



## Glenna Leslie Harrell-Burgess

July 16, 2021

Glenna Leslie Harrell-Burgess was the first child born to the late Glenn Leslie and Ruby DeJean Leslie-Johnson on July 3, 1931 in New Orleans, Louisiana. She departed this life on July 16, 2021 at the Our Lady of Wisdom Health Care Center in New Orleans.

Glenna was the loving and devoted mother of six beautiful children: Glennette, Alfred, Alton, Glenn, Stephen and Stephanie. She was married to the late Alfred E. Harrell, Sr. a Korean War Veteran (1951), and the late Albert Rashford Burgess a Tuskegee Airman and Army Air Corp Navigator (1967).

Glenna attended Corpus Christi Elementary School, Joseph A. Craig Middle school and Booker T. Washington High School in New Orleans, Louisiana. Glenna was an active member in many social and civic organizations during her middle and high school years. In her final year at Joseph A. Craig Middle school, she was crowned as Miss Craig. At Booker T. Washington High School, she served in multiple leadership roles in the student government association and the BTW civic society.

Glenna was a steadfast homemaker, and along with her mother Ruby DeJean Leslie-Johnson provided a beautiful and nurturing environment for her children, grand-children and her favorite nephew Leslie DeJean Nailer and beautiful niece Tracie Leslie-Quinn, and a multitude of family members and

friends. She was employed by the Orleans Parish School System for five-years and worked in the food service division until she joined her family in business at Howard's Eatery later to be called Chez Helené Restaurant.

At Chez Helene, Glenna worked with her aunt Helen DeJean-Pollock, the restaurants founder. Along with her brother Austin J. Leslie, her mother Ruby DeJean Leslie-Johnson, her aunt Thelma DeJean Bell-Roth, and her uncles Lester DeJean and Sidney DeJean. Glenna devoted her time, talents and treasure to help establish the family business as an iconic and historic landmark in the city New Orleans and world-wide. Glenna served as the front of house manager at Chez Helené for more than thirty-years, and with her knack for style and warm service she enjoyed greeting both repeat local guest and celebrities, i.e., Lou Rawls, Miles Davis, Cicely Tyson, Sammy Davis, Jr., James Baldwin, Henry "Hank" Aaron, Vernon Jordan, Stevie Wonder, Quincy Jones, Mickey Rooney, Carole Channing, Billy Eckstine, Red Fox and Lena Horne etc. Glenna was a staunch advocate for hard and meaningful work. She firmly believed it played an instrumental role in helping to build character. Subsequently, she required that at some point, all of her children and grandchildren would work and learn the value of earning an honest wage at Chez Helené.

Glenna was the consummate host. She enjoyed hosting family gatherings at her home for friends and family. Her favorite time of year was Mardi Gras. Annually, she hosted her Mardi Gras Day party at her Willow Street home where she served her famous red beans and rice and hot sausage link dish. Glenna also looked forward to weekly Sunday dinners at her mother's home on Miro Street, where family, friends and church members came to enjoy the family's famous creole-soul dishes.

Glenna's love for family was also manifested in her strong Christian faith and service to her church community. Glenna joined the Central Congregational

Church, United Church of Christ, in New Orleans, Louisiana in 1951. Glenna and her mother Ruby, club members and close friends worked fervently to help plant Central during its early years. Glenna served in several leadership roles at Central; the women's fellowship, women's auxiliary, and the building committee. Glenna particularly enjoyed and played a vital role in the design and maintenance of Central's interior and exterior beautification projects. She was always very particular about the altar floral arrangements, so she handled them personally. Along with her trusted friend and club-member Mattie C. Braden, she served Central Church and its surrounding community for more than fifty-years. After Hurricane Katrina, Glenna and her daughter Stephanie Harrell-Williams joined the Mount Tabor Baptist Church in New Orleans, Louisiana where they found spiritual comfort and warm fellowship under the leadership of the Rev. Dr. Ronnie M. Vinson and first lady Bridgette Vinson.

Glenna is survived by two sons Alton Emmanuel Harrell (Dianne) and Stephen John Harrell, Sr. (Deborah). Her grandsons Alfred Ephren Harrell, III (Anita), Stephen John Harrell, Jr, Maurice Anthony Williams, Jr., Ryan Christopher Harrell and Victor Hebert; her granddaughters Mia Saran Williams and Tierney Harrison; and her great-granddaughter Angel Lydia Harrell. She is aunt to Leslie DeJean Nailer (Orleanna), and Tracie Leslie-Quinn (Jonathan), and sister-in-law to Victoria Rianey-Leslie.

She is predeceased by four children Glennette Harrell, Alfred Ephren Harrell, Jr., Glenn Wellington Harrell, and Stephanie Harrell-Williams; and is also predeceased by two siblings Bernadine Leslie-Nailer, and Austin James Leslie. She is the sister-in-law to the late Wallace Nailer, the late Yvonne Gaillard-Leslie, and the late Geraldine Carr. She will be missed by the community and numerous friends.

Relatives and friends of the family are invited to attend a Celebration of Life at

11:00 A.M. on Saturday July 24, 2021 at Dillard University Lawless Memorial Chapel, 2601 Gentilly Blvd., New Orleans, LA. Visitation will begin at 10:00 A.M. Internment: Mt. Olivet Cemetery and Mausoleum. To sign the guest book please visit [www.rhodesfuneral.com](http://www.rhodesfuneral.com).

# Cemetery Details

## Mt. Olivet Cemetery

4000 Norman Mayer Blvd.  
New Orleans, LA 70122

# Previous Events

## Visitation

JUL 24. 10:00 AM - 11:00 AM (CT)

Lawless Memorial Chapel (Dillard University)  
2601 Gentilly Blvd  
New Orleans, LA 70122

## Service

JUL 24. 11:00 AM (CT)

Lawless Memorial Chapel (Dillard University)  
2601 Gentilly Blvd  
New Orleans, LA 70122

# Tribute Wall

HE

“ I will always remember growing up in Central Church with you there. We all had "Mother's" at Central and you were one of them. Thank you for the positive influence in my life and the life of others

Hermine - July 26, 2021 at 09:24 AM

EC

“ Mrs. Burgess was a life long family friend. She and my mother were both active aCentral Congregational Church. I grew up knowing her whole family. She was a king generous individual who will sorely missed.  
Emmett and Jovita Chapital

Emmett B Chapital - July 24, 2021 at 11:05 AM

MT

“ Michael & Marsha - Houston, TX purchased the Gracious Lavender Basket for the family of Glenna Leslie Harrell-Burgess.



Michael & Marsha - Houston, TX - July 23, 2021 at 03:59 PM

CT

“ Cigar Fathers and Tee Times purchased the Simply Elegant Spathiphyllum for the family of Glenna Leslie Harrell-Burgess.



Cigar Fathers and Tee Times - July 23, 2021 at 11:20 AM

CT

“ *Cigar Fathers and Tee Times purchased the Divine Peace Bouquet for the family of Glenna Leslie Harrell-Burgess.*



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**Cigar Fathers and Tee Times** - July 23, 2021 at 11:10 AM



“ *Joyful Memory was purchased for the family of Glenna Leslie Harrell-Burgess.*



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July 22, 2021 at 04:55 PM

JF

“ *Our Condolences are with the Harrell Family in this time of bereavement. Ms. Glenna will forever remain in our hearts. She was truly a Lady of Wisdom. She will be truly missed. Sleep on Ms. Glenna take your rest, we love you, but God love you best. Rest in eternity. Family our prayers for strength and peace of mind are with each one of you. God Bless and comfort you.*

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**Jerry and Connie Franklin & Family** - July 22, 2021 at 08:23 AM