



# Gwendolyn Arthe Goode Armstrong

November 30, 2018

Gwendolyn Arthé Goode Armstrong, also known as Granny, Diva, Gwen, Gwenlen, Aunt Gwen and Elegance, was born on November 21, 1930 in New Orleans, Louisiana. The third child of the union between Anne Victoria and Herbert Goode, she was described as “a force of nature” by her youngest granddaughter Erin Michelle, “a TRUE Scorpio” by her grandson Christopher Anthony, and “the Matriarch” and “part of the feisty in me” by her eldest granddaughter Keidra DeShan.

In her youth, Gwendolyn was as fiery and tenacious as she was in the sunset of her years. She attended Hoffman Elementary School where she attained the prestigious honor of becoming the valedictorian of her eighth-grade class. During that time, she was also trained as a classical pianist, taking lessons on the player piano at her mother’s Bienville Street home. She attended high school at Gilbert Academy where she was on the cheerleading squad. Gwen always marched to the beat of her own drum, completing two years of college as a music major at Southern University in Baton Rouge. I’m sure she caused quite a stir as a petite snare drummer in the Southern Jaguar marching band. During her attendance at Southern, she met the love of her life Edgar H. Armstrong, who traveled from New Orleans to Baton Rouge, every weekend, to court her with big ol’ boxes of candy and hosiery. He was known to say that “he never saw big, pretty legs like your mama’s before in my life!” Needless to say, this courtship culminated in holy matrimony and three children: Arthé Alicia, Gerald Edgar and Eleanor Lynn.

As a young woman, Gwen was a mother and homemaker until her three children were school aged. She went to work to help pay parochial school tuition for Corpus Christi, Xavier Prep and St. Joseph Academy. Initially, Gwendolyn worked in San Souci Lingerie Factory, served as carpool mom, and baby sat for her friends’ children for a short time. She then set her sights on 9-5 employment with the National Finance Center (NFC) as a voucher examiner and accountant. She later secured employment with the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) where she continued as an accountant. While at the USDA she served as mentor and trainer for many of the younger African American employees being hired. She said that “it was important that the young employees look the employers/supervisors in the eye-No looking down and no shuffling!” She was never one to hold her tongue-Gwen didn’t hesitate to speak her mind, especially regarding her rights

and the rights of others. Gwen, ever the Scorpio, was a warrior and survivor until the end. She overcame adversity with style, grace, a few choice words and a dose of “feisty”. To round out her life, Gwendolyn balanced her work with play. She was a member of many social aid and pleasure clubs including the LNC. She was also an Emeritus member of The Original Girl Friends, Inc. Gwen was crowned “Mother of the Year” by the Pontchartrain Park baseball little league, where her son Gerald played, and was also the recipient of other honors due to her generous nature.

Gwen, the generous giver and nurturer, always put others before herself. She postponed heart surgery to attend to her beloved, Edgar, an Alzheimer’s patient. She left work and picked up her young grandchildren, cooked their dinner, made sure baths were taken, and cleaned the house all before her daughter returned home from work. They sure don’t make them like Granny anymore. We all were fortunate and truly blessed to be sheltered under Granny’s wings.

Anyone who knew Gwen, knew that cooking was her passion and forté! She was the “hostess with the mostest” who often had a line of guests leaving her house with Tupperware filled with her delicious cuisine. Delicacies and culinary delights such as filé or okra gumbo, jambalaya, stuffed peppers, crabs or mirliton, fried chicken and fish with potato salad, red beans and rice or greens with pickled tips with pork chops, French bread or cornbread were some of the favorites that graced her table. Deserts such as lemon and pecan pies, pralines and bread pudding were also part of the line up that added to our expanding waistlines. Even the dogs got homecooked meals, such as prime rib, chicken and giblets, warm and on time every evening! If you were ever a guest at 3917 Odin Street, you know what I mean! Gwen always treated “Company” well. They were always offered something to eat or drink. Even when she became ill, she always found the strength to ask if the “Company” was offered lunch, dinner or a soft drink.

Gwen the elegant lady, hence the nickname “Elegance”, loved to dress up her home, her children and herself. She relished designer suits by Solini and shoes and handbags by J. Renee. She decorated her home with custom draperies, frilly curtains and lots of crystal. The pride and care that Gwen took in and of her home’s interior was also reflected on the home’s exterior-so much so that she won the neighborhood award “House of the Month” several times.

As mentioned above, Granny was an outstanding of a musician and loved a variety of music and dancing. It was fascinating to see her and Edgar cut a rug, swinging or doing the two step. She crooned to tunes of yesteryear and to hits from the sixties through the eighties. She was a Bobby Womack, Smokey Robinson, Marvin Gaye, Patti LaBelle, Whitney Houston, Aretha Franklin and Rick James and Teena Marie fan. It would be hard to forget her singing and dancing to “R.E.S.P.E.C.T.” “Fire and Desire”, “Ooh Baby Baby”, “Harry Hippie”, “No Diggity”, “The Right Kinda Lover” and “I Will Always Love You”. At Christmas time, her favorite carol was “Please Come Home for Christmas”-of course, it

could only be the version by Charles Brown. But above all others, her favorite song was “The Wind Beneath My Wings” by Bette Midler. A song so powerful that it awakened her from her four-day twilight, to open her eyes and utter the words “That’s my song” only a week before she passed.

We may have lost the physical manifestation of our family’s greatest treasure; however, we know that she will always be present in every dish, every song, and every dance to love us in her own special way, until we meet again. Ms. Gwenlen, Granny, Elegance, Auntie Gwen and Mama, the Matriarch of our hearts, you will be sorely missed by your children (Oath (Bert Jr.), Jay (Gaynell) and El (Mike)), your grandchildren (Kee, Bert III, Mikey, Erin, Chris (Kiera) and Erik (Christina)), your great-grandchild (Kassadie), sister (Polly Ann), sister-in-law (Rebecca) and a host of nieces, nephews, other family members and friends.

She will live eternally in heaven with those who preceded her in death. Her mother and father Anne and Herbert, her sister Mary, her brothers Crawford, Herbert Jr. and Joseph, her beloved husband Edgar and her great-granddaughter Bella, who she is sure to enjoy holding for the first time, and of course her fur babies Sassy, Patches, Gidget, Bambi, Christy, Brandy, Tina and Margeaux. In addition to her beloved family and puppies, she’s sure to raise the roof in heaven with her road dogs-Delores Dugas, Gloria Brown, Hazel Armstrong and the Notorious Hazel Smith. Rest in power and peace; we love you Granny. You are, have always been and will always be the wind beneath our wings.

P.S. Gran, say hi to the 88’s for us! 😊

Relatives and friends of the family, priest and parishioners of St. Gabriel Catholic Church are invited to attend A Mass of Christian Burial will be held at St. Gabriel Catholic Church, 5029 Louisa Dr. on Saturday, December 8, 2018 at 10:00 am. Visitation will begin at 8:30 am. Interment: Mount Olivet Cemetery. Arrangements by D.W. Rhodes Funeral Home, 3933 Washington Ave. Please visit [www.rhodesfuneral.com](http://www.rhodesfuneral.com) to sign the guestbook.

# Cemetery

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## **Mt. Olivet Cemetery**

4000 Norman Mayer Ave.  
New Orleans, LA, 70122

# Events

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**DEC** **Visitation** 08:30AM - 10:00AM

**8**

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St. Gabriel the Archangel Catholic Church  
4700 Pineda St, New Orleans, LA, US, 70126

**DEC** **Service** 10:00AM

**8**

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