, noon and night.*

*With Love,
Otto and Harriette*







Active Pallbearers and Floral Bearers
Nephews and nieces

Honorary Pallbearers and Floral Bearers
Sons, daughters, and grands of Ernest and Blanche VanHook Mangum
Pastoral Support Ministry
Martha E. Graham Sunday School Class



EXPRESSIONS OF GRATITUDE

Transitions Hospice & Staff, thank you for your dedication, compassion, and care.

To Chaplain Brent, CNAs (Isabel, Pat, and Liz), Nurses (both Sarahs, Teri, and Stacy) and Social Workers (Katie and Suzanne). You showed our Mom respect, love and care. Thank you for going above and beyond to bring joy, and enrichment in her later years.

We are sincerely grateful for the outpouring of support shown by our church family, friends and relatives. We thank you for each personal visit, phone call, word of encouragement, and prayer of comfort. There were many times we needed you for strength, and you were there.

OUR MOTHER AND GRANDMOTHER

You were a precious gift from God above,
so much beauty, grace and love.
You touched our hearts in so many ways,
your smile so bright even on the bad days.
You heard God's whisper calling you home,
you didn't want to go and leave us alone.
You loved us so much, you held on tight,
till all the strength was gone and you could no longer fight.
So you gave your hand to God and slowly drifted away,
knowing that with our love we will be together again someday.

Love you so much,
Otto, Harriette, grandchildren, and great-grandchildren



FINAL ARRANGEMENTS ENTRUSTED TO
Scarborough and Hargett Celebration of Life Center - 309 North Queen Street | Durham, NC 27701

INTERMENT
Beechwood Cemetery - 3300 Fayetteville Street | Durham, NC 27707