

Transitory Services

of the late

Mrs. Viola Abraham Burgess



St. Peters A.M.E. Church
4650 Sanders Avenue
North Charleston, South Carolina

The Reverend Lavern Stevenson, Pastor

Saturday Afternoon, October 14, 2000
2:00 P.M.

— Inhumation —

St. Peters A.M.E. Church Cemetery
North Charleston, South Carolina

Life Reflections

Viola Abraham Burgess, a woman of strength and dignity, is a native of North Charleston, South Carolina. The daughter of Ruth Abraham, she was raised by her uncle and aunt, Isaiah and Alicia Abraham.

Known affectionately as "Vi", she was educated in the schools of Charleston, South Carolina; Savannah, Georgia and Chicago, Illinois. Vi's professional training was received at Palmetto Beauty College School and Rice Business College.

At an early age, "Vi" became an active member of St. Peters A.M.E. Church. "Vi" served in many different capacities at St. Peters including Sunday School Teacher, Secretary, Organizer and Director of the Junior Gospel Singers and a member of the Senior Choir and the Trustee Board. She organized the Adult Class #2 of St. Peters Sunday School in September 1978 under the pastorate of Rev. George W. Brown and Bro. Frank Mallette, Superintendent.

In December 1959, Viola was united in Holy Matrimony to the late Rev. Fred D. Burgess. She then became an active member of her husband's churches: St. Luke A.M.E. Church and Mt. Horr A.M.E. Church of the South Carolina Conferences.

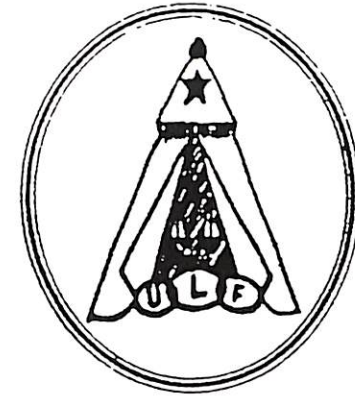
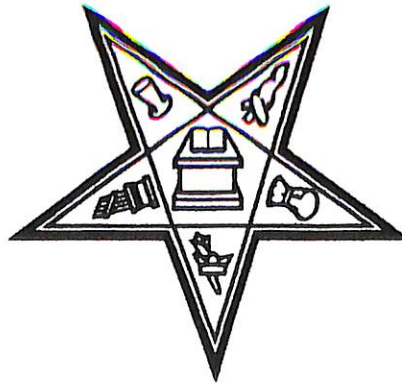
While in the South Carolina Conferences, her concern for the needy, aged and incapacitated endeared her to many. She was a past chairperson of the Senior Missionary Society and past Conference Branch Director of the Young People's Division of the South Carolina Conference Missionary Society. She was a delegate on two occasions for the Missionary Quadrennial Convention. In 1960, she was presented a plaque for dedicated and loyal support to the YPDers of the South Carolina Conference.

In addition to church work, "Vi" was active in civic, social and fraternal organizations. She was a founder, chairperson, and leader of the Homemakers Sewing Club, and she assisted with the mural design of the Liberty Hill Beautification Committee at the Felix Pinckney Community Center. She served as Assistant Matron of Queen Esther Chapter #166, Order of Eastern Stars, and she was the founder, organizer and leader of Queen of Sheba Tent #202, United Order of Tents, a Chairperson of the Grant Past Officers of the J.R. Gidden and Jolliffee Union Southern District #4. Additionally, she was a member of the National Biennial Encampment. She was also a member of the Sea Breeze Temple Order of Elks.

Vi's professional career began as a cosmetologist where she was the owner and operator of Vi's Beauty Parlor. Leaders and young girls from miles around could count on Vi to give them a serious press and curl for any and every event. Other employment included work as a substitute teacher, library assistant, telephone operator and election poll manager.

Rev. Burgess chose to share the later years of his life in wedded bliss with Viola Abraham. Rev. and Mrs. Burgess created a unique and special relationship based on a love of God and of each other. The wonderful memories of that extraordinary period brought many moments of comfort as she lived her life as a minister's widow.

After a period of illness, Vi chose to answer the call and claimed the victory on Sunday morning, October 8, 2000. Left to remember her and carry on her legacy with love are a devoted son, Mr. Paul E. Abraham; a caring and committed daughter-in-law, Mrs. Vermell K. Abraham; and a loving granddaughter, Ms. Latecia M. Abraham; her stepchildren, Mrs. Sarah Burgess Brown (Dr. James E. Brown), Mrs. Mildred B. Hanahan (Mr. James Hanahan) and Mrs. Ruby B. Miller; a dear and close cousin, Ms. Jacqueline A. Davis; first cousins, Mrs. Inell A. Anderson, Mrs. Edna A. Stewart, Ms. Catherine Abraham and Mr. Julius Abraham; a special in-law, Mrs. Gloria N. Beaufort; two godchildren, Mrs. Alicia Hopkins Hill and Rev. Dwight E. Barr. Her passing also leaves many other loving and caring relatives and friends to cherish her memory.



Queen Esther Chapter #166

*Philippians 4:13
I can do all things through Christ
which strengtheneth me.*

How Beautiful To Be With God

*How beautiful to be with God.
When earth is fading like a dream.
And from this mist-encircled shore
We launch upon the unknown stream.*

*No doubt, no fear, no anxious care.
But comforted by staff and rod.
In the faith-brightened hour of death
How beautiful to be with God.*

*Then let it fade, this dream of earth,
When I have done my lifework here,
Or long, or short as seemeth best –
What matters so God's will appear.*

*I will not fear to launch my bark,
Upon the darkly rolling flood,
'Tis but to pierce the mist – and then
How beautiful to be with God.
– W. Halsey Smith*

Order of Service

Reverend John H. Gillison, Presiding Elder

Officiating

- Prelude Selected Music
Mr. William M. Jenkins
- Processional "Abide With Me"
- Hymn "How Great Thou Art"
Combined Choirs and Congregation
- Invocation Reverend Levern Stevenson
Pastor, St. Peters A.M.E. Church
North Charleston, South Carolina
- Scripture Readings:
Old Testament Psalm 27
Reverend Julius Abraham (Cousin)
Pastor, Jerusalem A.M.E. Church
Statesboro, Georgia
- New Testament I Thessalonians 4:13-18
Reverend Isaac Holt
Pastor, Royal Baptist Church
North Charleston, South Carolina
- Solo Mrs. Sandra A. Malone (Cousin)
- Remarks Mrs. Lillie M. Richardson
Class Leader
- Resolutions Mr. Clifford W. Smalls
- Selections Ms. Andrea J. Magwood
- Tribute Ms. Latecia M. Abraham (To Grandmother)
- Organ Medley Mr. Paul E. Abraham, Son
- Eulogistic Hymn "When We All Get To Heaven"
Combined Choirs
- Eulogy Reverend Hezekiah David Stewart (Cousin)
Pastor, Nebo A.M.E. Church
College Station, Little Rock, Arkansas
- Selection "When We Reach the Other Shore"
Combined Choirs
Mr. Julius Goodley, Soloist
- Recessional "Goin' Home"
- The Service of Committal At Graveside
- Benediction

Active Pallbearers

Mr. Samuel Hopkins
Mr. Harry Dennis
Mr. Harry Fyall
Mr. Richard Johnson

Mr. Benjamin Grant
Mr. Frank McBride
Mr. James Pinckney
Mr. Nathaniel Jenkins

Honorary Pallbearers

Trustees and Stewards of St. Peters A.M.E. Church

Floral Bearers

*Ministers' Wives and Missionary Societies
Ushers of St. Peters A.M.E. Church*

Acknowledgement

The family has been deeply moved by the varied expressions of love, compassion and care exhibited to them by so many during the period of illness and home-going of their loved one. Our prayer is that God will richly bless each of you.

— The Abraham Family

Arrangements Entrusted To

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2000

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Charleston, South Carolina

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