



Olivia Joshua

October 8, 2025

Olivia Wire Joshua was born on October 10, 1922, in Lemannville, Louisiana, to the union of Harrison Wire and Mary Geason Wire. She was baptized in the Mississippi River by Rev. Henry Tribbet, Sr. in August 1938, as a member of Buena Vista Baptist Church. Her deep-rooted faith guided every step of her life.

In January 1941, Olivia united in marriage with Frank Joshua Jr. After Frank's return from World War II, the couple settled in New Orleans. She raised four children in a loving, structured household, grounded in discipline and education—instilling in them the values that shaped her own life. Olivia would continue her faith journey by joining Pilgrim Progress Missionary Baptist Church in 1951, under the leadership of Rev. John Francis. She served diligently on the Junior Usher Board, a role she fulfilled with grace and devotion until Hurricane Katrina displaced her in 2005.

Olivia was more than a homemaker—she was a skilled seamstress and a union activist. She worked at Rutter Rex Manufacturing Co., where she courageously participated in a labor strike to advocate for better working conditions. Later, she joined Deansgate Manufacturing, a unionized shop, and proudly retired as a member of the International Ladies' Garment Workers Union to care for her beloved husband.

Olivia was known for her generous spirit. She taught countless young women to sew and often supplied lunches for co-workers. She was a founding member and secretary of the Willing Workers Club of New Orleans, which was founded to support her home church, Buena Vista Baptist Church.

After Hurricane Katrina, Olivia returned to Lemannville to live with her sisters, Ruth Veal and Rosemary Sorrell, and worship at her family church – Buena Vista. Eventually, she moved back to New Orleans to live with her daughter, Bernette. She remained active by participating in the senior citizens program at Reality House on Franklin Avenue—continuing to uplift those around her with wisdom and warmth.

Olivia Wire Joshua was preceded in death by her parents, her husband Frank Joshua Jr., all of her beloved siblings, her son Lynwood Joshua, and her grandson Mark Johnson. She leaves behind a loving legacy in her children: Sigmond Joshua (Carol), Chief Justice Bernette Johnson (ret.), and Frank Frederick Joshua (Rita); her eight grandchildren: Glenn Joshua (Jennifer), Tonia Ricketts, Renee Deshommes, Ph.D. (Jacques), David Johnson, Kenneth Joshua (Claudia), Judge Rachael Johnson, RaShonda Joshua-Tibbs, and Antualisa Johnson; and 15 great-grandchildren who will carry her light forward.

She also leaves a host of nieces, nephews, cousins, and friends who were touched by her strength, kindness, and unwavering love.

Family and friends are invited to attend funeral services on Saturday October 18, 2025 at 10:00 A.M at Greater St. Stephen Full Gospel Baptist Church, 5600 Read Blvd. Visitation begins at 9:00A.M. Internment at Buena Vista Baptist Church Cemetery, Lemannville, Louisiana. In lieu of flowers, please consider making a donation to the Louisiana Judicial Council-National Bar Association Foundation, Inc. scholarship fund. Contributions should be sent to

the LJC-NBA Foundation, Inc. at PO Box 384 Kenner, LA 70063.
Arrangements by D.W. Rhodes Funeral Home, 3933 Washington Ave. New Orleans, LA 70125. Please visit www.rhodesfuneral.com to sign the online guestbook.

Cemetery Details

Buena Vista B. C Cemetery

Lemonville, LA

Previous Events

Visitation

OCT 18. 9:00 AM - 10:00 AM (CT)

Greater St Stephen Full Gospel
5600 Read Blvd
New Orleans, LA 70127
(504) 244-6800

Funeral Service

OCT 18. 10:00 AM (CT)

Greater St Stephen Full Gospel
5600 Read Blvd
New Orleans, LA 70127
(504) 244-6800

Tribute Wall

EH

“ I met Mrs. Joshua when Bernette and I were students at Spelman College. When I visited New Orleans for the first time in 1971, she met me with her warm, inviting smile and unmatched gumbo! She showed the same graciousness to my mother and aunt when they visited her in New Orleans. I will never forget her sitting outside Bernette's chambers after her investiture ceremony in 2013. She had appointed herself "gatekeeper" and said proudly, "You may go in and see the Justice now." My thoughts and prayers are with Bernette and the entire Joshua-Johnson families as they celebrate Ms. Olivia's amazing life tomorrow.

Edwina Palmer Hunter

Edwina Hunter - October 17, 2025 at 11:55 PM

SC

“ I remember my mom and I used to go over to her house on the weekend as soon as we walk through the door. She would say baby, you want some vanilla wafers and ice cream i would go in the refrigerator she would have all the ice-cream you can eat .I never seen someone who had that much ice-cream and vanilla wafers .
Sgt. J Conway

Sgt. J Conway - October 17, 2025 at 12:42 AM