



Dr. Gwendolyn A. Gates-Sanders

August 10, 1929 - September 17, 2024

Gwendolyn Anita Gates was born during the Great Depression on August 10, 1929, as the second of three children to George Walter Gates and Arzelia Smith Gates, who were delighted to welcome their beautiful, green-eyed baby girl into the world. As a precious middle child, Gwendolyn idolized her brilliant older sister, Winnifred, and was extremely protective of her younger brother, Ollie, whom she affectionately referred to as her "baby brother," despite being only three years his senior. The family briefly resided in Chicago with their great aunt Fanny, before returning to Kansas City where George found employment as a porter on the railroad.

In 1947, George W. Gates decided that a family-owned restaurant would be more appealing than life with the railroad. Pooling his resources, he opened "Gates Ol' Kentucky" at 19th and Vine, the first of the now-thriving restaurant chain known today as "Gates Bar-B-Q." In 1949, the family moved to 23rd and Charlotte as the population shifted, but a dream to open a bar alongside the restaurant drew George back to 19th & Vine in 1951. This dream was short-lived as a major fire forced a relocation to 24th & Brooklyn, where the business remained until 1957.

Arzelia found employment at Sally's Frock Shop downtown and eventually opened and managed her own dress shop. During this time, the family moved to Brooklyn

Avenue, continuing to

prosper. Gwendolyn graduated from Lincoln High School and briefly attended Kansas State

University. In 1949, she married Army Captain Bertram Walter Bartlett, and they had three children, Byron Walter, Olla Sue, and Bridget DeVere. Sharing her parents' entrepreneurial spirit, Gwendolyn opened a modeling school on 22nd and Indiana, teaching young women in Kansas City etiquette and modeling skills. She also formed her own modeling troupe, showcasing couture fashions from up-and-coming designers throughout the Midwest and New York. Gwendolyn even modeled with the Ebony Fashion Fair alongside Marie Cole, Nat King Cole's wife. During this period, she earned a bachelor's degree in education from Avila Catholic College in Kansas and began teaching kindergarten at Booker T. Washington Elementary School. Then in 1967, Gwen, Bert and their three children moved to Los Angeles, where Gwendolyn continued her passion for teaching with the Compton Unified School District, at Theodore Roosevelt Elementary School. This time around, however, she taught not only her kindergarten students but instructed teachers as well. In 1968, the couple resettled in the exclusive View Park area of Los Angeles and went on to receive her PhD from International University in San Diego.

After divorcing Bert in 1972, Gwendolyn pursued her lifelong passion for travel and worked summers with a Beverly Hills travel agency, organizing tours for friends and family around the globe, visiting destinations like Morocco, Brazil, France, Spain, Argentina, Egypt, and Israel, where she was baptized in the River Jordan.

In 1990, she retired with a lifetime teaching credential from LAUSD and moved to Las Vegas, where she'd built a second home from the ground up. But retirement did not slow her down. Instead, she continued to teach, lead tours, and to enjoy volunteering and sharing time with her sorority, Alpha

Kappa Alpha (AKA).

Known for her romantic heart, Gwendolyn married twice more after her divorce from Bertram: first to Leroy Schultz of the R&B group, The Platters, and finally, in 2014, to Charles Sanders, who preceded her in death after four years.

Gwendolyn lived a full life and on September 17, 2024, she passed away peacefully in her Los Angeles home at the age of 95.

Gwendolyn was preceded in death by her parents, sister, Winnifred, and her grandson, ShaKyi.

She is survived by her son, Byron; daughters, Olla; and Bridget (Maurice Johnson); brother, Ollie Gates, Sr. and grandchildren Gwendolyn; Olla; Arzelia; Bridget; Patricia; Lord Byron; Sebastian; Stephen; Corey; and George. She was a beloved aunt to Arzelia; Ingrid; Kiva; George; Ollie Jr.; and William Hill III and will be celebrated and dearly missed by a host of other relatives and friends.

Funeral Services will be held on Saturday, October 5, 2024, at 11:00 A.M. at Watkins Heritage Chapel 4000 Emanuel Cleaver II Blvd. KCMO 64130. Interment: Maple Hill Cemetery. Visitation: Saturday, October 5, 2024, from 9:00-11:00 A.M.. with Alpha Kappa Alpha Sorority Service at 10:00 A.M. at the chapel. Arrangements entrusted to Lawrence A. Jones & Sons Funeral Chapels. Condolence may be shared on our website lawrenceajones.com.

Cemetery Details

Maple Hill Cemetery

3300 Shawnee Drive
Kansas City, KS 66106

Previous Events

Visitation

OCT 5. 9:00 AM - 11:00 AM (CT)

Watkins Heritage Chapel
4000 Emanuel Cleaver II Blvd.
Kansas City, MO 64130

Sorority Service

OCT 5. 10:00 AM (CT)

Watkins Heritage Chapel
4000 Emanuel Cleaver II Blvd.
Kansas City, MO 64130

Funeral Service

OCT 5. 11:00 AM (CT)

Watkins Heritage Chapel
4000 Emanuel Cleaver II Blvd.
Kansas City, MO 64130

Tribute Wall

CM

“ *What a wonderful person and I remember modeling for her many years ago, along with Jimmy Jones of KPRS radio. She was a kind and smart spirit. She will be missed. Love you Gwen. .Chuck Moore*

Chuck Moore - October 12, 2024 at 01:13 PM

RB

“ *Renea Billings purchased the Medium Dish Garden for the family of Dr. Gwendolyn A. Gates-Sanders.*



Renea Billings - October 02, 2024 at 10:57 AM