



Ms. Mary Berkley

December 25, 1942 - February 25, 2021

Obituary

Mary Magdalene Johnson Berkley

Earthly entrance: December 25, 1942

Wings earned: February 25, 2021

On the day we celebrate the remembrance of our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ, The Lord saw fit to bless the Earth with another angel. It was a cold December, in Halifax County North Carolina. The Johnson family was excited to start opening presents and start the holiday festivities. The house was filled with an abundance of love and singing. The smell of fresh made cabbage, biscuits, fried chicken, and sweet potato jacks filled the air. Things were tight in the Johnson home, however there was never a shortage of love and music. The festivities came to an abrupt end when it was time for Mary to enter the world. Growing up, Mary was teased by her siblings about how she ruined Christmas for everybody, and they had to wait to open presents and eat. Her mother always assured her that she was the best gift she had ever received for Christmas.

Growing up, Mary enjoyed playing and working in the cotton fields, picking cotton with her siblings. Everybody in the Johnson house had a job. Her father was a sharecropper. Everybody was responsible for picking a certain amount of cotton before returning to the house. Mary was extremely scared of snakes, so most of her time in the field was spent on snake watch; which meant her cotton bag was always short. Her siblings always made sure to pick a little extra to put in her cotton bag so she wouldn't have to face the wrath of her father. The Johnson clan was raised to stick together and support each other in any circumstance, something she carried in life and instilled in her own children and grandchildren.

As a young lady, Mary made her way to Washington DC. A new life in the big city. One Spring day while walking downtown with her sisters, Mary's life would be forever changed. Mary met a tall handsome young fellow with a quirky smile and thin mustache. His name was George Washington Berkley. With George so smitten, Mary believed she had met the love of her life, and would be joined together by marriage for well over 40 plus years. To this union two children, Teresa and Anthony were born in Washington DC and later after arriving in Kansas City, a third child, Kamla was born.

When George and Mary moved to Kansas City in the late 60's, Mary had only her husband and two children. Mary filled her time by being a stay at home mom and block mom for the other neighborhood kids. Mary worked diligently with the PTA, Girl Scouts, and was a Den Mother for her son in the Cub Scouts. Mary often made the kids clothes and whatever else was needed. Soon Mary and George became close friends with their neighbors, Carl and Minnie Dixon. This friendship quickly turned into family. Mary would proudly exclaim that Minnie was her sister and first friend in Kansas City.

After the third child to the union was born, Mary felt the need to go to work outside of the home, to relieve some of the financial pressure off George. A

passion for hair had been ignited in her youth as she enjoyed brushing her aunt Liza's hair as a child. The true ignite would come later after Mary had messed up her oldest daughter's hair with a relaxer, Mary knew she had to fix this situation. Mary decided to go to Cosmetology school and become educated on how to properly care for all types of hair. Mary started Radiance Salon and began to build a legacy of hair in Kansas City. Mary was very active with the Black Hairdressers Association, and took numerous hours of continuing education through the conventions and educational seminars.

In the late 90's, Mary was recognized by Dudley Products for being a top notch stylist in the Kansas City area, for at that time over 25 years.

Later Radiance Salon became Radiance Salon and BTQ. At that time Mary's two daughters, Teresa and Kamla had joined the business and worked side by side for several years and through three different locations.

Later the trio would split in 2008, when Teresa moved to Louisiana and opened the Attitude Salon & Btq. Mary was so proud her entrepreneurial spirit had been passed to her two daughters. In 2009, the salon became Radiance Salon Beauty & Design Group, under the leadership of her youngest daughter Kamla. Mary would often proclaim, " I work for her now!", Mary refused to retire and was working as a stylist until her health began to fail. The Radiance Family meant so much to Mary, as she was more than a stylist to so many that came through the salon over the years. She often shared her love for Jesus and never missed an opportunity to tell someone how good God is and was to her.

Mary was very active in her church. As a child, she sang with the sunshine band under the direction of her mother Roena Johnson. The children would walk a dirt road to church and sing their hearts out and every Sunday. Mary

loved the Lord and loved working in the church. It was there the seed was planted.

Praising the Lord and working in the church was so important to Mary, her soul could not rest until she found a new church home in Kansas City, that came to pass when Mary joined Haven of Rest Baptist Church, under the leadership of the late Rev. Nathaniel Nelson. At Haven of Rest, Mary worked tirelessly doing what ever needed to be done. As a Deacons wife, Mary worked with the Ministers wives, Deacon wives, and Christian Leaders ministry. Over the years, Mary became a staple with the culinary committee, and would often be seen on the serving line, helping to make sure every mouth got fed, always a smile or encouraging word. Mary was active with the Sunday School, and Mission ministry. Mary served on the Usher Board as assistant Directors for Usher Board #2 and #3. Mary served as Vice President of Usher Board #1, and also served as an usher in the New Era District. Mary worked on the Communion committee, sung in the Women's Chorus, and also served as President of the Pastor's Aide. Mary was appointed to the Advisory Board because of her desire to keep things decent and in order while serving the Lord. No matter what the job was, that was needed, rather it be sweeping the floor, wiping down tables, or even washing dishes. Mary was always willing to step in and get the job done, and always with a smile. Mary would say, the Lord put us here to serve, and I'm gonna serve till he calls me home.

Mary was preceded in death by the love of her life, George W. Berkley, her parents, Roena and Shirley Johnson, her siblings, Mitchel Johnson, Jimmy Johnson, Willy Johnson, Lewis Johnson, Donel Johnson, Haywood Johnson, Shirlo Johnson, Dorothy Capehart.

Mary will be deeply missed by her children, Teresa Austin (James), George A Berkley, Kamla Paschal (Warren). Grandchildren; Durell Monroe, Nathan Berkley, Joshua Hanley (LeCrecia), Kameron Berkley, Kazmyn Paschal,

Channing Paschal. Great grandchildren; Naujea, Honesty and Promise Hanley. Mary's remaining siblings, Dillian Johnson (Christabell), Florence Piles, Roberta Joshua (Israel), Thomas Johnson, sister/niece Mary Anne Dade (Thomas).

Not to be forgotten a host of nieces, nephews, cousins, friends, church family, and the Radiance Family.

Graveside services will be Wednesday, March 3, 2021, 11:00 AM at Brooking Cemetery. Visitation will be held on Tuesday, March 2, 2021, from 5:00pm-7:00pm at the chapel. Service conducted by Lawrence A. Jones & Son Funeral Chapel. Condolences may be shared on our website. Due to COVID-19, social distancing and face coverings will be enforced. Temperature checks for all guest.

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“ *Spathiphyllum* was purchased for the family of Ms. Mary Berkley by Donna M Johnson. Send Flowers Wishing you peace to bring comfort, courage to face the days ahead and loving memories to forever hold in your hearts Love and Prayers Donna-Marie, Keisha, Tarra and Deonna Donna M Johnson

Donna M Johnson - May 25, 2023 at 01:41 PM