



Ms. Willie Bell Kitchens-Morris

September 29, 1923 - December 31, 2018

Willie Bell Kitchens Morris was the sixth of nine children born to the late Will and Hattie Bell Shivers Cannon on September 29, 1923 in Ruleville, MS (Sunflower County) near Dockery Farms Plantation (known as the Birthplace of MS Delta Blues). Soon after her birth, her parents relocated their family back to Florence, MS where she joined the Good Hope Missionary Baptist Church and received her education at the Steep Bank School that was located there. As an active church member, Willie Bell taught songs to the youth choir in the early church, helped charter and sing in the gospel choir, was a member of the missionary society, and served as an usher.

Willie Bell united in holy matrimony to Ulee "Dude" Kitchens. To this union, eight children were born. Ulee transitioned to heaven in December of 1981. Later, Willie Bell married Gus Morris. No children were born to this union. Gus Morris, her parents, and two sons (Johnny Kitchens and Ulee "June Bug" Kitchens, Jr.) also preceded her in death.

Affectionately known as Mama Bell, she enjoyed living and loving life. As a farmer's wife, she took great joy in cooking, fishing, gardening, raising her children, and sharing her flowers and vegetables with neighbors and friends both near and far. She later gained employment with the Mississippi State Hospital where she retired after more than 20 years of service.

Willie Bell expressed her love for her children, grandchildren, and friends by hosting them on Kitchens Ball Field with great food, live music, a series of softball games, and memories to last a lifetime. Her 'Miracle Elixir was sought

by many to cure colds and other illnesses, and her delicious "sweet potato pies" gained her fame and notoriety beyond her wildest dreams. First Sundays at Good Hope Church allowed her to showcase her elegant hat collection, stylish suits, and matching accessories with a sassy strut that only she could execute. Her witty personality, sharp one-liners, and smooth dance moves created memorable moments for all who loved and adored her.

Growing up in a talented family, Willie Bell had a deep love of music. As a musician, she played the piccolo, harmonica, piano, guitar, and also played briefly for Good Hope Church. With a strong desire to equip her children with success beyond education, she sacrificed one month's pay of \$80 to purchase a piano for her home. From this, she taught all of her children how to play and sing the song "I Have A Ship Out On the Ocean". Her selfless sacrifice sewed seeds that would birth multiple generations of musical gifts and talents that would be heard around the world. Her legacy in music continues through her offspring with eight active church musicians, and several singers and songwriters across the gospel, jazz, classical, and R&B genres.

On the morning of Monday, December 31, 2018, Willie Bell Kitchens-Morris decided to celebrate the New Year in her New Home with Jesus Christ as she slept away peacefully surrounded by close relatives. She is survived by three daughters: Lee Dorothy Lewis of Florence, MS, Ivory Bell Thames (Sammy Jr.) of Florence, MS, and Margaret Lee (Dewey) of Stockton, CA; three sons: Earnest Kitchens (Anna Rae), Richard Kitchens, Frank Kitchens (Faye) all of Florence, MS; one brother: J.C. Cannon (Mable); one sister: Sadie Barnes; one daughter-in-law: Clara Kitchens; twenty-nine grandchildren; forty-three great grandchildren, sixteen great-great grandchildren; and a host of nephews, nieces, other relatives and friends.

Previous Events

Visitation

JAN 4. 1:00 PM - 7:00 PM (CT)

"Lovie" Dean Memorial Chapel
745 Hwy 468
Brandon, MS 39042

Tribute Wall



“ Evelyn Young lit a candle in memory of Ms. Willie Bell Kitchens-Morris



Evelyn Young - January 08, 2019 at 01:47 AM



“ Jacqueline Cameron lit a candle in memory of Ms. Willie Bell Kitchens-Morris



Jacqueline Cameron - January 04, 2019 at 05:08 PM



“ Pastor Jessie N. James lit a candle in memory of Ms. Willie Bell Kitchens-Morris



Pastor Jessie N. James - January 03, 2019 at 09:20 PM



“ Melinda Mack lit a candle in memory of Ms. Willie Bell Kitchens-Morris



Melinda Mack - January 01, 2019 at 12:16 PM

JB

“ *Jejuan Brown lit a candle in memory of Ms. Willie Bell Kitchens-Morris*



Jejuan Brown - January 01, 2019 at 01:41 AM