



Darlene C. Burrows

July 28, 1921 - August 4, 2022

Obituary

Darlene Collins Burrows was born July 28, 1921 in Coffeyville, Kan., the 3rd of eight children born to the union of the late William Collins and Ellen Wesley Collins.

She was reared in Coffeyville during the tough years around the Great Depression. Darlene often spoke of a close, loving and large family that made modest resources stretch a long way.

Darlene was educated K-12 in Coffeyville's public schools and endeavored to pursue a college education at the encouragement of her family.

She enrolled in junior college for a time, and continued her education at Pittsburg State University in Kansas, where she earned her Bachelor's degree in education. While in college, she joined Delta Sigma Theta Sorority, whose sisterhood she enjoyed for decades.

Darlene loved to regale all who would listen with stories of working to pay for her education. She worked as a waitress at a popular restaurant serving Black clientele in Coffeyville. When World War II began, she sought employment along with friends at a bomb factory that began operations nearby. She spoke of how a supervisor looked at her application, saw her college experience and

pulled her from a line of applicants for production jobs.

He walked her over to a line for those being hired to inspect bombs bound for the battlefield. She was hired for that higher-skilled job -- and thus did her part to help with America's war effort. This while earning money to continue her education.

After finishing Pittsburg State, Darlene began work as a teacher in the racially segregated schools of that era. In the early years of her career, she traveled across the Midwest and South in that work.

For a time, she taught in Fayetteville, Ark., public schools. She was proud of standing up to school system administrators there, demanding that her Black students in segregated classrooms receive the same quality of books and learning materials as White students.

Darlene eventually settled in Kansas City, Mo., where she met the late Monroe Burrows. They were joined in matrimony in 1953. To this union, one daughter, Lisa, was born.

At her husband's encouragement, not long after Lisa was born, Darlene enrolled in a summer Master's degree program for teachers at Columbia University's Teachers College in New York City.

Darlene's diligence and intelligence paid off as she earned a Master's degree in education from Columbia, a fact of which she was justifiably proud. Throughout her life, she encouraged all who would listen to pursue a quality education.

Darlene and Monroe doted on their only child as they made a successful life in Kansas City. Both were educators in the Kansas City Public Schools and

devoted to their work of preparing children for the future. The family were staunch members of Bethel AME Church.

They were active in the community as well. Darlene spoke of once meeting future U.S. Supreme Court Justice Thurgood Marshall at a Kansas City reception.

Darlene was devoted to her God, her family and her friends.

She retired from teaching in 1983. And for a decade, starting in 1981, she tirelessly took care of her husband Monroe after he was partially paralyzed by a serious auto accident. She was his devoted caregiver until he passed in 1991. Before then, she had labored as a caregiver for other family members as well, while working full-time as a teacher.

As her daughter began her married life in St. Louis, Darlene eagerly volunteered her services as a babysitter as she strongly “encouraged” the newlyweds to quickly have children “while she was still young enough to recognize them.”

After her first grandchild, Alexander, was born, Darlene became a frequent Amtrak traveler between KC and St. Louis.

When her second grandchild, Gabrielle, was born, Darlene decided to leave her longtime home in KC and live with her daughter in St. Louis. There, she spent years watching her grandchildren grow up and shuttling them to preschool and to their other grandmother’s home nearby.

Darlene accompanied the family on many vacations. Road trips were measured by how many restaurants she counted along the way – and food

stops to satisfy her hearty appetite. Since she never had a birth certificate, her Kansas high school diploma sufficed in lieu of a passport once on a family trip to Canada.

Darlene also enjoyed annual bus tours out of KC for seniors. It let her keep in touch with friends there and two of her sisters who went with her at times.

As she entered her 90's, Darlene's health began to fail. Even as Alzheimers began to take hold, she still retained her laugh and sense of humor at times. In her final years, her ready smile and laugh encouraged the devoted team of 24/7 caregivers who watched over her at the family home.

Darlene lived a long, full life, filled with a love for her God, family and all people. Many of her caregivers past and present stopped by her home to celebrate her 100th birthday in 2021.

A week after her 101st birthday, on Aug. 4, 2022, Darlene went to sleep early that afternoon and quietly transitioned to eternity at 2:14 p.m., shortly after a visit from a hospice chaplain.

She leaves behind to cherish her memory: a beloved daughter, Lisa Burrows; two grandchildren, Alexander and Gabrielle; son-in-law, Andre, and a host of nieces, nephews, cousins and friends. Darlene was preceded in death by her parents and 7 siblings, Wilma, Orville, Otis, Loren, Berniece, Geneva and Earlene.

Funeral services will be Sat, Aug 13, 2022, 11:30am at The Linwood Chapel. Visit 930-1130 am. Interment Forest Hill Cemetery.

Service conducted by Lawrence A. Jones & Sons Funeral Chapel.

Condolences may be shared on our website.

To send flowers
to the family or plant a tree
in memory of Darlene C. Burrows, please visit our floral store.

[Read More](#)

Tribute Wall

TV

“ A Memorial tree was ordered in memory of Darlene C. Burrows by The Valles. Plant a Tree Lisa, Andre, Alex and Gabby, We are sending our love, thoughts, and prayers during this difficult time. We are truly saddened to hear of Mrs. Darlene C. Burrows passing. Know that we are here for you. The Valles

The Valles - May 25, 2023 at 11:37 AM

GC

“ I am so sorry for your loss. May you find comfort in the beautiful memories you have shared through the years and in your love for each other. May God bless you all with power beyond what is normal as you travel through this life without her physical presence.

Gertha Coffee - August 13, 2022 at 11:11 AM

NR

“ My condolences. May her memory be a blessing. Nancy Pierron Reynolds

Nancy Reynolds - August 12, 2022 at 09:45 PM

MS

“ The first time I met Cousin Darlene and my Cousin Lisa was at a fashion show and tea put on by my Mother Bessie Thompson at Swope Park United Methodist Church. After or perhaps before the event, Darlene kept staring at my Mom. She kept saying " I know you! I know you!" Well low and behold, it so happened that she was one of my Dad Freddie Thompson's Coffeyville, KS first cousins from the Wesley family. My Cousin Lisa and I were about 25 years old. We became fast friends. From that we spent many fun times at Cousin Darlene's lovely home on 29th street off of Prospect in Kansas City, MO. Darlene loved to laugh and loved people. She was warm and inviting. I will truly miss her and her beautiful smile.

Meredith E Shellner - August 12, 2022 at 06:24 PM

SR

“ Hi Lisa, We are so sorry for the loss of your mother. Praying for you and your family. You have are sincere condolences.

Sheri and James Riley - August 12, 2022 at 01:53 PM

JE

“ I loved your mother's love for family and her stories. A fond memory was at a Wesley Family Reunion where the Collins sisters sang acapella at the family reunion talent show. Love JoVonna and family.

JoVonna Everett - August 12, 2022 at 11:04 AM

TV

“ Lisa, Andre, Alex and Gabby, We (The Valles) are Sorry for Your Loss. You all are in our thoughts and prayers. Please know that we are here for you and your family. With Love, The Valles

The Valles - August 12, 2022 at 10:14 AM

RD

“ *Condolences Lisa and family. I pray for healing and love.*

Reggie Davis - August 12, 2022 at 08:05 AM