



Diane Sams

October 9, 2023

Diane Evans Sams, a woman of faith, family, and community, was born January 24, 1943 in New Orleans, Louisiana. The “Blessed” seventh daughter of twelve girls and one boy to the late James Robert Evans, Sr. and Beola Wright Evans. Diane was raised in a God-fearing household and was taught to reverence the Lord with all of her heart, mind, and soul. She purposed to live a life that would bring glory to God and she did this until she was called home on October 9, 2023.

Under her parents’ spiritual guidance, Diane was raised in the Church of God in Christ (C.O.G.I.C.). She accepted Christ as her personal Lord and Savior as a young woman. During her Christian journey she served and was a leader at St. Philip St. C.O.G.I.C. (New Orleans) under her uncle, Supt. Henry Evans; House of Faith C.O.G.I.C. (New Orleans) Dr. Benson Magee; Full Gospel C.O.G.I.C. (New Orleans) Bishop Charles E. Brown, I; New Bethel C.O.G.I.C. (Charlotte, NC) Bishop Tommie A. Murphy under watch care after Hurricane Katrina, and in 2010, she joined Abundant Life Church (New Orleans) Pastor Leroy Theard, Sr. where she was a faithful church mother until transitioning. Diane was an avid lover of reading, history, politics, and art. She was educated in the New Orleans Public School System, and in 1960, she graduated from The Booker T. Washington High School, where she excelled in sports, speech, and debate.

In 1961, Diane married the love of her life Frank Anthony Sams, Jr. They were married 39 years until his death in September of 2000. Unto this union five

children were born, Petrice (TC), Deatricia (Dede), Frank (Frankie-boy)/deceased, Timolynn (Tim), and Frank (Frank Timothy).

Diane was a fierce and loving mother. Her unwavering love and selflessness were evident in every aspect of her life. She embraced the joys and challenges of motherhood with grace, always putting the needs of her children above her own. Her children were the apple of her eye and she delighted in every milestone and accomplishment they achieved. The bond she shared with each of her children was truly extraordinary, filled with countless moments of laughter, guidance, and unwavering support.

As a grandmother, aka “Grandma,” “Grammie,” or “Gigi,” she truly blossomed, surrounding her six granddaughters and three grandsons. She often found herself being the grandmother of her grandchildren’s classmates and friends, fixing special meals, desserts, or altering clothing.

She was an amazing woman with a strong determination to provide a better and more stable quality of life for her family. One way she believed this was possible was through education. Diane attended Meadows Draughn Business College, and in 1971, completed an associate degree in Business. Later in life, while working a full time job, she returned to Southern University at New Orleans and in 2003 received a B.A. degree. She intentionally exhibited the message she would “preach” that each generation should do better than the last.

Diane worked for over 30 years as an employee of Orleans Parish School System. She leveraged this position as an opportunity to invest in the youth and families that were placed in her care for the 8 hours of the school day. Upon her retirement, she volunteered with the Broadmoor Improvement Association and was an active voting poll commissioner. Diane was an advocate for those less fortunate and often used her home on Delachaise St. as a place of refuge for persons impacted by domestic violence.

“Lady Di” or “Suga Dee” as her children affectionately called her gave many valuable lessons during her 80 years, among them: “If God didn’t think you need parents, He would have let you just grow-up like grass!” “My rules are

like God, they don't change.”, “Don't go taking wooden nickels.” and “The children of today....,”

Lady Di was a fun-loving and nurturing, spirited individual, always up for an impromptu trip, a Saturday morning shopping spree, Sunday afternoon brunch and Saints football games, or a heart-to-heart talk, but she was also an ambitious and resourceful businesswoman with the heart and soul of a true creative.

Diane was gracious in all her ways, and the epitome of class. A skilled seamstress, fashionista and trendsetter, she loved to dress and was always ready for the runway. Even with all of her accomplishments and successes, she remained humble and committed to God's work.

Diane was a superb cook. Her signature dishes were seafood gumbo, carrot cake with homemade cream cheese icing, smothered okra with shrimp and sausage, cornbread, and of course RED BEANS and rice; everyone always remembered the taste.

Diane is preceded in death by her parents, James and Beola Wright Evans, seven siblings Evalee Brown, Ernestine Williams, Lubirda “Bert” Jackson, Alice Marie Vanderson, James Evans, Jr., Janie Pearl Sanders, Deborah Hammond, “life-time love” and husband, Frank Anthony Sams, Jr., beloved son Frank Fitzgerald “Frankie-Boy” Sams, and her furry son and companion Zeus.

Diane leaves to cherish her memory and move her legacy forward five siblings: Dorothy Mae Coleman of Chicago, IL., Geraldine Manuel of New Orleans, Eugenia Jackson of Los Angeles, Carolyn Jackson of Fort Worth, TX, and Inez Barrow of Gray, LA; four children Petrice Sams-Abiodun (Taiwo) of New Orleans, LA. Deattria Johnson (Wayne) of Charlotte, N.C., Timolynn Sams of New Orleans, LA., and Frank Timothy Sams Sr. (Dana). Her 9 grandchildren LaChica E. Alexander, Tatiana U. Johnson, Oluremi P. Abiodun, Frank T. Sams Jr., Jaylynn J. Sams, Timothy D. Sams, Evan D. Sams, Tamia D. Sams, Jaxon O. Sumter, seven great grandchildren. Her dear sisters

through marriage Rosalee Verret and Joan Mae Evans and cousin Wilma “Tah” Henry; two beloved godchildren Ramel Sanders and Sonya Clemment; nieces, nephews, cousins, church family and an extended family of relations and friends from every walk of life. Relatives and friends of the family are invited to attend a Funeral Service @ Abundant Life Baptist Church, 9900 Haynes Blvd. NOLA on Saturday October 21, 2023 at 11:00 AM. Visitation 9:00 AM. Interment: Providence Memorial Park, Metairie, LA. Arrangement by D. W. Rhodes Funeral Home, 3933 Washington Ave. Please visit www.rhodesfuneral.com to sign the online guestbook. Livestreamed by Abundant Life Church NOLA on Facebook and YouTube.

Cemetery Details

Providence Park Cemetery

8200 Airline Dr.
Metairie, LA 70003

Previous Events

Visitation

OCT 21. 9:00 AM - 11:00 AM (CT)

Abundant Life Church
9900 Hayne Blvd.
New Orleans, LA

Funeral Service

OCT 21. 11:00 AM (CT)

Abundant Life Church
9900 Hayne Blvd.
New Orleans, LA

Tribute Wall



“ May *HAPPY* memories of your mom comfort you during this time. 🕊️

Pat Thomas - October 21, 2023 at 10:48 AM



“ From Allegany Fellowship Cohort 4 purchased the *Simply Elegant Spathiphyllum* for the family of Diane Sams.



From Allegany Fellowship Cohort 4 - October 19, 2023 at 10:04 PM



“ *Serene Reflections Bouquet* was purchased for the family of Diane Sams.



October 18, 2023 at 03:55 PM