



Mrs. Bessie Thompson-Fleming

February 10, 1932 - February 13, 2026

Mrs. Bessie Lee (Harris) Thompson Fleming, the daughter of Clara Mae Barnard Harris and Albert Harris, was born on February 10, 1932, in Sikeston, Missouri. She was the fourth child and third daughter among ten siblings (seven girls and three boys). She was preceded in death by her parents; her siblings Carrie Mae Spearman, (Emma) Lucille Davis, Albert Sylvester Harris, Marie (Marrie) Young, and Charles Harris; and her son, Derwin D. Thompson (1998). Both of her parents lived into their nineties—Albert Sr. to the age of 90 and Clara Mae to the age of 91—as did her brother Albert, who also lived to be 91. Bessie was married first to Freddie Lee Thompson (deceased 1985) and later to Audrey Leevester Fleming (deceased January 2026).

To find work and support their growing family, Albert and Clara Mae moved around a lot across the South, from Mississippi to Missouri and Arkansas, finally settling in Eudora, Kansas. Bessie attended school at Eudora High School where she was active in sports and the choir. As the fourth of ten children, her mother, Clara, relied heavily on her to help cook meals and enroll her younger siblings in school after the family moved to Eudora, Kansas.

Growing Up and into Adulthood

To have books and clothes for school, Bessie and her siblings picked potatoes during the summer and used portions of that money to buy those things. Because there were ten children in the family, some of the older siblings had

to put paper in the bottoms of their shoes just to make it to school. According to Bessie, her dad, Albert Harris Sr., had a green thumb. He could grow tomatoes, walnuts, pecans, and even slaughter pigs. Christmas presents were simple and included an orange or an apple. She loved attending her grandchildren's sports competitions, plays, musicals, and other activities—not only to show her support, but also to reminisce about her own talents. She often recalled how well she played baseball and basketball, how fast she could run, and how smoothly she could slide into home plate—she was good. She also fondly recalled her lovely soprano voice and singing in the Glee Club.

Life's Journey

By the age of 18, the Harris Children were considered adults and were told they had to move out and begin taking care of themselves. After graduating from Eudora High School, Bessie moved to Kansas City, Kansas and wanted to be a secretary, secretary, but during the 1950's, they were not hiring blacks in those positions. She eventually got a job as an elevator operator, where she met one of her long-time friends, Ms. Leola Evans. Bessie loved to go out with friends, dancing and dressing up like the Hollywood Actresses...She developed the nickname "Mucho" from the then famous song "Bésame Mucho."

Also, along the way, she met a genuinely nice lady named Mrs. DePriest, for whom she stayed in an apartment in her multi-family dwelling. She became a surrogate mother to Bessie and eventually the Grand-Godmother to her 4 children.

Bessie met her first husband, Freddie Lee Thompson, through a fellow nurse and good friend, Mrs. Mildred Johnson. Their marriage in 1956 enriched our lives with our connection to the Wesley Family from Coffeyville, Kansas. This allowed her children to have many more aunts, uncles, and cousins, as well as the opportunity not only to learn, but also to enjoy the rural "country life,"

especially during the summer months.

In 1987, Bessie connected with some cousins of her mother, Clara Mae's family, who originally lived in Mississippi. Since her mother was older and had not seen her cousin Christine or Aunt Mary for decades, she decided to organize a Barnard-Roy Family Reunion in 1988. There were Cousins, Aunts and Uncles that they knew about, but had not either met or spent time with and it allowed everyone from Chicago, Detroit, Mississippi, Arizona, Nevada, Seattle, Washington, and South Carolina to get together. Once again, Bessie proved herself to be a visionary, planner, organizer, and implementer. We continued the Reunions every 2 years until the early 2000s.

On February 20, 1999, Bessie married her husband, Audrey Leevester Fleming creating a blended family with three adult children on both sides. Through this union, he became a grandpa to all her current and soon to be grandchildren and a grandma to his. Family was extremely important to them and having reunions and family gatherings was critical to keeping the Harris/Thompson and Fleming families connected. They were married just shy of their 27th wedding Anniversary, when her loving husband, Audrey passed away on January 2, 2026.

Mrs. Bessie Lee (Harris) Thompson Fleming became the Matriarch of the Harris family, after their parents passed away. This title reflected not only the role she embraced from childhood into early adulthood, but also the fact that she lived the longest among the ten siblings and their parents. She leaves to cherish memories and fun times with Siblings: Augusta D. Harris, Barabara A. Sheffield. Helen M. Barner, Jeffery Harris; Children: Paul G. Thompson (Christina), Meredith E. (Darie) Shellner, Troy A. Thompson; Shelia J. Jones (Fred), Trenia Fleming (Tyrone), Loinel Fleming (Sheryl). Grandchildren (8): Valerie C. Thompson-Lipe (Corey); Tova L. Thompson; Solana A.M. Shellner,

Shannon A. Shellner, Malachi Thompson, Shalay Bowman Thompson, Victor A.F. Thompson, Joscelyn S. Thompson; Great Grandchildren (7): Joshua, Corben, Kaleb, and Richard Thompson-Lipe; Sophia and Alaia Thompson; Serenity Hunter, and 1 new Great Granddaughter Laura Beth. She also leaves a host of nieces, nephews, cousins, friends, and colleagues who admired her loving, 'chill' spirit, commitment to community service, and her ability to inspire and enrich the lives of many.

Funeral Services will be held on Saturday, March 7, 2026, at 11:00 a.m. at the St. James United Methodist Church 5540 Wayne Ave. KCMO 64110.

Interment: Leavenworth National Cemetery Monday March 9, 2026. Visitation: Saturday 9 - 11:00 a.m. at the Church. Arrangements entrusted to Lawrence A. Jones & Sons. Condolences may be shared on our website.

Cemetery Details

Leavenworth National Cemetery

150 East Muncie Road
Leavenworth, KS 66048

Previous Events

Visitation

MAR 7. 9:00 AM - 11:00 AM (CT)

St. James United Methodist Church
5540 Wayne Ave.
Kansas City, MO 64110

Funeral Service

MAR 7. 11:00 AM (CT)

St. James United Methodist Church
5540 Wayne Ave.
Kansas City, MO 64110

Interment

MAR 9. 11:00 AM (CT)

Leavenworth National Cemetery
150 East Muncie Road
Leavenworth, KS 66048

Tribute Wall



“ *Beautiful in Blue* was purchased for the family of Mrs. Bessie Thompson-Fleming.



March 06 at 09:18 AM



“ *Beautiful in Blue* was purchased for the family of Mrs. Bessie Thompson-Fleming.



March 03 at 11:57 AM



“ A [Memorial Tree](/store/Product.aspx?ProductId=4518) was planted in honor of Mrs. Bessie Thompson-Fleming.

March 03 at 11:57 AM



“ *Robbin Boone lit a candle in memory of Mrs. Bessie Thompson-Fleming*



Robbin Boone - February 24 at 02:21 PM

RB

To the family of such a Bless Women of God. She will be missed. She had such a beautiful smile. always a caring loving touch for all the people she came in contact with. remember all the good times. Blessings and Love to the family Of Mrs. Bessie Thompson-Fleming.

Robbin Boone - February 24 at 02:23 PM

MS

God's blessings on you, Sister Robbin.

Meredith Shellner - February 25 at 09:17 AM

AH

Will miss my dear Sister Bess, but I'm so thankful to the Lord for taking up to be with Jesus! At 94 years of age, she had completed her work on the Earth! Many loved ones greeted her, after she was greeted by dear Jesus, Lord and SAVIOR! 🙏❤️

Augusta Harris - March 02 at 09:55 PM

RS

The Sylvan's offer prayer for you at this time. Your mother was a special person to us. Blessings on you and your family.

Robert Sylvan - March 07 at 10:05 AM