

Homegoing Celebration
In Loving
Memory of



Mrs. Edna Bennett Thornton

Sunrise

March 28, 1933

Sunset

May 15, 2016

SERVICE

Saturday ~ May 21, 2016

12 Noon

Mt. Calvary Missionary Baptist Church

27 Girtman Street

Hazlehurst, Georgia

Reverend Jamie Jackson ~ Presiding
Pastor Reuben Bennett, Jr. ~ Eulogist

Memories of Edna



To Our Beloved Mother

Jesus said "ye are the light of the world. A city that is set on a hill cannot be hid. Neither do men light a candle and put it under a bushel, but on a candle stick; and it giveth light unto all that are in the house. Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father which is in heaven."

~ (Matthew 5: 14-16)~

Our Hearts are real heavy today as our protector, counselor, leader, peacemaker, educator, comforter, chef, and friend leaves us behind to enter her spiritual home. Mom, this is so very hard and we could never be prepared to live our lives without you.

Mom, please know that we could not have asked God for a greater mother, because when he made you he made the best. You were front and center for our births, marriages, graduations, promotions, and celebrations. You traveled around the world to be present in our lives.

Mom, you were never selfish with your time and support. You always had time to write a paper, create a poem, bake a cake, fill out a form, or share a family story.

Mom, your greatest gift to us was allowing us to spend time with you. The time spent with you bought us great joy when you were 30 years old, 50 years old, and 83 years old.

Your words, smile, and joy bought great peace and guidance to us.

Mom, we will continue to walk through life in a way that will display your love, professionalism, spiritual and caring guidance.

Mom we are going to grieve for you, cry for you and miss you like no other, but as we told you as we said good-bye, we know you were tired and you fought so hard to be here for us. We will lead the lives you prepared us to lead. We will take care of your grandchildren and great-grandchildren with the same spirit you took care of us.

You prepared us for life without you.

Mom, our great God decided to bring you home with Him.

You are now with Dad, Granddad, and Grandmother.

Mom, we thank God for giving you to us.

Our Mother, Our Queen, Rest in peace.

Your Children,

Renee, Eric & Sharon





Order of Service

Reverend Jamie Jackson, Presiding

- Musical Prelude Combined
- Processional Ministers and Family
- Prayer of Comfort Reverend Henry Josey
- Solo Ms. Matter Parker
- Scripture Readings
 - Old Testament Reverend C. D. Johnson
 - New Testament Reverend Betty Thomas
- Selection The Benjamin Family
- Reflections of Love **Please limit to 2 minutes**
 - As a Church Member ~ Mr. Calvin Kornegay, Jr.
 - As a Teacher ~ Mr. Steve Kurtz
 - As a Friend ~ Mrs. Mary Anna McMillian
 - As a Neighbor ~ Mr. Glenn Harris
 - Family and Friends
- Selection The Benjamin Family
- Special Tributes The Grandchildren
- Solo "I'm Free" ~ Ms. Anna Patterson
- Resolution and Acknowledgements Mrs. Elizabeth Brown
- Solo "I'm Coming Lord" ~ Mr. Reginald Kornegay
- Words of Comfort Pastor Reuben Bennett, Jr.
- Processional and Final Glance Family and Friends

Precious Memories



*Take nothing for granted, For whenever you do
The joy of enjoying is lessened for you-
For we rob our own lives
much more than we know
When we fail to respond or in any way show
Our thanks for the blessings
That daily are ours-*



*The warmth of the sun, the fragrance of flowers,
The beauty of twilight, the freshness of dawn,
The coolness of dew on a green velvet lawn,
The kind little deeds, so thoughtfully done,
The favors of friends
and the love that someone
Unselfishly gives us in
a myriad of ways,
Expecting no payment
And no words of praise.
Oh, great is our loss
when we no longer find
A thankful response
To things of this kind,
For the joy of enjoying,
And the fullness of living,
Are found in the heart
That is filled with thanksgiving*



By: Helen Steiner Rice



Life Reflections for

Mrs. Edna Mae Bennett Thornton



Edna Mae Thornton was born March 28, 1933 in Telfair County Georgia to the late Charlie Spencer and Mattie Lou Huff Bennett. She was raised in a large family the second child of 15 children. She joined Frances Chapel Baptist Church at an early age.

Edna received her Elementary and High School education through the Wheeler County and Telfair County School Systems where she graduated Valedictorian from Twin City High School in 1951. After spending a year working in New York, she entered Spelman College in Atlanta in 1952. She graduated from Spelman in 1956 with a Bachelor of Arts Degree in Social Sciences and a minor in History. Because she wanted to teach, she continued college receiving certifications to teach elementary grades one through eight, and high school grades nine through twelve. Edna taught school for thirty-seven years and retired in 1995.

Edna married Milton Thornton March 3, 1958 and they celebrated 55 years of marriage until his death in 2013. To this union three children were born: Sonja, Eric and Sharon.

Edna traveled to many countries, including three months in India as a Fulbright Scholar. She has also been to many states throughout the United States. Desiring to have her family worship together in the same church, Edna joined the St. James A.M.E. Church in Hazlehurst under the leadership of Reverend Cooper. Her husband was already a member there at the time she joined. She held several positions in the church and on the Waycross District, including Sunday School teacher, Young People Department Director, Missionary President, Usher Ministry President, Steward Board Member, and member of the Layman organization. She was also a member of the Waycross District Chair, and a delegate to the Layman Convention in Ohio in 1975. In her community, she was a member of the library board, Retired Educators Association and Chairman of Hazlehurst's Community Recreational Board.

Edna received many awards during her lifetime. In 1977, she received the Missionary Appointments to the Office of the Supervisor of the Waycross District by Bishop H. I. Bearden. She also was awarded a service award in 1985 for contributions to Happy Land and the Senior Citizens Award from the House of God Church for outstanding community service. In 1995, she received an award honoring her for her efforts in, "service to education and enriching of the lives of students in Jeff Davis County." In 2001, Altamaha Technical College selected her as Jeff Davis County Retired Educator of the Year, for her dedication to education, contribution to community, and commitment to public service. She was also given a certificate of appreciation by the Retired Educators Association for "Loyal and Dedicated Service." In February of 2007, she was recognized for tireless enthusiasm, dedication, and hard work to St. James A.M.E. by Reverend Mathis and the Young People Department.

On May 15, 2016, God called Edna's name and welcomed her into Eternal Glory. We know God is too wise to make a mistake and you have found comfort and peace. God's Word tells us if you give to His people, He will give to you abundantly. We know you are in Heaven, a place filled with joy, jewels and riches ... no sickness or suffering.

She was preceded in death by her mother and father, husband – Milton Thornton, Brothers – Walter Bennett and Deroy Bennett, Sisters – Charlene Briggs and Mattie Travis.

Loving memories of Mrs. Edna will be cherished by:

Three children: Sonja Renee Hall (Harry) of Lorton, VA.; Eric Kenneth Thornton (Monea) of Sugarhill, GA. and Sharon T. Lias (Joseph) of Sanford, FL.

Ten Grandchildren: Eric M. Hall (Makeda) of Fort Belvoir, VA, Talia S. Thornton of Atlanta, GA, Brittany C. Anderson (Andrew) of Auburn, AL, Leslie M. Thornton of Atlanta, GA, Cedric T. Hall of Alexandria, VA, Joseph L. Lias III of Ft. Leonardwood, MO, Jaylan M. Lias of Sanford, FL, Sydney Renee Lias of Sanford, FL, Emani M. Thornton of Sugarhill, GA and Roosevelt Martin III of Sugarhill, GA.

Four Great-Grandchildren: Mariah Hall, London Love, Meliah Hall, and Logan Chase.

Sisters: Ernestine Balkcom of Hazlehurst, GA, Olivia Gadson of Jacksonville, FL, Amy Kornegay (Quincy) of Hazlehurst, GA, Mary Cook, Janet Johnson, Valoria Bennett, all of Jacksonville, FL.

Brothers: Charlie Bennett Jr. (Dale), Reuben Bennett, Sr., Jim Bennett all of Hazlehurst, GA and Ray Bennett of Jacksonville, FL

Special Nieces and Nephews: Shanee Williams of Jacksonville, GA, Geraldine Cue of Hazlehurst, GA, Marie A. Collier of Albany, GA, Jerrell Briggs of Hazlehurst, GA, Winfred Bennett of Jacksonville, FL and Javon Miles of Tallahassee, FL.

Special Cousins: Doris Pitts of Jacksonville, FL and Dorothy Harleston of Hazlehurst, GA, **and a host of nieces, nephews, cousins and friends.**



Memories of Grandma Edna

Mama Edna,

*You never get enough time with the ones that you love,
When they leave its like your heart flies away on the wings of a dove
With memories of their smile and laugh on your ears
And in your eyes the glistening of those sad tears
Even though you know you will see them again
It doesn't make it any easier because you know not when.
The fear of the unknown is what makes it so hard
You don't know how you'll go on, you don't know where to start
They tell you from the Heavens, you will see them again
They have joined the army of our Father, and they are in it to win
You will never forget, even though time heals all wounds
Our friend, our loved one, who we will see again soon.
Grandson ~ LTC Eric M. Hall*



We had a wonderful Great -Grandma, she truly broke the mold.
Her smile was made of sunshine, and her heart was solid gold.
Her eyes were as bright as shining stars, with rings of clear sky blue.
We had a wonderful Great-Grandma, and this we know is true.
She shared with us her nursery rhymes, songs, and riddles too.
She showered us with her kisses, hugs, and "I love yous".
And while we did not know her for as long as some of you;
We had a wonderful Great-Grandma, and this we know is true.

Now she's gone to Heaven, far above the clouds.
But we will always love her and promise to make her proud.

With love for our Grandma Edna,
Mariah, London, Maliah, Logan

Precious Memories of Grandma

Edna Mae

She liked to dress in her Sunday best,
With a wide –brimmed hat to match her dress.
Her shoes and clutch coordinated too,
That's how Edna Mae would do.

If the family had any cause for celebration,
She was in attendance with dedication.
How she enjoyed a nice brunch, party, and tea.
Edna Mae was as classy as she could be.

Her loved ones to her meant the most,
She used the Jeff Davis Ledger to brag and boast.
She always had wisdom to share and impart,
Edna Mae was an educator deep at heart.

She liked crossword puzzles, and reading poetry and rhymes.
She collected all the state spoons, and dolls of every kind.

But nothing ever brought her more joy, than fellowship and family time.

Bennett Family Reunion time, or with any cause,
She would throw down in that kitchen.
Strawberry cakes, mac & cheese, and a roast duck
With all the fixings.

It didn't matter if you were just passing through,
Or in town for any length of stay.
She would feed you and have your stomach tight,
In the very best way.

Now that she has left us,
There is no question where she went.
We know she was always heaven-bound,
Because she loved God and was first heaven-sent.

She can rest peacefully with her mom and husband,
No more pain, toil, or labor.
For to be absent from the body,
Is to be present with our savior.

She was a mom, sister, aunt, cousin,
A friend and a grandmother.
That was Edna Mae,
And there will never be another.

With Love ~ Brittany



Our Sister



Lord we know taking your angel Edna was not a surprise to You, but it caught us off guard. We thank You for the time you let us have her here with us. We also thank You for the promise that You can bring good out of every situation even the ones that seem to be unbearable to us. Lord help us to trust You to see us through. Our sister was a gift to us from God. The kind of sister who brought Life wherever she went. She would brighten up the room and encourage everyone in it. She was always ready to give a hug, or a smile, just when you needed it most.

*We love you always
and we will miss you dearly,*





Active Pallbearers

Nephews and Grandsons

Honorary Pallbearers

Deacons and Stewards of Various Churches

Flower Attendants

Nieces and Granddaughters

Acknowledgements

When death occurs, family and friends gather to celebrate a life that was lived and shared the sorrow that is present. Often times, it is difficult to one's emotions to accept the loss of a love one. The loss of our beloved Mother, Sister, Grandmother, Auntie and friend will place a permanent void in our lives. But, only with the help of our Lord we will continue on with your continued love and support.

The Thornton Family is deeply grateful: For the golden words of consolation from the ministers; for your participation attendance at this worship service celebrating the life of our loved one; For those wonderful people who used their skills to prepare nourishments to refresh our weary bodies; For countless gifts of flowers and messages of sympathy; And for intangible things, unutterable in speech or language.

We have been enriched by your friendship and strengthened by your love. We appreciate each sympathy gesture that has served as a source of comfort. May the peace of the Lord always be with you.

Special Thanks:

We would like to thank the Doctors, Nurses, Critical Care team, and staff of the Vascular Intensive Care Unit at Florida Hospital South Orlando , Florida.

Interment

*Hazlehurst Memorial Cemetery
Hazlehurst, Georgia*

Repast

*Charlie S. Bennett Building
315 Hallspur Road
Hazlehurst, Georgia*

Video presentation of loving memories of our beloved mother, grandmother, great grandmother, sister, auntie, and friend by Cedric T. Hall (grandson).

Thornton's Funeral Home



*26 North Miller Street
Hazlehurst, GA 31539
912.375.2654*

*James B. Melton, Mortician
Serving Since 1925*

"Let the service we render speak for us"



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912.367.9464*



*The old saying goes "Hats Off to You"
But today I decided to wear this hat in tribute to you
Because you were a woman of beauty, style and grace
Always poised and dignified, no matter the time nor place
I put on some gloves and some smell good too
Because that's what you taught me that a lady should do
You see I was listening to what you would say
About having class and behaving in the proper way
You told me the correct way to sit and sip my tea
And to never reach across the table but say, "Please pass me"
You showed me how to set a table and to serve the food
Where to place my napkin and which fork I should choose
You taught me that a lady should be very smart,
Well read, full of knowledge and appreciative of art
So you took me to libraries, museums, concerts, and plays
You helped mold and shape me in so many ways
You see I watched you, how you would take the time to dress
How you carefully chose the lipstick that matched your clothes the best
I saw how you were always willing to try something new
And there was never a trip to be taken that was too far for you
I saw your willingness to share all that you knew
And the way you encouraged me to give my best everything I do
I may not always do what you taught me
through your actions and your words
But please know that I watched intently
and that everything was heard
So although the saying goes "Hats off to you"
Today I wear my hat and gloves because Grandma,
I am so proud of you!*

Love ~ Talia