

In Loving Memory



Etta L. Smith

1922-2020

Thursday August 27, 2020 10:30 AM
Hughes Funeral Home
324 Bellevue Avenue
Trenton, NJ 08618

The Smith Family would like to extend their deepest appreciation and thanks for all the thoughts, prayers, and actions of kindness in our hour of grief. The cards, flowers, donations and being present have given immeasurable comfort. Nana would be so proud of you all.



“Brothers and sisters, we do not want you to be uninformed about those who sleep in death, so that you do not grieve like the rest of mankind, who have no hope. For we believe that Jesus died and rose again, and so we believe that God will bring with Jesus those who have fallen asleep in him.”

Thessalonians 4:13-14

Funeral services provided by:
Hughes Funeral Home LLC
340 Bellevue Avenue
Trenton, NJ 08618

Corey D. Hughes, Manager NJ License #4021

Obituary

Etta Navolia Smith (née Little), of Lawrenceville, NJ died Sunday, August 2, 2020 at home from complications arising from COVID-19. She was 97. Born in Surry County, Virginia on October 1, 1922 as the youngest of 7 children born to Joe and Pattie Little (née Blunt), Etta was a lifelong advocate of education and the benefits imparted therein, which prompted her to pursue a career in education.

After receiving her Bachelor's degree in Home Economics in 1944 from Virginia State University, Etta became what was then called a Home Demonstration Agent through the USDA in Farmville, Virginia. Later, Etta moved to Fredericksburg, VA in 1958 where she began her formal teaching career, instructing elementary school children in Stafford, Va. After Moving to Princeton, NJ in 1963, Etta received her Master's degree in education, and continued to teach elementary school children in Trenton, NJ through her retirement in 1989.

Etta, along with her husband, the late Reverend Edward Smith, was also a lifelong advocate for social justice. She and her husband were actively involved with the Civil Rights movement in partnership with and as members of the Southern Christian Leadership Conference. Together, along with their lifelong friends City Councilman Weldon Bailey and wife Thelma Bailey, successfully organized the first affordable housing complex in Fredericksburg, VA. She was instrumental in supporting her husband and helping to organize student efforts to integrate schools in Stafford, Va. She was then, as were many women of her generation, an unsung hero of a movement.

After moving to Princeton in 1963, Etta was an active First Lady of First Baptist Church of Princeton, where her late husband was pastor, helping to organize one of the first federally subsidized daycare for the children of working parents while also being a working parent herself. Four years after the original daycare opening, Etta assisted in transitioning the subsidized daycare to one that was wholly owned and operated by First Baptist Church, creating jobs within the community by employing surrounding community members. After her husband's death, Etta was a former President of the Ladies Guild at Shiloh Baptist Church, and recipient of their Woman of the Year award. After retirement, she was president of several clubs as an active member of the Lawrence Senior Center in Lawrenceville, New Jersey.

Etta is survived by her daughter, Linda D. Smith, her granddaughters Thulani A. Smith and Shani M. Smith, a great-grandson Avery B. Smith, and several cousins, nieces, nephews, and close friends.

Order of Services

- ◆ Words of Comfort - Reverend Keith Marshall
- ◆ Eulogy - Thulani A. Smith
- ◆ Additional friends and family may offer words of comfort and remembrance if time allows.



“In the path of righteousness is life, and in its pathway there is no death.”
Proverbs 12:28