



Dr. Willie Gene Woods

November 3, 1943 - November 5, 2025

Dr. Willie Gene Woods was born in Yazoo City, Mississippi to the late Rev. John Wesley Woods, Sr. and Jessie Turner Woods on November 3, 1943. Willie was the eighth child born to this union of 11 siblings. Willie peacefully departed this life on November 5, 2025, at the University of Maryland Shore Medical Center in Easton, Maryland, after a short illness surrounded by her beloved family.

Willie grew up with her family in Caroline County, Maryland. She graduated from Lockerman High School in Denton, Maryland as a valedictorian of her Class of 1961. She continued her formal education, earning a Bachelor's degree from Shaw University in Raleigh, North Carolina and a master's degree from Duke University in Durham, North Carolina and her PHD degree from Indiana University of Pennsylvania.

Willie accepted Jesus as her Lord and Savior at an early age and was baptized at Harmony Missionary Baptist Church in Denton, Maryland, under the Pastorship of her grandfather, the late Rev. Dr. Turner. She was an active participant in church and served as a Trustee, choir member, pianist and worship leader.

Dr. Willie Woods began her distinguished career in education as a classroom teacher in the North Carolina Public Schools and later in the Caroline County Public School System. She subsequently transitioned into higher education upon relocating to Pennsylvania, where she joined Harrisburg Area Community College. Over the course of her tenure, she held several key

academic leadership roles, including senior Professor of English and education, academic Dean, and acting Vice President for faculty and instruction. Following her retirement from Harrisburg area Community College, Dr. Woods returned to Maryland and continued her service in academia as Dean of Arts and Sciences at Chesapeake College in Wye Mills. She retired from that role in 2011. Throughout her distinguished career Willie received numerous awards and recognitions and honors including: Who's Who in American Education, Lifetime Achievement Awards Caroline County NAACP, Maryland governor's Volunteer Service Honor and Kweisi Mfume Excellence in Advocacy Award.

Dr. Woods maintained a longstanding commitment to volunteerism and community service, consistently demonstrating a passion for uplifting others and advancing initiatives that promote justice, equality, and excellence. Her dedication to civic engagement was evident even during her college years, when she was recognized in Who's Who Among Student in American Collages and Universities. She served as a junior Counselor and an active member of the College Student Council, participating in peaceful freedom marches and sit-ins that contributed to meaningful social progress within the community.

Throughout her professional career, Dr. Woods remained deeply engaged with both professional organizations and community service initiatives. She served on numerous boards, including the YMCA, Alternative Rehabilitation Communities, and Youth Urban Services, among others. Her dedication to educational advancement and civic engagement was further exemplified by her development and launch of a community college program focused on robust community integration and service. this innovative initiative earned national recognition for its excellence and impact.

Dr. Woods was deeply involved in the local community, where she was best known for her recent tenure as President of the NAACP Caroline County Branch from 2021 to 2024. Under her leadership, and with the support of a dedicated Executive Committee, the branch implemented a strategic plan

focused on community service, launched its inaugural newsletter, and successfully doubled its active membership. In 2024, she spearheaded a year-long celebration commemorating the branches' 75th anniversary. Among her most impactful contributions was a widely publicized collaboration with Black residents of Federalsburg, the ACLU of Maryland, and the Caucus of African American Leaders of the Eastern Shore. This coalition advocated for reforms to Federalsburg's election system to bring it into compliance with the voting Rights Act and to ensure equitable representation, including the opportunity for a person of color to be elected to the Town Council.

Dr. Woods continued her civic engagement with distinction, serving as Chair of the Board of Directors for the Lockerman School Association, Inc. She was also a former board member of the Talbot Historical Society, where she played a pivotal role in establishing a permanent museum exhibit dedicated to the African America experience. Her decades of community involvement are reflected in the numerous awards and leadership recognitions she received. A lifelong member of Alpha Kappa Alpha Sorority, Inc. Kappa Theta Omega Chapter, Easton, Maryland, where Dr. Woods held various leadership roles within this organization, including serving as Chapter President. Dr. Woods also is a lifetime member of the Africa American Museum in Washington, D.C. Willie had a generous inner spirit which was reflected: Joyfulness (She enjoyed traveling with family and friends, with her clothing style, you know, shopping was something she enjoyed very much); Practical (She was an avid reader and always willing to learn and share with others). She enjoyed volunteering to improve lives the of individuals. Deep Thoughtfulness (Her happiest moments were spending time with her family where she looked forward to many family gatherings and celebrations).

Dr. Woods was a servant leader committed to using God-given skills and expertise in ways to help educate, elevated and empower others to succeed. She put God first in all her endeavors and was led by the Holy Spirit.

Family members preceding her in death are her parents, Rev. and Mrs. John

Woods, Sr. of Preston, Maryland, her brothers, Benjamin Woods and Maurice Woods and her sisters, Alice Watkins and Mattie Woods.

She leaves to cherish: her four sisters, Ezola Webb of Preston, MD, Cozy Street (Newlin), of Smyrna, DE, Jessie Woods of Dover, DE and Hattie Woods, Harrisburg, PA; two brothers, Rev. Alfred Woods, Front Royal, VA and John Woods, Jr. (Linda) Chesapeake, VA; sister-in-law, Lynda Woods of Cleveland, OH; niece, Sherri Woods Spratt (Jefferey) of Pataskala, OH; nephews, Anthony Woods of Bedford Heights, OH, Donald Woods of Cleveland, OH and Darnell Watkins, Atlantic City, NJ; cousins, Misty Brown of Varina, NC, Nazelle Jefferson of Jackson, MS, Robert Turner (Clara) of Federalsburg, MD, Martha Dickerson of Federalsburg, MD and many grand nieces and nephews and other relatives.

Previous Events

Visitation

NOV **19**. 4:00 PM - 7:00 PM (ET)

Bennie Smith Funeral Home - Easton
426 E Dover St.
Easton, MD 21601
(410) 822-7228
info@benniesmithfuneralhome.com
<https://www.benniesmithfuneralhome.com/>

Visitation

NOV **20**. 10:00 AM - 11:00 AM (ET)

St. Luke's U.M.C. (Denton, MD)
100 South 5th Street
Denton, MD 21629

Funeral Service

NOV **20**. 11:00 AM (ET)

St. Luke's Methodist Church (Denton)
100 South 5th Ave.
Denton, MD 21629

Live Stream Broadcast on Facebook

NOV **20**. 11:00 AM.

Bennie Smith Funeral Home MD / VA

Tribute Wall



“ Bennie Smith Funeral Home created a Tribute Video in memory of Dr. Willie Gene Woods



Bennie Smith Funeral Home - November 20, 2025 at 12:45 PM



“ Bennie Smith Funeral Home created a Webcast in memory of Dr. Willie Gene Woods



Bennie Smith Funeral Home - November 20, 2025 at 11:24 AM

PS

“ Peter H. Singleton lit a candle in memory of Dr. Willie Gene Woods



Peter H. Singleton - November 24, 2025 at 09:53 AM

CA

“ It was clear upon first meeting you that you were a force to be reckoned with, a true scholar and icon of leadership. I am blessed and honored to have worked with you for a short time. Your legacy will impact this region for many years to come. Rest in Power, Dr. Woods!



Christine Allison - November 20, 2025 at 04:22 PM

FB

“ To my friend, soror, and fearless NAACP leader. I will always cherish your words of wisdom and guidance that helped me through good and bad times. I will miss you and your warm spirit. Faith Blackburne-Proctor, NAACP National Board of Directors.

Faith T Blackburne - November 20, 2025 at 11:28 AM

AD

“ Alfreda Evangeline DennisBowyer sent a virtual gift in memory of Dr. Willie Gene Woods



Alfreda Evangeline DennisBowyer - November 20, 2025 at 10:24 AM

AD

“ It is with heart felt sympathy I share my love and support to the Woods Family. I praise God for the time He allowed us to share precious moments with Dr. Woods. A Rose among Roses. Rest in Peace and Power 🙏



Alfreda Evangeline DennisBowyer - November 20, 2025 at 10:19 AM

MW

“ Michele Wayman lit a candle in memory of Dr. Willie Gene Woods



Michele Wayman - November 19, 2025 at 04:46 PM

DB

“ Dana Bowser lit a candle in memory of Dr. Willie Gene Woods



Dana Bowser - November 19, 2025 at 03:21 PM

DB

Dr. Woods always exemplified grace, class, and a spirit of excellence. Rest in eternal peace.

Dana Bowser - November 19, 2025 at 03:24 PM

LE

“ I first met Dr. Woods when she served as the Dean of Arts & Sciences of Chesapeake College; she quickly became my mentor and role model, not only for her compassion for students, but also for empathy for everyone. After her retirement, we crossed paths many times, through her continual altruism and dedication to students; I'm proud to consider myself her friend. Life won't be the same without her.

Linda Earls - November 19, 2025 at 03:05 PM

FT

“ Faith Tull-Church lit a candle in memory of Dr. Willie Gene Woods



Faith Tull-Church - November 19, 2025 at 02:20 PM



“ Pink Tribute Spray was purchased for the family of Dr. Willie Gene Woods.



November 19, 2025 at 10:50 AM

JP

“ Janet Pauls lit a candle in memory of Dr. Willie Gene Woods



Janet Pauls - November 18, 2025 at 06:43 PM

MT

“ I know Dr. Woods from my days as a student, then PT staff, then colleague at Chesapeake College. She was as gracious, helpful and compassionate toward me in my student days, as she was when we worked together. Dr. Woods moved through her days with elegance and grace. Plus, she was a great beauty and dynamite dresser!

Marylou Towey - November 18, 2025 at 05:21 PM

GC

I met Dr Willie G. Woods 43 years ago when I first came to Ridgely, MD, Replanted Zion UME, and we Bonded, she Encouraged and Supported my Military Career for over 30 years then when I Retired Placed me on the list for Grants to attend Chesapeake College upon my Retirement from the Military... She later became my Instructor at the College and Supported my Ministry. She has Left an Unforgettable Legacy for Us All. My Prayers are With Her Family and That The Torch She Carried Will Be Forever Carried On To Continue Her Work As We Continue To Celebrate Her Life...As She Has Taken Flight To Soar With Her Angels In Heaven And Bear Watch Over Us All...REST I PARADISE MY SISTER AND ENCOURAGING FRIEND...

Geraldine Caraballo - November 18, 2025 at 10:48 PM

CC

*“ To family of Dr. Woods. The candle is a representation of the glow that's surround is all
My best to all during this time. Will miss you.*



Carolyn Causey - November 18, 2025 at 02:27 PM

JM

“ Jacki McArdle lit a candle in memory of Dr. Willie Gene Woods



Jacki McArdle - November 18, 2025 at 12:54 PM



“ Joyful Memory was purchased for the family of Dr. Willie Gene Woods.



November 18, 2025 at 09:39 AM



“ Judy Gordon lit a candle in memory of Dr. Willie Gene Woods



Judy Gordon - November 17, 2025 at 09:19 PM



A Phenomenal Woman has left this world too soon, leaving behind a legacy of grace, courage, and compassion. She lived with intention and loved with her whole heart. Those who knew her carry her spirit, her wisdom and her warmth. Her journey was shorter than it should have been, but her influence was great, her contributions vast. Her memory will remain a guiding light. Rest in Peace, Dr. Woods.

Judy Gordon - November 17, 2025 at 09:33 PM



“ Kamal Hennayake lit a candle in memory of Dr. Willie Gene Woods



Kamal Hennayake - November 17, 2025 at 07:17 PM



“ *Full Of Love Bouquet was purchased for the family of Dr. Willie Gene Woods.*



November 17, 2025 at 11:09 AM



“ *Linda Earls planted a [Memorial Tree](/store/Product.aspx?ProductId=4518) in honor of Dr. Willie Gene Woods.*

Linda Earls - November 17, 2025 at 11:09 AM



“ *Days of Sunshine Bouquet was purchased for the family of Dr. Willie Gene Woods.*



November 17, 2025 at 09:28 AM



“ *Caroline County Branch of the NAACP purchased the Pink Potpourri Bouquet for the family of Dr. Willie Gene Woods.*



Caroline County Branch of the NAACP - November 16, 2025 at 08:31 PM



“ *Simply Elegant Spathiphyllum was purchased for the family of Dr. Willie Gene Woods.*



November 16, 2025 at 02:58 PM



“ *Sincerely, Robert and Jean Ragin planted a [Memorial Tree](/store/Product.aspx?ProductId=4518) in honor of Dr. Willie Gene Woods.*

Sincerely, Robert and Jean Ragin - November 16, 2025 at 02:58 PM



“ *Hilton and Margaret Friend purchased the Full Of Love Bouquet for the family of Dr. Willie Gene Woods.*



Hilton and Margaret Friend - November 16, 2025 at 10:31 AM



“ *Hilton and Margaret Friend planted a [Memorial Tree](/store/Product.aspx?ProductId=4518) in honor of Dr. Willie Gene Woods.*

Hilton and Margaret Friend - November 16, 2025 at 10:31 AM

GP

“ Geraldine Pauls lit a candle in memory of Dr. Willie Gene Woods



Geraldine Pauls - November 15, 2025 at 12:30 PM

TW

“ Sorry For Your Loss



Thomas Widgeon - November 15, 2025 at 07:31 AM

SH

“ S. Lorenzo Hubbard lit a candle in memory of Dr. Willie Gene Woods



S. Lorenzo Hubbard - November 14, 2025 at 09:38 PM

SH

Keeping the entire family in my thoughts and prayers! ❤️

S. Lorenzo Hubbard - November 14, 2025 at 09:42 PM

EE

“ *Edith Taylor Elzie lit a candle in memory of Dr. Willie Gene Woods*



Edith Taylor Elzie - November 14, 2025 at 04:56 PM

PF

To the woods family may the peace of God continue to bless and keep you always in perfect peace it's been years since I seen or talk to the family I am here for you call me at any time sorry I will not be able to come but my heart and prayers will always be with you praise God for willie rest on truly will miss you love you and also love the family love you all be bless pat ockimey from baltimore md

Pat ockimey shirley carter woods friend - November 16, 2025 at 11:12 AM