

Bernice
White Byrd

Homegoing Celebration

*Forever in Our Hearts ~
Remembered Always With Love*



Bernice White Byrd

September 5, 1938

March 28, 2025

Shady Grove Baptist Church

21024 Piney Woods Road | Orange, Virginia

April 17, 2025 | 12:00 PM

Elder Derrick Barbour | Officiant & Eulogist

Rev. Joseph Moore | Pastor

Obituary

Bernice White Byrd
September 5, 1938 – March 28, 2025

Bernice White Byrd entered into eternal rest unexpectedly on March 28, 2025, in Washington, DC. She was born on September 5, 1938, in Orange, Virginia, to the late Elizabeth Coleman White and Gilford White, Sr. As the fifth of nine children, Bernice was raised with strong family values. Her large extended family—siblings, aunts, uncles, cousins, and grandparents—deeply shaped her life. With sisters spaced five years above and below her, she grew up closest to her brothers, who were among her best friends.

Faith and Church Involvement

Bernice was baptized at a young age at Shady Grove Baptist Church in Orange, Virginia. After relocating to Washington, DC, she connected to churches tied to her family, joining First Rising Mount Zion Baptist Church in 1971. In 2012, she became a founding member of Spirit of Love and Deliverance (SOLAD) Baptist Church alongside her daughter and granddaughters. She also regularly visited New Hope Baptist Church. Bernice began each day reading the Bible and Our Daily Bread devotional, attended weekly Zoom Bible studies, and attended annual homecoming services at Shady Grove Baptist Church, Orange Grove Baptist Church, Little Mine Road Baptist Church, and First Rising Mount Zion Baptist Church.

Education and Career

Bernice skipped the second grade at Lightfoot Elementary and graduated from George Washington Carver Regional High School at just 15 years old in 1954. After graduation she attended a vocational school associated with Jennie Dean called the Manassas Industrial School for Colored Youth. She worked assorted jobs babysitting and cleaning before joining the U.S. Patent and Trademark Office in 1966. There she advanced through roles as Clerk Typist, Application Clerk, Supervisory Patent Assistant, and Team Leader. She earned Bronze Awards from the Department of Commerce in 1983 and 1993 and retired in 1994. After retirement, she volunteered to “read to seniors,” worked briefly for her brother’s company, Ultra Technologies, and later at Dalinkwent Wear, owned by her son Lydell. She also prepared taxes from her thirties until age 85.

Family Life

Bernice married James Edward Byrd in 1957. They had four children: Tony, Terri, Danita, and Lydell. Much of her parenting journey was as a single mother, relying on her strong will and support from extended family. She strongly emphasized the need to develop necessary, viable life and work skills and provided whatever support and encouragement that was needed for them to achieve. She made difficult choices and worked hard to give her children every opportunity. She was proud to attend the college graduations of all four of her children and many grandchildren.

Her children, grandchildren, great-grandchildren brought her immense joy. She supported them generously with savings bonds, cash, tuition, and assistance with purchasing vehicles and/or homes. Visits from her great-grandchildren lifted her spirits like nothing else, no matter how much pain she was in. She greeted them with hugs, kisses, and offered candy (according to Julius) her favorite snacks—peanut butter crackers, graham crackers, PB&Js, hot dogs, beans, applesauce, and even her coveted bananas (which she had to have every morning). When she ran out, someone had to make a banana run—immediately!

Hobbies and Interests

Bernice created lasting memories through family outings—fishing trips, horse races, amusement parks, and road trips. She especially loved visits to her hometown of Orange, Virginia. As her children grew, she traveled more—taking cruises, cross-country train rides, and vacationing often. When longer trips became difficult, she still made time for Atlantic City casinos – and enjoyed the Temptations Christmas concert at MGM in December.

She loved listening to great gospel and R&B music, watching Family Feud, Wheel of Fortune, and Maury Povich, and completing the daily Washington Post puzzle in ink well into her eighties. While she eventually suspended her long-time participation as a regular member of Iverson Mall Walkers in Hillcrest Heights and a local gym as her pain worsened, for over 30 years, she continued to play bid whist at Hillcrest Heights Community Center in Oxon Hill, Maryland — one of her final enjoyments before surgery.

Resilience and Independence

From childhood, Bernice faced medical challenges that taught her to live with pain. Despite this, she remained independent—handling her own affairs and overseeing home maintenance into her eighties, most recently arranging for the installation of a brand new exterior chair lift less than two weeks before her surgery. In 1972, she secured her home at a time when women weren't allowed to obtain mortgages in their own names. She paid it off early and stayed there for the rest of her life.

Bernice was known for her sharp memory, financial discipline, and witty honesty. Though she described herself as shy, she loved to talk and was known in the family as “Telephone, Telegraph, and Tell Bernice.” During her final week, she talked on the phone to many loved ones—adding to the shock of her sudden passing.

Her home was always open—to family, friends, musicians, and even Howard University students over the years. While she didn't always offer cookies, she offered presence, perspective, and a place where everyone felt they belonged.

Legacy

Bernice was preceded in death by her parents; brothers Gilford Jr. “BayBoy”, Robert, and Isaiah White; and sister Lucille White Carter.

She is survived by her four children: Anthony “Tony” Byrd, Teryl “Terri Byrd” West (Billy), Danita Byrd, and Aaron Lydell Byrd, Sr. (Bridgette)

Thirteen grandchildren: Lakeesha Wilson, Danisha Byrd, Anthony De’Ron Byrd Sr. (Jakara), Steven Byrd Sr. (Gazzet), Danika Byrd Gaskins (Javin), Dionne West, Ralph Maddox-Byrd, Nicole West, Aaron Lydell Byrd Jr. (Ashia), Marsha Maddox-Byrd, Cynthia Maddox-Byrd, Charles Maddox-Byrd (Jennifer), and Byron Ford (Yasmine)

Seventeen great-grandchildren: Kierra Wilson-Walker, Kayla Walker, Brizhane’ Nicole Byrd, Aniyah Denay Byrd, Kameryn Byrd, Anthony “AJ” De’Ron Byrd Jr., Ayden Isaiah Byrd, Steven Byrd Jr., Jonah West-Ramirez, Zara Johnson, Ivy Johnson, Gianna Gaskins, Jonathan Nelson, Madison Maddox-Byrd, Julius Byrd, Nyela Ford, and Madison Ford

Siblings: Elizabeth Campbell, Arlene Stanard (Vanwarden), Beauford White, and Edward White Sr. (Dianne)

Other cherished relationships beyond immediate family marked by mutual respect, love, and enduring connection: Velma Eddings and Gisela “Oma” West, along with Kenyatta, Penda, Jelani, Azizi, Oludae, and Mapenzi Byrd

Her life and memory will also live on through many nieces, nephews, cousins, friends, and church family members.



Order of Service



Elder Derrick Barbour, Officiant
New Hope Baptist Church

Prelude	Musicians
Processional	
Praise and Worship	<i>This is the Day</i> Twana Hill-Ellis
Call to Worship	Elder Derrick Barbour, Officiant New Hope Baptist Church
Old Testament	Zara Johnson
New Testament	Ivy Johnson
Prayer of Comfort	Bishop Robert White New Hope Baptist Church
Congregational Hymn	<i>What a Fellowship</i> Twana Hill-Ellis
Pastoral Acknowledgements	Rev. Joseph Moore Shady Grove Baptist Church
	Pastor Raymond Bell Spirit of Love and Deliverance (SOLAD) Baptist Church
Musical Selection	<i>The Blood Will Never Lose Its Power</i> Rev. Roland T. White, Associate Minister First Rising Mt. Zion Baptist Church
Remembrances of Love	The Family of Bernice White Byrd
Reflections and Tributes <i>Not to exceed two minutes</i>	Diane Johnson-Seaton
Acknowledgements (Cards and Letters)	Barbara Jordan, Church Clerk SOLAD
Musical Selections	<i>Amazing Grace / Your Grace and Mercy</i> Twana Hill-Ellis
Obituary (read silently)	
Musical Selection	<i>Total Praise</i> Twana Hill-Ellis
Eulogy	Elder Derrick Barbour
Benediction	Elder Anntoinette Barbour New Hope Baptist Church
Recessional	<i>Going Up Yonder</i> Twana Hill-Ellis
Postlude	<i>Musicians</i>

Reflections

When I was around four or five, I remember Grandma dressing well and wearing nice outfits. She also got her hair done on a regular basis. One day she showed up with red hair, which scared me. Clowns had red hair, and I found clowns creepy. So naturally, I connected the dots: red hair is creepy! One day we were at my grandmother's house, and my mother wanted to wash My hair in My grandmother's sink. I completely freaked out. I'm like "NOOOO! MY HAIR IS GOING TO TURN RED!!!" I just knew my grandmother's hair was that color because of the water she used to wash it from her faucets. I mean, what else could explain that kind of transformation? Faucet dye was the only logical answer. My grandmother never dyed her hair again. Coincidence? I think not. The pipes had spoken. – Danisha

When you gained your heavenly wings and GOD took you home, I had so many mixed emotions—sadness, loneliness, emptiness, and a void. You were like a second mother to me, and losing a special friend like you brings deep sorrow to my heart. However, the wonderful memories live on: your beautiful smile, kindness, and giving heart; your Sunday visits and overnight stays; our phone calls, two or three times a day; and all the fun times we shared will live on as a legacy of love that I will always cherish. I know you're watching over me—until we meet again. – Your loving daughter-in-law, Bridgette

When I think of Aunt Bernice, so many things come to mind, but the one that stands out most is that she told you the truth, no matter what. On top of that, her mind was so sharp she could remember details from any year. She was a wealth of knowledge and would tell me family stories I had never heard before. – Natasha White Hill

Bernice's father, Gilford, and my mother, Bertha, were brother and sister, making us first cousins. We were good friends, growing up just a country hill apart in Orange, Virginia. As we got older, we would often talk by phone and see each other at reunions and family celebrations. Bernice never forgot anyone's birthday, and I still remember attending several of her birthday parties with her children and grandchildren and had a great time at her 80th birthday celebration. Many blessings to her and her family. I will miss her dearly. . – Florence Daniel Bias

Bernice and I grew up together, and we had so many fond memories. She will be greatly missed. – Love Pot ❤️

Although my sister Peggy and Bernice had been friends for years, I didn't meet Bernice until I was 12. When I was 16, she taught me how to do and understand the income tax process, which influenced me in obtaining my accounting degree and pursuing a long career in finance. For that alone, she became and will always be my hero and a virtuous woman! Rest in sweet peace, my dear Lady. – Debbie Rose Beasley

Sweet, Caring, Cheerful, and Loving. These are a few of the words that describe Ma/Grandma Bernice. On multiple occasions, when we needed a place to stay, she invited us into her home. She welcomed our family to her table and fed us when we were hungry. She accepted us, gifted us, called to check on us, and loved us unconditionally. Although we did not descend from her womb, she loved us like her own. For over 25 years, she was our mother, grandmother, teacher, and a friend. We thank God for her life and for the positive impact she made on ours. – Penda, Azizi, Oludae, and Mapenzi





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Pallbearers

Aaron L Byrd II
Anthony De’Ron Byrd, Sr.
Steven. L. Byrd

Byron Ford
Matthew White
Charles Maddox-Byrd

Honorary Pallbearers

Thomas Blichard
Michael Carter
Matthew Shirley

Cameron Stanard
Van Stanard
Edward Guilford White, Jr.

Blessed by Your Kindness

Out of deep love for our mother—and your grandmother, sister, aunt, cousin, and friend—you each showed up, offering your time, care, and strength. In our time of sorrow, your love, prayers, and presence have lifted us. As Bernice’s kids, your kind words, meals, visits, calls, and heartfelt gestures reminded us just how deeply our mother was loved—and how deeply we are loved in return. She will be forever in our hearts and remembered always with love.

A gentle light, a steady hand,
A quiet word we understand.
You stood with us when days were dim—
We felt your grace because of them.

We are especially grateful to our cousin Cynthia and sister-in-law and wife, Bridgette, for your unwavering support, thoughtfulness, and care. A special thanks go out to our aunts and uncles who lost their sister and still managed to fully and patiently support us through this process. We are also deeply grateful to her neighbors, Russell Young and Denise Bolding, who watched over our mother when we could not be there. Your presence has been a true blessing to our family. Thank you for walking beside us, lifting us, and helping us honor a life so fully lived.

With Love, Tony, Terri, Danita, and Lydell & Our Kids
www.BerniceWhiteByrd.com

Interment

Shady Grove Baptist Church Cemetery

Repast

Immediately following the service in the Church Dining Hall

Final Arrangements Entrusted To:

DD Watson Mortician
117 West Street | Louisa, VA 23093