



Yvonne Theresa Olivier Bechet

July 5, 2020

Yvonne Theresa Olivier Bechet, a retired Lieutenant with the New Orleans Police Department, died peacefully in her sleep of natural causes on July 5, 2020 surrounded by her loving family. She was 86 years old.

The daughter of Armand G. Olivier, Sr. and Eva Francis Olivier, Yvonne, born in 1934, grew up in the Lafitte housing project. She attended Joseph S. Clark High School and not long after her 1951 graduation married Ronald J. Bechet in 1952. They welcomed four children, Ronald J. Bechet, Jr., Donna Bechet-Kilbourne, Terence P. Bechet and David M. Bechet. In 1961, while raising her children, she obtained a job at NASA becoming one of the first women to install advanced electronics on the Apollo rockets being built at the facility. Yvonne went on to be a pioneer in the New Orleans Police Department being one of only seven women to enter the Police Academy in 1968, the 44th Academy class. Only five would finish and Yvonne being the first African American Woman. Through her 22 years on the force, she took on many tasks proving her worth in the department. As a woman of color, acceptance was not always a given. Arriving for her assignment to the Second District, Yvonne found that all but one officer had called in sick not wanting to work with a Black officer. Her boss was ready to suspend all involved, but Yvonne pointed out that the officers had families to support and suggested they be allowed to return to work if they were willing to apologize, which they did. In 1972, she went undercover with the Drug Enforcement Agency and was instrumental in breaking up one of the largest drug organizations during that time. She had to

carefully conceal her arms with long sleeves even though the weather was hot and humid because she had no signs of drug use. Her drug addict persona was so convincing that the dealers arrested did not recognize her as she testified against them at trial. She received the NOPD Merit Award for her efforts.

Yvonne was promoted to Commander of the Community Relations Division after only two years on the job where she oversaw the federally funded Officer Friendly program which introduced officers to elementary school children in efforts to build a trust in the communities where people were being warned about police brutality. However, Yvonne's crowning achievement with the Community Relations Division were the summer talent shows held each week in one of the city's 11 housing projects. Sometimes as many as 500 people gathered in the courtyards of the housing projects each week for a chance to see local talent vie for a chance to appear in the finals which were held in City Park Stadium attended by several thousand people. Local musical legends Chocolate Milk were the volunteer band at the onset of the shows. It was monumental at the time as racial unrest was prominent. Officers going into the communities recruiting for the talent shows helped build trust and mend relationships between officers and the public.

As a Sergeant, Yvonne was assigned to the Police Academy as an instructor. Always looking to right injustices, as the President of the Black Organization of Police she sued NOPD on behalf of officers to ensure they had a fair chance at being accepted into the Academy. Her highest rank came during the Ernest "Dutch" Morial administration where she was appointed Deputy Superintendent of Technical Services under Chief Warren Woodfork. She retired as a Lieutenant in 1990. Today, Yvonne's legacy lives on as nearly one quarter of the police department are women.

Yvonne was a member of St. Paul the Apostle Catholic Church, founding member of The Black Organization of Police, Just Us Gals social club, Sisters In The Spirit, Fifty Five and Faster, The Rosary Group and the local chapter of AARP. She was also a part of a group of ladies affectionately known as "The

Posse” which consisted of Julia Collins, Edna Dillon, Doris Orticke, Edith Reimonenq, Lula Simms and Evangeline Walker who enjoyed travelling and gathering for each other’s birthdays at one of their favorite restaurants then going on to play cards well into the evenings.

Yvonne was preceded in death by her parents, Armand G. Olivier, Sr. and Eva Francis Olivier, and brother, Milton Olivier. She leaves to cherish her memory, her brother Armand G. Olivier, Jr. (Gwen); son, Ronald J. Bechet, Jr. (Troï), daughter, Donna Bechet-Kilbourne (Paula), Terence P. Bechet (Sheila) and David M. Bechet; Grandchildren, Yvette Bechet (Boris Palacios), Brandy Bechet, Brandon Bechet (Latoya), Alyse Bechet (Brandon Winey), Jeffrey Deblanc, Tia Alexander (Jake Walker), Aaron Bechet, Sydnie Felton-Bechet, David Felton-Bechet, Brelyn Woodridge, Madison Bechet and Chloe Bechet; Great-Grandchildren: Julian Gale, Ashanti Bechet, Angelica Sulcer, Jayden Bechet, Stella Palacios, Aubrey and Brandon Winey.

Yvonne was Mom to her kids, 2mom to Liande Wainie who, along with Harolyn Davis and Torial Ladmiraault were her “daughters of the heart”. She was Grammie to her grands and great-grands, Gaga to her great-grand Stella, Vonnie to her brothers, friends and family and Sarge, Lieutenant and Chief to her former NOPD co-workers.

Due to Covid 19 public visitation will be from 8:30 – 9:30 and a private Memorial Mass will follow at 10:00 a.m. at St. Paul the Apostle Catholic Church, 6828 Chef Menteur Hwy, New Orleans, LA 70127 on Saturday, July 11, 2020. Interment: Mount Olivet Cemetery, 4000 Norman Mayer Blvd, New Orleans, LA 70122. Arrangements by D.W. Rhodes Funeral Home, 3933 Washington Ave. New Orleans, LA 70125. Please visit www.rhodesfuneral.com to sign the guestbook.

Cemetery Details

Mt. Olivet Cemetery

4000 Norman Mayer Ave.
New Orleans, LA 70122

Previous Events

Visitation

JUL 11. 8:30 AM - 9:30 AM (CT)

St. Paul The Apostle Catholic Church
6828 Chef Menteur Hwy
New Orleans, LA 70126

Service

JUL 11. 10:00 AM (CT)

St. Paul The Apostle Catholic Church
6828 Chef Menteur Hwy
New Orleans, LA 70126

Tribute Wall

GF

“ Yvonne was a courageous, kind and beautiful lady, with the spirit of grace and strength. I will forever remember her kindness and friendship that she most graciously gave to me when I began my (civilian) employment at NOPD. Yvonne was blessed with the spirit in 2nd Timothy 4:7, She fought the good fight and she has finished the race. Her soul is n heaven with the angels which surrounds the throne of GOD.

Gloria Connelly Fosberg - July 11, 2020 at 03:34 PM

GF

“ Gloria Connelly Fosberg lit a candle in memory of Yvonne Theresa Olivier Bechet



Gloria Connelly Fosberg - July 11, 2020 at 03:27 PM

LD

“ Offering my condolences and prayers to the family of Mrs. Bechet.

Linda Douglas - July 11, 2020 at 03:24 AM

HP

“ May the Good Lord welcome Yvonne to her Heavenly home. May she RIP eternally. I remember Uvonne we'll from her days in the drug enforcement task force. Great success. Great lady. Love and sympathy. Harolyn Patin. DEA retired. ❤️🙏🙏🙏



Harold C Patin - July 11, 2020 at 12:36 AM

PM

“ Yvonne,
My best friend's (Felice) grandmother was your mother's sister. I have many wonderful memories of gatherings at their home that included you and your parents. . The one that stands out most was when you made Felice's wedding dress and all of our bridesmaids dresses. You made sure that we were all picture perfect. Her wedding was so special because of your loving attention and talents.

*Rest In Peace in God's loving arms.
Patricia Dufauchard Mincer
(Patsy)*

Patricia Dufauchard Mincer - July 10, 2020 at 08:04 PM

HF

“ *Heard Family lit a candle in memory of
Yvonne Theresa Olivier Bechet*



Heard Family - July 10, 2020 at 02:24 PM



“ *Divine Peace Bouquet was purchased for the
family of Yvonne Theresa Olivier Bechet.*



July 10, 2020 at 11:11 AM

TM

“ I met Yvonne at Nicholls High School where she was the Community Liaison Officer! She gained the respect and admiration of the students, faculty and staff! I will never forget my wonderful friend! My sincere condolences to her entire family! May God continue to Bless you! Yvonne has left you a beautiful legacy to be proud of! Love, Tanya M. Menendez

Tanya M. Menendez - July 10, 2020 at 01:28 AM

FB

“ Yvonne was a fantastic woman. We were in the police academy together and from time to time our judo instructor Donald Duke would pair her and I up. That may not sound like much, but Yvonne was about 100 lbs and I was about 210 lbs at the time. We laughed but she did what was expected of her to do. Haven't seen her in years however I feel that she left this world smiling like she always did. My condolences and prayers go out for the entire family.
Frank Buras

Frank Buras - July 09, 2020 at 04:28 PM

KH

“ My condolences to the Family. I enjoyed working with Officer Bechet at F. T. Nicholls High in the 70's and performing with the Bechet children in All That Jazz at UNO.

Karl Hymel

Karl Hymel - July 09, 2020 at 04:07 PM



“ I HAD THE PLEASURE OF WORKING UNDER YVONNE WHEN SHE WAS A DEPUTY CHIEF. SHE WAS FAIR AND CARING. MY CONDOLENCES TO HER FAMILY.

PETER BACHEMIN,
RETIRED SGT.

Peter Bachemin - July 09, 2020 at 02:42 PM

SF

“ Yvonne was such a gracious lady. She welcomed me into her home in Gentilly, many times. I was delighted to run into her at festivals on the Riverfront. She once threw a birthday party at a hall on Elysian Fields. All the guests were asked to wear black. The hall was filled with people decked out in beautiful black formal wear. Enter Yvonne in a dazzling white dress. It was dynamic. But that was not all of it. We had speeches, music and dancing. Act II with a costume change. The family second lines into the hall with red hats and other accents. and Yvonne is a red gown. It was a great night and I saw a new side of her that charmed me. She will be truly and deeply missed.

Sara Fanelli - July 09, 2020 at 10:53 AM