



Pallbearers
Family and Friends
Floral Bearers
Family and Friends
Acknowledgements

The Family of Joan Claire Smith Lyons appreciates all the kind acts of love and expressions of friendship and sympathy shown to us during the passing of our loved one. Your sincere thoughtfulness was a great source of comfort and strength and will be cherished for days to come. May God bless each of you.



THE NEGRO SPEAKS OF RIVERS

*I've known rivers:
I've known rivers ancient as the world and older than the flow
of human blood in human veins.
My soul has grown deep like the rivers.
I bathed in the Euphrates when dawns were young.
I built my hut near the Congo and it lulled me to sleep.
I looked upon the Nile and raised the pyramids above it.
I heard the singing of the Mississippi when Abe Lincoln went down
to New Orleans, and I've seen its muddy bosom turn all golden in the
sunset.
I've known rivers:
Ancient, dusky rivers.
My soul has grown deep like the rivers*

By Langston Hughes

Professional Services Rendered by



Funeral Home of Whiteville
707 Vinson Blvd. • P.O. Box 796 • Whiteville, NC 28472 • (910) 642-4055
www.peoplesofwhiteville.com
"Service with Dependability, Distinction, and Dignity"

CELEBRATING THE LIFE
OF
Joan Claire Smith Lyons

Alpha
February
8, 1932

Omega
May
20, 2023

FRIDAY, MAY 26, 2023
11:00 AM

Peoples Funeral Home Chapel
707 Vinson Blvd.
Whiteville, North Carolina 28472

Obituary

Joan Claire Smith Lyons was born on February 8, 1932 in Queens, New York. She was the eldest daughter of Henry Randolph Smith and Isabelle Nixon Murphy Smith. She transitioned, and joined the ancestors on May 20, 2023 at UNC Health Southeastern in Lumberton, North Carolina. She was preceded in death by her husband, Joe Lyons of 36 years, and three of her sisters, Carol Ernestine Smith Spaulding, Margaret Virginia Smith Henderson, and Wilhelmina Ann Smith Johnson.

Joan was educated in the New York City Public School System and graduated from James Monroe High School in 1950. After the sudden passing of her mother, Joan willingly accepted the awesome responsibility of helping her father rear her three youngest siblings, Margaret, Wilhelmina, and Henrietta. She was only 23 years old.

She then went on to become an Administrator with the New York City Department of Social Services where she retired after 30 years of service.

As an adult, Joan furthered her education through non-traditional avenues as a student of Dr. John Henrik Clarke, Dr. Yosef Ben-Jochannan, and other notable scholars in African Studies. She was also a long-time member of the Association for the Study of Classical African Civilizations (ASCAC) for more than 30 years, where she also learned to read and write hieroglyphics.

Joan Claire inherited her mother's passion for reading. In fact, she was a voracious reader, having read and collected for her personal library over 2000 books on African history and the African-American experience.

Her passion for reading and studying history was further expanded through her extensive travel throughout the African Continent. Between 1982 – 2007, she traveled to Egypt (Kemet), Ethiopia, Ghana, Ivory Coast, Senegal, South Africa, Sudan, Zambia, and Zimbabwe.

She was a historical source of knowledge for her family, community at large, and held history classes for family and friends in her home. She also enjoyed on and off-Broadway Theater while living in New York City for many years.

Joan was a kind, straightforward, proud woman who cared about lineage and legacy, and instilled those same values onto her family.

Left to cherish her precious memories are her sister, Henrietta Patricia Smith Graham of the home; a host of nieces and nephews; Great-nieces and nephews; Great-Great nieces and nephews; cousins; other relatives, and friends.



Order of Service

Reverend Doctor Staccato Powell, Eulogist
Reverend Algernon McKenzie, Presiding
 Friendship Missionary Baptist Church

INVOCATION..... **Pastor Algernon McKenzie**

OPENING SELECTION..... “God Is So Good (To Me)”
Mahalia Jackson

SCRIPTURE

OLD TESTAMENT..... Ecclesiastes 3:1-8..... **Deacon Willie Guinyard**

NEW TESTAMENT..... Galations 6:7, 9..... **Malikah Johnson Hudson**

PRAYER OF COMFORT..... **Minister Renee Guinyard**

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT..... **Carole Evadne Mangum**

REMARKS..... “Our Last Letters From Near and Far”

SELECTION..... **Reverend Algernon McKenzie**

EULOGY..... **Reverend Dr. Staccato Powell**

SERVICE OF COMMITTAL AND INTERMENT..... **Hallsboro Memorial Park**

Repat..... **Friendship Missionary Baptist Church**
 239 W. Columbus St. Whiteville, NC 28472

DEATH TO ME...

Death, to me, today is like health to the ill, like going outdoors after confinement. Death, to me, today is like the smell of myrrh, like sitting under the sail on a windy day. Death, to me, today, is like the fragrance of lotus, like sitting on the shore of feasting.

Death, to me, today is like a well-trodden way, like returning home from war. Death, to me, today, is like the clearing up of clouds from the sky, like a person discovering that which was unknown. Death, to me, today, is like longing to see home after spending many years in captivity.

Selections from the Husia
“Sacred Wisdom of Ancient Egypt”

