



Nida Edna Harris Vital

February 24, 2021

We celebrate the iconic life of Nida Edna Harris Vital, whom GOD called home on February 24, 2021 at 84 years of age.

Nida Edna Harris was born on Thursday, December 10, 1936 in Natchez Mississippi to the late Elbert Harris and Nida Edna Henderson. Nida, affectionately known as "Betsy Ann", grew up in Natchez, eventually becoming a big sister to her brother, James Thomas Harris. Learning great oratory skills with best penmanship and calligraphy, Nida became a 1955 graduate of St. Francis High School. She then attended Jackson State University, where she pledged and crossed into Delta Sigma Theta Sorority, Inc, Delta Pi Chapter - Spring, April 28, 1958. She would graduate from Jackson State University with a B.A in Political Science. Betsy Ann then attended Tuskegee Institute where she met the love of her life, Oliver J. Vital, Sr. She would graduate from Tuskegee Institute with a Masters in Political Science.

Nida & Oliver worked tirelessly in the Civil Rights movement, working with Reverend Ralph David Abernathy, Morehouse President Emeritus and member of Omega Psi Phi Fraternity, Inc., Dr. Benjamin Elijah Mays, and Dillard President Emeritus and 16th Grand Basileus of Omega Psi Phi Fraternity Inc., Dr. Albert W. Dent. It was during their work with the civil rights movement where Dr. Albert W. Dent recruited both Nida & Oliver to teach in New Orleans, Louisiana, where Nida would start teaching as an instructor at Dillard University, and Oliver at Xavier University and New Orleans Public

School System. Delta Nida Edna Harris married Omega Man Oliver Jude Vital Sr in 1967 in Natchez, Mississippi.

Nida & Oliver had their first child Pia Marie Vital in 1968, but Pia passed away shortly after childbirth. Nida later gave birth to two sons: Oliver Jr. & Carlos.

During her tenure at Dillard University, she touched the lives of multiple students, faculty, staff, and the broader community.

She served as a teacher and academic advisor in American History, Political Science, and Governmental Affairs. She helped coordinate the campaign to elect the first Black Mayor of New Orleans Ernest "Dutch" Morial, and also worked with state and national leaders including Louisiana Governor Edwin Edwards, President Gerald Ford and President Jimmy Carter. Nida was a very active member of Delta Sigma Theta Sorority, even serving as Vice-President of the New Orleans Alumnae Chapter.

After two decades at Dillard University, Nida Vital retired to pursue a successful career in real estate while also concentrating on raising her sons. Oliver Sr., and Nida assured that both of their sons finished high school, college, and in the case of Carlos, medical school. Prior to retirement from real estate and due to Hurricane Katrina, Nida and Oliver were forced to move to the Greater Houston Metro Area with their son, Oliver Jr., grandson Oliver III, and former daughter-in-law, Twann Butler and to the home of their son, Dr. Carlos and daughter-in-law, Dr. Karla Vital along with granddaughter, Layla of Friendswood, Texas. After the birth of her granddaughter Lauryn and 2-3 years after becoming widowed in 2007, she was diagnosed with Alzheimer's. She bravely fought for fourteen years while enjoying the additional birth of her granddaughter Lianna Vital as Maw Maw. Even as Alzheimer's advanced, it couldn't take away Betsy Ann's beautiful smile, amazing personality, & beautiful funny wit & Godly soul. Although she was called home by the Supreme Healer and joins her husband, Oliver Sr., son Oliver Jr., brother, James Thomas, and Mama Nida Henderson, she is survived by her son, Dr. Carlos, Daughter-in-law, Dr. Karla, nephew, James T. Harris and niece-in-law, Stephanie Harris, grandchildren: Oliver III, Layla, Lauryn & Lianna, a host of

cousins, nieces, nephews, friends and sorors.

For the repose of Maw Maw Nida's soul and to all of the dearly departed, may Maw Maw Nida rest in the Lord's Heavenly Peace.

Relatives and friends of the family are invited to attend a Funeral Service at Tulane Memorial Baptist Church, 3601 Paris Ave New Orleans, LA 70122 on Friday, March 5, 2021 at 10:00 am. Visitation will begin at 8:30 am to 10:00 am. As mandated by the State of Louisiana due to the COVID-19 pandemic, attendance is limited. Everyone is required to adhere to all restrictions. You must wear a face mask at all times and practice social distancing. Interment: Holy Family Cemetery New Iberia, LA 70560. Arrangements by D.W. Rhodes Funeral Home, New Orleans, LA 70125. Please visit www.rhodesfuneral.com to sign the online guestbook, share memories, and condolences for the family.

Cemetery Details

Holy Family Cemetery

New Iberia, LA

Previous Events

Visitation

MAR 5. 8:30 AM - 10:00 AM (CT)

Tulane Memorial Baptist Church
3601 Paris Ave.
New Orleans, LA

Service

MAR 5. 10:00 AM (CT)

Tulane Memorial Baptist Church
3601 Paris Ave.
New Orleans, LA

Tribute Wall

RG

“ She was a presence! Growing up I remember looking up to her (literally) and thinking how cool she was. She made a statement simply by entering the room. Big smile, big hugs and big laughs. She will be dearly missed, but her legacy will live on in so many people. Keeping you all in my prayers.

Rogerwene Gifford - March 10, 2021 at 10:16 PM

LL

“ Soror Nida will be greatly missed. I will always remember her smile and kind heart. Rest in Heaven, Soror. Prayers to the family.
Lynda Roberson Louis, Ph.D. and Family



Lynda R Louis - March 05, 2021 at 03:52 PM

LH

“ To Carlos and family,
We extend our sincerest condolences on behalf of our Soror Nida Harris Vital.
God promised never to leave you or forsake you! Trust in HIS promises.



New Orleans Alumnae Chapter of Delta Sigma Theta Sorority, Inc.
Linda A. Howard-Curtis President

Linda Howard-Curtis - March 05, 2021 at 10:25 AM

KT

“ *My condolences to Bro. Carlos and the entire Harris Vital family.
Keith Taylor
Rho Phi Chapter Omega Psi Phi Fraternity*

keith taylor - March 04, 2021 at 04:22 PM



“ *My prayers to the best teacher in the world. We became friends and she guided me when I purchased my home. Rest In Peace . Sandra Wilkins*

Sandra Wilkins - March 04, 2021 at 01:52 PM