



Jessie Cottman Smith

November 15, 1928 - December 10, 2020

JESSIE'S AMAZING JOURNEY

To everything there is a season, and a time to every purpose under the heaven:

It all began on Thursday, November 15, 1928 when the fifth of nine children was born to the late Jesse T. and Virgie A. Cottman. Reared in a small community known as Tindley's Chapel in Somerset County, Jessie traveled far and wide during her lifetime, but there was no place like home for her. On Thursday, December 10, 2020, while at Tidal Health in Salisbury, Maryland, she transitioned from her earthly home to her heavenly home in glory.

Jessie's academic journey took her to places that some could only imagine because of her humble beginnings. From a one-room schoolhouse in Tindley's Chapel to graduating from Worcester High School in Newark, Maryland at the age of fifteen to matriculating at Maryland State College in Princess Anne, Maryland, she had only just begun. After earning a Masters of Science in Library Science from Columbia University in New York City, New York, she returned to the Eastern Shore to begin her teaching career at Worcester High before making a career-move to her alma mater, Maryland State College which was eventually renamed the University of Maryland

Eastern Shore (UMES) as first a Reference Librarian and then as the Director and finally retiring as Dean of the Library.

During her tenure and stellar career at UMES, Jessie had the opportunity to travel extensively. She spent a year at Stanford University in California, 6-weeks in Zambia, a foray to Egypt and assignments throughout the United States too numerous to mention.

In 1970, Jessie met her soulmate and after a two-year romantic courtship, she married the love of her life, Master Sergeant Morris B. Smith, on November 25, 1972. Their union was filled with life, love, laughter, family, friends and their beloved pets. They traveled by car, cruise ship, plane and motorhome, but always together. Morris and Jessie remained blissfully married until his passing on February 1, 2014.

Upon her retirement from UMES on November 30, 1998, Jessie became even more active in her church where she had always been a lifelong faithful and dedicated servant, lending her expertise in various capacities. Among other responsibilities at Mount Zion, she served as Chairperson of the Pastor Parish Relations Committee and Church Lay Leader.

Although retired, Jessie found more time to devote to her alma mater, the University of Maryland Eastern Shore. She was a true Hawk for life—powerful, swift, strong, graceful, admired, respected and well-loved. A two-time inductee into the UMES National Alumni Association's Hall of Fame, Jessie proudly epitomized true school spirit and never missed the opportunity to exhibit and support the "maroon and gray."

Whether you knew her as Aunt Jessie, Cousin Jessie, Mrs. Smith, Ms. Jessie or Boss Lady, she was a force of nature all by herself. She lived her best life, made the most of it and enjoyed every minute of her life well-lived.

Indelible memories of Jessie's life and legacy will be remembered by: her nieces, Shirley Hamilton, Sheila Turner (Clifton), Felicia Johnson, Cheryll Mills (Carroll), Nelva White—her godchild (Barry), Natalie Collier, Sheila Smith, Ann Timmons and Pamela Smith (Maurice); her nephews, William Collier, Jr., Bryan Collier (Kristina), Gerald Smith, Jr., Gregory Smith and Gene Smith (Qiana); great nieces, Robin Manigault, Nicole Selby (Demond), Alicia Pleasant (Mahlon), Erica and Jessica Mills (her godchild), Briana White, Monica and Michelle Turner and Haley, Chloe and Ava Collier; great nephews, David Johnson (Jasmine), Lamar Collier, Derrick Smith (Malena) and Justin White; brothers-in-law, Gerald Smith (Gracie) and William Collier, Sr. (Elsie) and a host of great-great nieces, great-great nephews, cousins, colleagues and friends. Her lhasa apso, Moli Minty Smith, also shares our grief at her overwhelming loss.

In addition to her parents, siblings, in-laws and husband, Jessie was preceded in death by her only godson, Shannon Lamar Hamilton.

Those we love must someday pass, beyond our present sight,
Must leave us and the world we know without their radiant light.
But we know that like a candle, their lovely light will surely shine,
To brighten up another place, more perfect, more divine.
And in the realm of Heaven, where they shine so warm and bright;
Our loved ones live forevermore, in God's eternal light.

SORROWFULLY SUBMITTED ~ THE FAMILY

Tribute Wall

MP

“*Mrs. Jessie C. Smith was my Mentor. She had a zest for life, and lived the finest. Education and having your resources were very important, along with her social status, to get along with everyone she came in contact with. Encouraging and firmness she gave to she cared about. I will miss her comical ways of saying things to either get your attention, and being serious as she said it. Ms. Jessie achieved a lot while she lived her life, I will never forget her, and her smiles. Love you. Sheila Palmer*

Ms. Sheila Palmer - December 16, 2020 at 02:23 PM

LW

“*I remember Ms. Jessie as a very strong and vibrant leader. She was always very passionate about all of herpursuits. She will be sadly missed.*

Lloyd Ward - December 16, 2020 at 12:11 PM

CW

“*Cousin Jessie you will be greatly missed as one of the many Matriarchs of our Family. I will miss picking up the phone calling you for a chat or advice filling the void when my mother passed.*

Carl Wayne Wesley - December 15, 2020 at 07:47 PM

DL

“ To All of Us That Loved Aunt Jessie, The Death of Aunt Jessie was sudden, although she was sick she was a fighter, and I expected her to recover. She will truly be missed. Although, we are sad and feel empty today. Aunt Jessie lived her life. The 1st day I met her she let me know that she enjoyed life. Family may I offer some comfort to you. Prayer time and all the fond memories Aunt Jessie leaves with us to cherish. Will help ease the emptiness we feel today. Love Lewis Family East Orange, New Jersey

Delores Lewis - December 15, 2020 at 07:26 PM

CF

“ Cousin Jessie - you were a positive light in our lives and will live on forever in our hearts.

Cousin Carl and Patricia Wesley and Family - December 15, 2020 at 06:34 PM

GF

“ Our thoughts and prayers are with you.

Gerald & Gracie Smith and Family - December 15, 2020 at 09:43 AM

AN

“ My sincere condolences to the family of Mrs. Jessie Smith, the life of the party, but always a lady!! Jessie was a dear friend and also a colleague at the University of Maryland Eastern Shore. She will be sorely missed. As she so named me, Miss Lookin' Good Noble

Annette Noble - December 14, 2020 at 04:01 PM

DW

“ As a freshman entering Maryland State College in 1966, I was assigned by Dr. William O. Hull as her library assistant. When I walked into the library and saw her sitting behind the desk, the first thing I noticed was her awesome smile and her friendliness to a student that was really nervous. She had the uncanny knack of putting everyone at ease and I soon learned how to be her assistant. I must have done well because she requested me to be her aide every semester until I graduated in 1970. I spent four years admiring her as a person of warmth, of dignity, and of moral character. Ms. Jessie and I quickly developed a friendship that has lasted since my graduation. She became acquainted with my family, always asking about my children. As the years went by, she also got to meet my granddaughters and grandson who were students at UMES. My last conversation with her centered around her telling me to join swimming lessons at the "Y" with her. She was over 90 and I was over 70! What a pair we would have made but I never had the chance to go swimming with her, the pandemic happened. Thank you family for the opportunity to know and love Ms. Jessie. She was an inspiration and is deeply missed. It is my prayer that God will sustain each of you with His presence as you say farewell. Respectfully with Love, Rev. Dr. Doretha S. Whittington, Pastor St. John African Methodist Episcopal Church, Pocomoke

Doretha S. Whittington - December 13, 2020 at 08:03 PM

WA

“ To The Family:It is truly very difficult to truly express my condolence for the transitioning of a "great" LADY and "FOREVER HAWK" who was amazing and special. Jessie was very considerate and most dedicated during her years at Maryland State College/UMES. For those of us who truly knew and worked with her, she will live on in our hearts and memories. May the blessings of God be showered upon you as you go through this life changing experience. God take only the best to share eternity with Him, Jesus Christ and Holy Spirit. You will see her again, she is gone but NEVER to be forgotten. Jessie is safely HOME, forever in the presence of God.Hawk Love.William F. Armstrong,Class of 70, MSCThe Best and LAST

William F Armstrong - December 12, 2020 at 01:36 PM