

### IN GRATEFUL APPRECIATION

The family of *the late* **Bertha J. Baker Woods** wishes to express deep and heartfelt appreciation for your loving thoughtfulness and concern, including cards, flowers, phone calls, emails, texts, Facebook tributes, visits, your presence here this evening, and especially the comfort of your continuing prayers. We also appreciate those who sent their love from near and far to encourage us during this time. May God bless and keep each of you in His loving embrace and care.

### **IT'S HOW YOU COPE**

by Bruce B. Wilmer

Life has its measure of setbacks --  
Some are small, some are larger in size.  
There are portions of every existence  
Which clearly we'd like to revise.  
But stresses and problems are normal --  
Disappointments are part of the game.  
If we let these moments control us,  
We must assume part of the blame.  
It's how we react that's important;  
We mustn't distort what we feel.  
Let's work with what life has to offer  
And never begrudge a bad deal.  
Depression can never assist us  
In weathering woes on this earth.  
We shouldn't let each disappointment  
Give rise to more grief than it's worth.  
Instead we should try to discover,  
As life in intensity mounts,  
A way to place things in proportion.  
You see, how we cope is what counts.

*Professional Services Entrusted To:*



*Frank R. Bell*  
*Funeral Home, Inc.*

536 Frank & Doris Bell Way  
(formerly Sterling Place, corner of Classon Avenue)

Brooklyn, New York 11238

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Frank R. Bell, *Founder* ~ Doris D. Bell, *Co-Founder*

*Executive Directors:*

Frances Bell Henry ~ Eric D. Ganes ~ Robert L. Henry

## *In Loving Memory Of*



## *Bertha Jane Baker Woods*

*Sunrise*

April 20, 1942

*Sunset*

August 15, 2020

Thursday ~ August 20, 2020 ~ 5:30 p.m.

at

FRANK R. BELL FUNERAL HOME, INC.

536 Frank & Doris Bell Way

(formerly Sterling Place, corner of Classon Avenue)

Brooklyn, New York 11238

*"... I am the resurrection and the life: he that believeth in me,  
though he were dead, yet shall he live:" ~ St. John 11:25*

## OBITUARY

*Bertha Jane Baker Woods* was born on April 20<sup>th</sup>, 1942 to Mozzell McCullough Baker and Wilfred Garfield Baker, Sr. in Conover, North Carolina. She was the middle child and only daughter born to this couple; however, she later found out that she had another older brother with whom she shared a close bond.

**Bertha** completed her elementary and high school education in the Catawba County school system graduating a year early and at the top of her class. **Bertha**, or “Tiny” as family called her, wanted more than what her high school education alone could achieve. Consequently, she dreamed of going to college, and despite knowing that this would be a financial struggle, she worked hard at menial jobs that were given to Black women at that time and appreciated the opportunities and assistance that others who saw her potential gave to her. This philosophy of “paying it forward” is something that she continued throughout her life, not only in the career she chose as a social worker, but also in the choices of ministries in which she chose to participate. She was always grateful for the assistance of those who saw her need and potential, and as a result, helped her to stay in college and receive her undergraduate degree.

Not long after receiving her Bachelor’s in Sociology from Johnson C. Smith University (Class Elite of ’64), **Bertha** came to New York City. After a few changes of address, in the late 1960s she eventually settled in Brooklyn where she lived the rest of her life.

In 1968, **Bertha** married Dr. Jerry Nathaniel Woods, who preceded her in death three months ago. They had a daughter, Dr. Ericka C. Woods, three years after marrying. Their marriage lasted about four years, and **Bertha** raised Ericka as a devoted single parent. When Ericka had a near death experience at the age of 21, **Bertha** was the instrumental force in healing the relationship between father and daughter. She set an example of how not to be a bitter single mother. Over time, **Bertha** and Jerry developed a unique and good friendship, and surely, he’s there now to welcome her home.

Those who knew **Bertha** know that she was a very social and outgoing person as well as a hat queen. She had a hat for every occasion. She also loved her church (St. Paul Community Baptist Church) as well as traveling, going to Broadway shows (at a discount), spending time with friends and family, cooking and baking. One could say she was born with the perfect last name of Baker given all the cake and pie requests she had filled over her life. She loved every ministry she was involved in over the years – LAMBS, Social Justice, Daytime Ministry, Women’s Ministry, to name a few.

Even when in pain or fatigued from the various illnesses she had to suffer through, she would still find the time and wherewithal to do what she could, whether it be holiday dinners, something for the church or to help a young person. Yet, in spite of all these things that she thoroughly enjoyed, to use some of her last words, her daughter, Ericka, was her “greatest pride and joy.” She often said that “Since God gave me a child -- a child I wanted -- to me, I’m accountable so I have to give [you] back to Him,” because she believed being a mom was her most important job, often giving up promotions in various agencies within New York City’s Department of Social Services that she believed would interfere with her ability to be a good parent. Despite these financial sacrifices, when she was in her fifties, she returned to graduate school and attained her LCSW, retiring in 2002 as a Level III Supervisor with ACS’s (Administration for Children Services) Family Preservation Program.

Though predeceased by her parents, and her oldest and younger brothers: Ernest McCullough and Vernon Baker, **Bertha** leaves to honor and cherish her memory, her daughter Dr. Ericka C. Woods (Alphonso Myles) of New York; her brother Wilfred G. Baker, Jr.; a niece Catreena Baker (Marvin Young); a nephew Alvin Baker; two aunts: Estelle Wilson and Mary Connor; a special “daughter” Kameko Jones, and “son” James Ervin; as well as a host of other nieces, nephews, great-nieces, great-nephews, cousins, other relatives, church members and friends.



In lieu of flowers,  
donations for student scholarships may be made to:

JOHNSON C. SMITH UNIVERSITY

(her alma mater and HBCU)

In Memory Of

**BERTHA J. BAKER WOODS**

Though restrictions are starting to be eased, we are still closely monitoring the situation with the COVID-19 pandemic. With that in mind and the safety of all concerned, we are still recommending adherence to the recommended guidelines of the NYC Department of Health the CDC. Thus, all who enter this establishment must be wearing a mask; allow your temperature to be taken, and use hand sanitizer provided at the entrance and in the chapel. Although it is unnatural and difficult, especially during this time when the family needs you most, physical contact with family, and with one another as well as the body is not suggested. Social distancing (keeping 6 feet apart) is still required. Your cooperation is most appreciated during this temporary disruption of life as we know it.