



## Mildred June Hayes

August 23, 1950 - December 23, 2020

### CELEBRATING THE LIFE OF MILDRED JUNE "RUKIYA" HAYES

On Wednesday, December 23, 2020, Mildred June "Rukiya" Hayes, loving mother of two and grandmother of three, passed away peacefully at the age of 70. Mildred was born on August 23, 1950 in Lexington, S.C. to Jesse "Tay" and Cornelia Hayes.

Raised in Columbia, S.C. by her paternal grandparents Oscar G. and Viola Perry, Mildred graduated from Booker T. Washington High School in 1968. In 1970, she married James Harris of Lexington, S.C. They raised two children: their daughter, Candice Cheretta Harris Grant and their son, James Kevin Harris.

A devoted, attentive mother, Mildred was very close to her children. She created a supportive home environment where she instilled in them a love of learning and a deep pride in African American culture and history. She took pleasure in teaching reading and writing to her children well before they entered school, and encouraged them both to pursue their individual talents and interests. She also took them to church each Sunday, making their connection with God a priority in their lives.

Mildred worked at Southern Bell Telephone Company in Columbia for a few years before answering her true calling: educating children. She began

working as a substitute teacher in the late '70s at St. Martin de Porres Catholic School before becoming a full time staff member there. She had an exceptional gift for connecting with each individual student and honoring their unique ways of learning, which helped many of them achieve greater academic success.

She later went on to share her enthusiasm for education at Richland School District One with children of varying ages and abilities in different schools throughout the Columbia area. A genuinely caring person, Mildred always thought of others before herself. She was an active member of St. Martin de Porres Catholic Church for many years, where she sang on the choir, became a CCD (Sunday School) teacher, and frequently served as a lector (reader) during services. She was also a regular volunteer in the Soup Ministry, where she would bring Candice and Kevin along to help. She would happily offer rides to Church for those who were without transportation.

Beautiful in both appearance and spirit, Mildred was an intelligent, talented woman who carried herself with dignity and humility. She had a pleasant and articulate voice, and was a gifted writer. Those close to her knew that while she was a more introverted person, Mildred could also be very expressive, and enjoyed having spirited discussions and healthy debates. She had a very strong sense of humor, and loved to laugh.

An avid history buff, Mildred enjoyed volunteering as a docent at Historic Columbia in the '90s, where she led tours of Columbia's Historic landmarks, including the Hampton-Preston Mansion, Robert Mills House, Woodrow Wilson Family Home, and her favorite property, the Mann-Simons Cottage, a home owned by African-American Midwife Celia Mann, a formerly enslaved woman who walked to freedom from Charleston, S.C. to Columbia, S.C. in 1850.

Mildred was passionate about sharing African and African-American history, particularly with children. She created her own educational projects for school aged children to help meet this goal. Her chosen name, Rukiya, is Swahili in origin, and means “she who rises up,” a meaning that fits accordingly as she always aimed to uplift those around her.

After retiring from Richland School District One, Mildred and her son Kevin joined her daughter Candice and her family in Charlotte, N.C. Shortly after relocating, Mildred began a part-time job at the University YMCA, where she continued her love of working with children.

In her spare time, she enjoyed spending time with her family, especially her grandchildren, who lovingly called her “Mina,” a nickname that stuck from her granddaughter Karisi’s attempt to say “Grandma” as a toddler. They would walk to the local park, go swimming at the pool, create special projects, cook and play together, and much more. She would attend their special school events, extracurricular activities, and much more.

After a few years, Mildred finally began full retirement. Always willing to help when needed, she loved cooking meals and baking for her family, and loved to research and experiment with new recipes. A nature lover, Mildred was especially moved by the beauty of the ocean and the mountains, where she enjoyed watching the leaves change colors in Fall. Simple pleasures like gardening, taking walks, visiting different restaurants, cups of coffee, early morning trips to farmer’s markets and local shops, and sitting outdoors under the trees brought her great joy.

Over the years, Mildred visited a few churches in the Charlotte area, including the Center for

Spiritual Living (C.O.L.O.R.S.) In the months before she passed, she drew great comfort and inspiration from listening to sermons by Rev. Jordan B.

Boyd at Rockwell A.M.E. Zion Church. Through her example, her loved ones know what resilience and strength truly looked like. Mildred peacefully left this earthly realm on December 23, 2020. She is loved deeply, will be greatly missed, and never forgotten.

She is remembered with love by her daughter, Candice (Keith) Harris Grant; her son, James Kevin Harris; her two grandsons, Kamau Andre Grant and Korey Ashael Grant; her granddaughter Karisi Anaya Grant; siblings Pamela Hayes of Montgomery Village, MD; Gail Hayes of Washington DC; Debra Hayes, Reginald (LaShonda) Hayes, James (Cortress) Hayes, Aaron (Martha) Hayes, Jacqueline Smalls, and Sheron Hayes, all of Columbia, SC; a host of cousins; many nieces and nephews; close friends; and loved ones.

In lieu of flowers, please consider a donation to Project One, a local non-profit organization offering scholarships and mentors for college-bound students from single parent homes.([www.projectonescholars.org](http://www.projectonescholars.org))

# Tribute Wall



“ *Mildred June Hayes*

October 24, 2022 at 09:23 PM



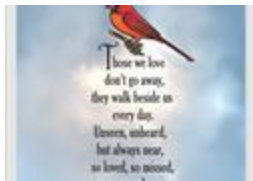
“ *Ms. Mildred, what a beautiful person to have known. As well as your family, praying for peace and comfort. May God continue be with you all.*



**Terry C. Kelly** - December 29, 2020 at 06:31 PM



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**House of Rosedale Home of Funerals, LLC.** - December 29, 2020 at 11:00 AM