

CELEBRATION OF LIFE

Mary Mills Spence

SUNRISE
FEBRUARY 21, 1940

SUNSET
JANUARY 4, 2023

TUESDAY, JANUARY 17, 2023
VIEWING ~ 9AM / MASS ~ 11AM
ST. MARTINS CATHOLIC CHURCH
1908 NORTH CAPITOL STREET, NW
WASHINGTON, DC 20001
CELEBRANT ~ FATHER MICHAEL J. KELLY

Mass of Christian Burial

Order of Service

Blessing of the Body

Hymn

First Reading, Book of Wisdom 3:1-9.....Eldress Paula Simms
Responsorial Psalm.....23rd Psalm
Second Reading, Roman 6: 3-9.....Marcus Mills
Gospel Reading: John 14: 1-6.....Father Michael J. Kelly
Homily.....Father Michael J. Kelly
Words from the Family.....Obie and Mark Spence
Musical Selection.....Mary Barns

Prayer of the Faithful (Response: Lord hear our prayer)

Presentation of the Gifts Hymn

The Preface

Eucharistic Prayer

The Lord's Prayer

Communion Hymn

Tributes & Reflections

Final Commendation / Farewell

Musical Selection.....I Did It My Way

Interment

Repast

Pallbearers

Marcus Mills, Camaron Spence, Michael Mills, Lyndell Walker, Byron Blackmore, Garrison Blackmore

The Life and Legacy of Mary Mills Spence

On February 21, 1940, Mary Mills Spence was born to the late Wade Mills and Bertha Barbour Mills in their home at 1313 5th Street N.W. Washington DC. On January 4, 2023, Mary departed this earth peacefully to her heavenly home.

She was the youngest of seven children which included four boys and three girls. Mary was the matriarch of her family. She was not only an Aunt but a mother figure to all her nieces, nephews and great niece.

On November 28 1959, Mary married Obie Homer Spence and from this union they had two children; Mark and June Spence. Mary laid eyes on Obie and they were married for sixty-three years. Obie recounts their love story stating Mary followed him as he crossed U St when he was on his way to church. She followed him every time she saw him and sat next to him at church. Obie began ducking Mary by going to church on Saturday rather than Sunday and took a different path to church. She ran him down and then they courted for three years going to Hot Shoppes to get orange freezes, burger and fries and to listen to Nat King Cole songs on the juke box. Their favorite song was "Too Young". Obie said her smile and mini-skirts were irresistible. All who knew Mary knew Obie because she called his name and talked about him all the time, they truly loved the Lord and each other.

Mary was baptized Catholic at Holy Redeemer Church and received her First Holy Communion at Saint Martins of Tours Catholic Church. She was an active member of Saint Martins until her early fifties. Mary was a member of the Ladies of Charities and Solidarity. Years later, she became a member of Imani Temple African American Catholic Congregation. Mary raised her children to know Christ and worked diligently so they could attend Catholic school by baking her famous dinner and Cinnamon rolls. They loved Christ and attended church every Sunday.

Mary expressed her love for God in how she cared for her family, friends and those who she had the pleasure of meeting. She loved her family, friends and enjoyed making new acquaintances. She was compassionate, had a down home nature and was genuine as if she had known you for years. She was sincere in wanting to know how you and your family was doing. Mary prayed for you, kept in contact with you, asked about your extended family members, mailed cards to you and attended your families' events which was all so important to her.

Mary made you feel comfortable discussing anything from personal to political matters and your secrets were safe with her. She had a great sense of humor and would have you cracking up. If you were feeling down, by the end of the conversation with her, you felt a lot better. Mary used her gift to make you laugh to uplift you and to entertain you. People gravitated to her and they loved to play cards with her. Mary would crack jokes and play Pinochle and Bid Wiz with the best of them.

Mary took pride in cooking and loved to see her family and others eat and enjoy her food. She would always say "does it taste alright" while she stood over you with more food to share. Her baked chicken was golden brown, rolls was soft as cotton, squash and oyster dressing would melt in your mouth and the secret ingredient was Butter. It made Mary happy when you were full and couldn't eat anymore.

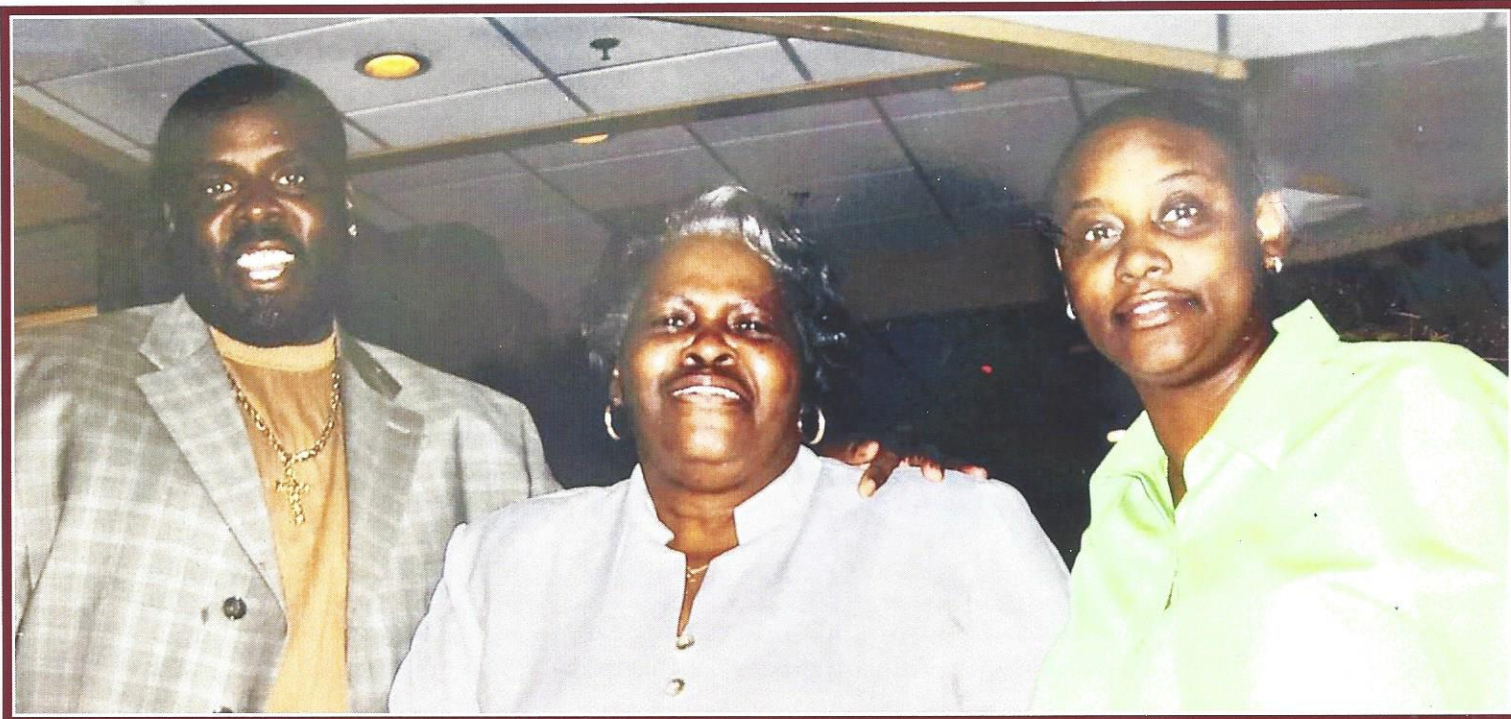
Mary graduated from McKinley Technology High School. She was a member of the Class of 1958. She stayed in touch with her classmates by being a part of the reunion planning committee. Mary enjoyed seeing and reconnecting her former Tech-ites Classmates.

From high school, Mary began her employment career. She held various jobs as a cook, medical secretary, help aide, book keeper and clerk. Where ever Mary found employment, she looked for jobs within the organization for her friends as well. The first job Mary had was as a cook for the Medical Mission Sisters House of Studies where she cooked for twelve Nuns who loved her and the meals she prepared. She worked for the United States Government Printing Office from 1973 until she retired as a medical secretary in 2000. Her smile and personality made her peers feel better before seeing the medical professional for treatment. Mary made life-long friends throughout her employment who she remained in contact over the for years.

Mary fought an incredible fight with grace, patience and tenacity; never waiving in her faith or dedication to the Lord and her family. Now we are blessed with the deposit she made in this earth – goodness, kindness, hope, humor, a praying spirit and spreading God's love!!!

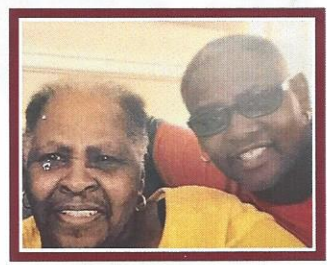
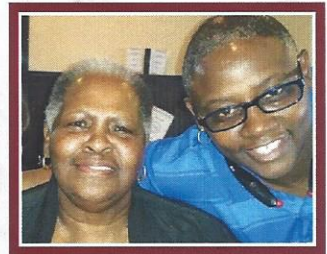
She is proceeded in death by her parents Wade and Bertha Mills, brothers Melvin, Frank, Edward and Clifton, sister's Marguerite and Barbara Ann; niece Verna Learnard and nephews; Charles Mills, Cornell Mills, Donald Mills and Barry Mills. Sisters in laws; Valerie Spence, Darlene Spence and Vacey Spence.

She leaves to cherish her memory; husband, Obie Spence, her children Mark Spence (Cathy) and June Spence; grandson, Camaron Spence. Nieces; Bernetta Walker, Sandra Mills, Debra Mills, Marilyn Gore; Nephews; David Mills and Clayton Mills. Great Nieces; Leslie Walker, Charlene Mills, Renee (Bryon) Blackmore, Brooke (Vincent) Sanders and Tiquisha Harris. Great nephews Lyndell Walker, Marcus Mills, Michael Mills and Zachary Learnard. Great great nieces, Arianna Walker, Corinne Sanders and Kennedy Harris. Great, great nephews Garrison Blackmore, Graham Blackmore and Calvin Harris Jr. Brother in laws; John Spence, Ambrose Spence, Albert Spence and their children Reginald, Donna, Gregory, Amy, Toni, Arnold, John III and a host of other family members and friends.



I've Got the Children to Tend

The clothes to mend
 The floor to mop
 The food to shop
 Then the chicken to fry
 The baby to dry
 I got company to feed
 The garden to weed
 I've got shirts to press
 The tots to dress
 The can to be cut
 I gotta clean up this hut
 Then see about the sick
 And the cotton to pick.



Shine on me, sunshine, rain on me, rain
 Fall softly, dewdrops, and cool my brow again.

Storm, blow me from here, with your fiercest wind
 Let me float across the sky, 'Til I can rest again.

Fall gently, snowflakes, cover me with white
 Cold icy kisses and, let me rest tonight.

Sun, rain, curving sky, mountain, oceans, leaf and
 stone, star shine, moon glow, you're all that I can call
 my own.

Maya Angelou.

From your daughter June

Everything Mom

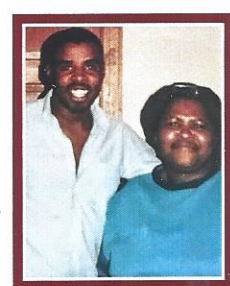
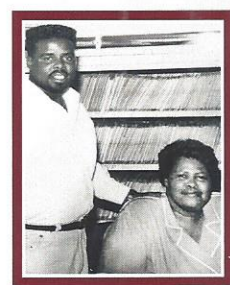
How did you find the energy, Mom
 To do all the things you did,
 To be teacher, nurse and counselor
 To me, when I was a kid.

How did you do it all, Mom,
 Be a chauffeur, cook and friend,
 Yet find time to be a playmate,
 I just can't comprehend.
 I see now it was love, Mom

That made you come whenever I'd call,
 Your inexhaustible love, Mom
 And I thank you for it all.

By Joanna Fuchs

From your son Mark



Look for Me in Rainbows

Time for me to go now, I won't say goodbye
Look for me in rainbows, way up in the sky.

In the morning sunrise when all the world is new,
Just look for me and love me, as you know I loved you.

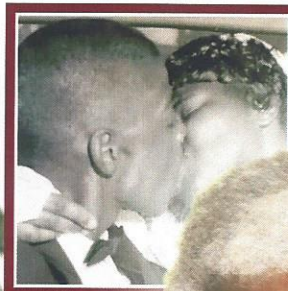
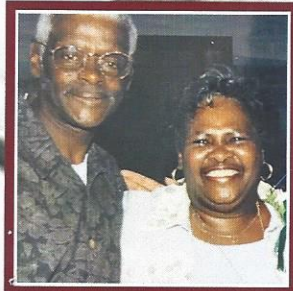
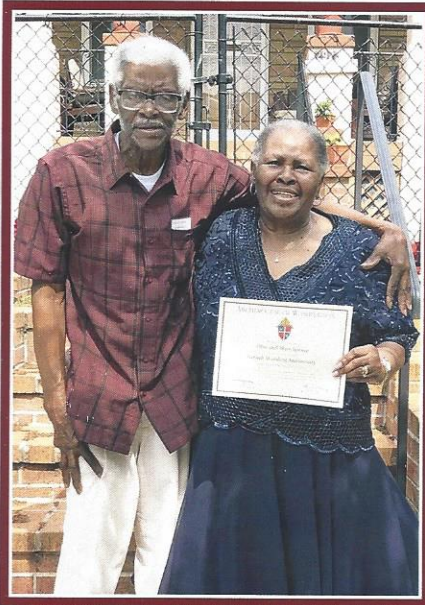
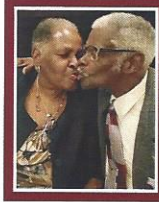
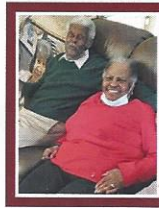
Time for me to leave you, I won't say goodbye;
Look for me in rainbows, high in the sky.

In the evening sunset, when all the world is through,
Just look for me and love me, and I'll be close to you.

It won't be forever, the day will come and then
My loving arms will hold you, when we meet again.

Time for us to part now, we won't say goodbye;
Look for me and love me, as you know I loved you.

Just wish me to be near you,
And I'll be there with you.



Fond memories of my soul sister, Mary Spence

One of the bright spots in my four years at Medical Mission Sisters House of Studies on 6th and Buchanan Streets, D.C. was Mary. In 1964, she was hired to help out one of our older sisters, Sister Peter, with the cooking for the 12 of us living in the house. She fit in like she was one of us, though she was married to Obie and had 2 kids, Mark and June. Coming home from school at Catholic University, I found her always there with a smile on her face – and good food cooking in the kitchen. Her rolls were heavenly. Not many people could have adjusted so easily to being with a house full of nuns – but she did. She got to know all the guests who came to our house: Mr G and his “associates,” a generous benefactor with a criminal record, all the young seminarians who enjoyed the company of the young sisters, a group of Army nurses lead by Peggy Adams who had worked in Vietnam with our sisters there, visiting MMS from other countries, the changing chaplains who came to say Mass and hear confessions. Our house was always busy and Mary was often involved in our activities.

When I returned from Africa in 1971 and located in D.C., Mary and I were back in touch. One of our first times together was at the wedding of another ex- MMS, Joan Laffey.

In the years after that group of MMS scattered far and wide, Mary was like the glue, keeping in touch with us and sharing news about each other. Many of those women have passed on before her and I trust, have welcomed her with outstretched arms.

After I married Terry Wise, Mary, and sometimes Mark, were a part of our family and joined us on different occasions. Mary often helped take care of our kids: baby Michael, Katherine, and Suzanne when Terry and I wanted to go out as a couple.

Our friendship has deepened over the 58 years, with Mary visiting me in Atlanta several times and me spending time with her and her family in D.C. I have many happy memories of these special times together. As we both aged and traveled less, we spoke by phone about every two weeks. She was often the one to call first, wanting to hear how I was doing and then we'd have long meandering conversations about life and politics, family, and health.

Mary was one of the most generous, caring, and forgiving women I know, who always reached out to others, and while she had much she could have complained about, she spoke with gratitude for her life, her family, and her ties with Medical Mission Sisters.

Mary leaves a hole in the fabric of our lives with her passing over, but my life feels so much richer because of being one of Mary Spence's friends. She will never be forgotten while I live.

From Aimee Wise

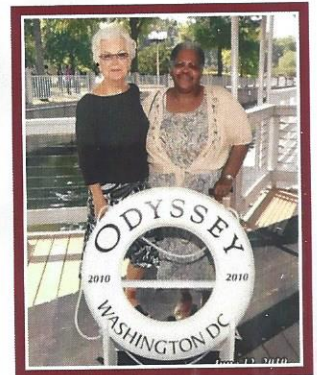
Mary was such a loving, appreciative, caring and grateful woman!

At 6th and Buchanan N.E. Washington D.C. she kept our Medical Mission Sisters home humming in the 60s as we students went our various ways to Trinity, Catholic U. and Georgetown. The memory I'll never forget was when Martin Luther King, Jr. was assassinated. The streets in N.E. Washington were ablaze. Obie called and told Mary to stay with us with Mark and June. He was safe, but didn't want them to travel. The Next day I drove Mary, Mark and June home. The sights were dreadful. Mark (about 5) asked Mary, "Mamma why did they burn that down?" Mary said simply, "They weren't good to our people"

Through the years Mary kept in touch with many of us better than we did with one another.

In 2021 on my way to Philadelphia, moving back to our MMS mainhouse from Florida where I had been for 32 years after returning from India and St. Louis, I visited with Mary and Obie and it was so good!!

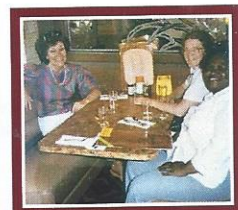
With love and joy, Sr. Lorraine Ryan, MMS



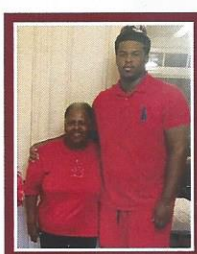
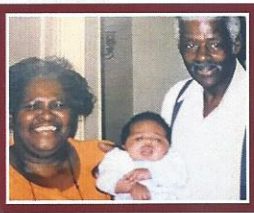
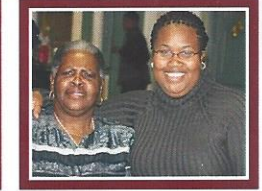
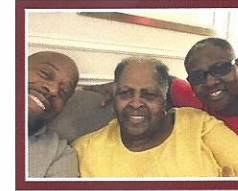
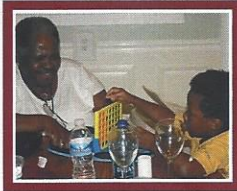
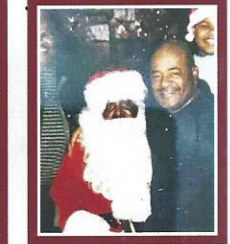
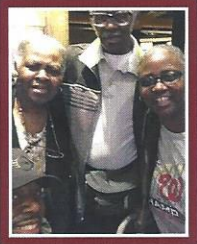
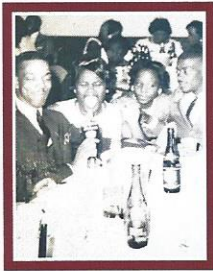
AIMEE AND MARY



SR. LORRAINE RYAN, MMS

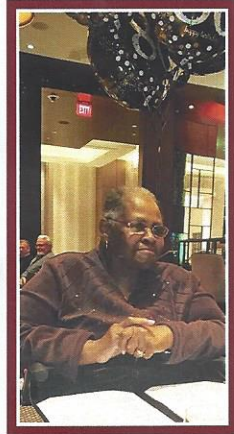
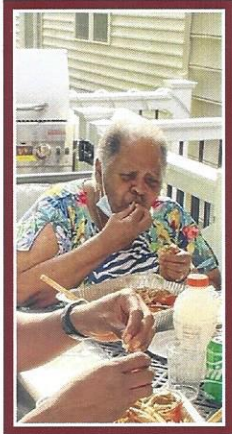
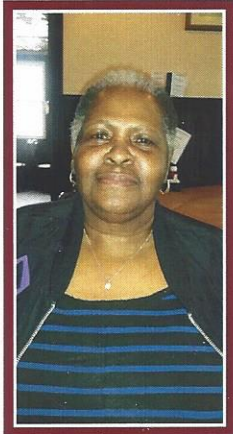
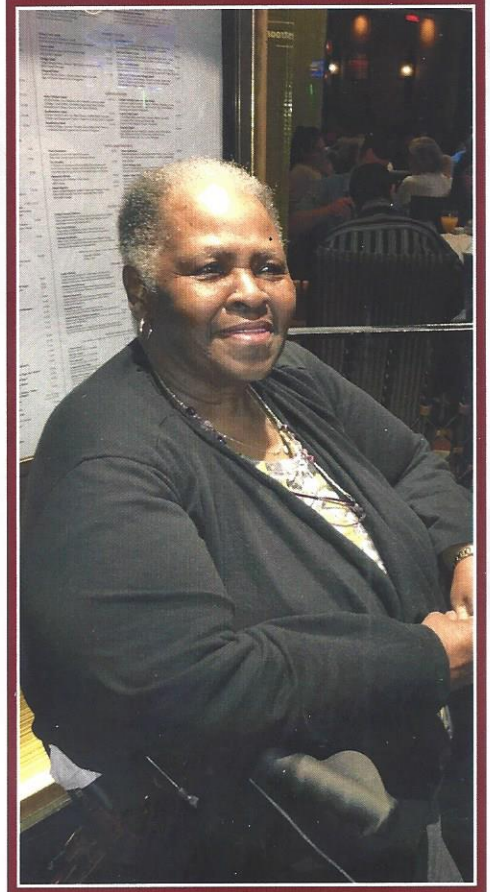
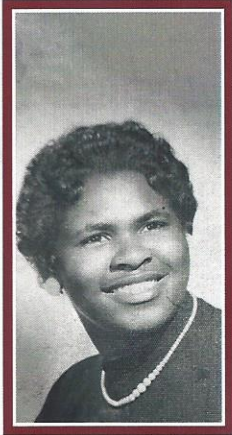
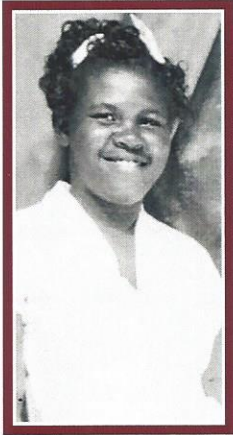


Precious Memories



ACKNOWLEDGEMENT FROM THE FAMILY

The entire Spence/Mills family wishes to express their sincere gratitude and appreciation for the many comforting words, prayers and all the other expressions of kindness shown during our time of bereavement. Special thanks to the Medical Housecall Program and Social worker Ruth Shea, Washington Hospital Center Nurse Practitioner; Michelle Sullivan, Carroll Manor Rehabilitation Center, The 10th Street Neighbors, Dolly Jenkins and all the health aides and care takers who assisted her.



Mary Spence

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Seaside Memorial Memories

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