

Pallbearers

Nephews
Honorary Pallbearers
Deacons of Rehoboth Baptist Church
First Nazareth Baptist Church

Floral Bearers

Nieces
Honorary Floral Bearers
Deaconesses of Rehoboth Baptist Church
First Nazareth Baptist Church

Acknowledgement

We, the family of Mrs. Celeste Davis Sweeney would like to thank Reverend Blakely N. Scott and Members of First Nazareth Baptist Church for allowing the use of this church for this homegoing celebration of our beloved Celeste. Your kindness will never be forgotten. Dr. Ivory Thigpen and the Members of Rehoboth Baptist Church for welcoming Celeste and for making her one of your own. Thank you for your visits, phone calls and all the kindnesses shown during her illness. Caregivers: LaTisha Sweeney, Novella Kirkland, Gloria White, Renee, Teri, etc. who provided loving care during her illness. Neighbors, Relatives, Former Students and Friends who checked on her, transported her to appointments, prepared meals and ran errands throughout her illness. Crescent Hospice Care and Bayada Home Healthcare for providing outstanding and caring services in the home.

*Homegoing Celebration
In Loving Memory
of
Mrs. Celeste Davis Sweeney*



*Saturday, July 6, 2024
12:00 Noon*

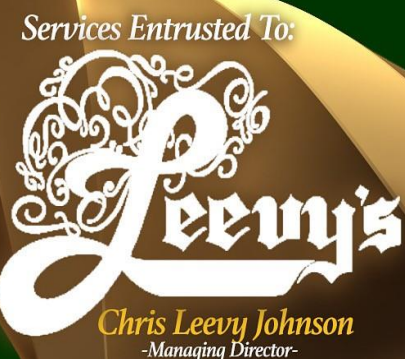
*First Nazareth Baptist Church
2351 Gervais Street
Columbia, South Carolina*

*Reverend Dr. Blakely N. Scott
-Pastor-*

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-General Manager-

Reflections of the Life of Mrs. Celese Davis Sweeney

Celeste was born to the late Otis and Ella Dixon Davis on December 21, 1943, in Greenville, South Carolina. She grew up on a farm with her 12 siblings where she developed a “green thumb” and loved plants and flowers, which were exhibited in her home(s), wherever she lived.

At the age of 8, she joined Rock Hill Baptist Church #2 in Greenville, South Carolina, and remained active until moving to Columbia after completing college. She then joined Second Nazareth Baptist Church, under the leadership of Reverend William M. Bowman, and served there faithfully for many years. After her beloved husband, James W. Sweeney passed, she joined First Nazareth Baptist Church, under the leadership of Reverend Dr. Blakely N. Scott. Other church memberships included Ebenezer Baptist Church in Rock Hill, SC and Greater Travelers Rest (House of Hope) in Decatur, GA, under the pastorate of Dr. E. Dewey Smith, Jr. Most recently, she joined Rehoboth Baptist Church in Columbia, under the pastorate of Reverend Dr. Ivory Thigpen. In May of 2024, she was blessed and honored to have the title of Deaconess Emeritus bestowed upon her at Rehoboth.

Her service in these churches was extensive and included the following: Sunday School teacher for youth; Youth Directress; member of Deaconess, Missionary and Choir ministries; Women’s Day co-chair; Church Anniversary co-chair; organizer for feeding the homeless and hungry; seminary leader; counselor for youth, veterans and others and the list goes on. Celeste was a true servant of God who stayed on the battlefield until her illness would not allow her to physically serve any longer. Even in failing health, she sent out prayers and daily inspirational messages to those she thought may want or need them. On Sundays, even though she was homebound, she tuned in to services on YouTube. She had a heart for God and wanted everyone to know of His goodness, grace and mercy.

Celeste’s educational background included attending the segregated public schools in Greenville, including Mt. Pleasant and Sullivan Street Elementary schools. In 1962, she went on to graduate with honors from Fuller Normal Institute, a private school supported by the Holiness Churches. After high school, she entered Allen University in Columbia, South Carolina, graduating with a BS Degree in Science, with a minor in Biology and Physical Education. While at Allen, she became a member of Alpha Kappa Alpha Sorority, Inc. She continued her education at the University of South Carolina and received the MA Degree in Advanced Counseling. Celeste was a lifelong learner and studied further at USC and Nova Universities, earning enough hours for the Educational Specialist Degree.

Celeste chose Education and Counseling as a career beginning in 1966 at Twin Cities High School in Batesburg, South Carolina, where she taught a variety of science courses, along with Physical Education. She also served as a temporary basketball and cheerleading coach. From there she taught similar courses at Winnsboro High School. In 1971, Celeste served as Director of and

When Tomorrow Starts Without Me

When tomorrow starts without me, and I’m not here to see,
If the sun should rise and find your eyes, filled with tears for me.

I wish so much you wouldn’t cry the way you did today,
while thinking of the many things we didn’t get to say.

I know how much you love me, as much as I love you,
and each time you think of me, I know you’ll miss me too.

When tomorrow starts without me, please try to understand
That an angel came and called my name and took me by the hand

The angel said my place was ready in heaven far above
And that I’d have to leave behind all those I dearly love.

But when I walked through Heaven’s gate, I felt so much at home
When God looked down and smiled at me from His great golden throne.

He said, “This is eternity and all I’ve promised you.”
Today my life on earth is past, but here it starts anew

I promise no tomorrow but today will always last
And since each day’s the same day, there’s no longing for the past.

So when tomorrow starts without me, don’t think we’re far apart,
For every time, you think of me, I’m right there in your heart.

Memories



counselor for the Trio/Upward Bound Program at Allen University and taught Health and Psychology for veterans of the Vietnam War. She began working at Spring Valley High School in 1975 where she served as counselor for grades 9-12. She oversaw seeking and advising students about scholarships and, through her efforts, students earned over \$300,000 in scholarship aid, which was a major accomplishment in the 1980's. Celeste also worked to produce National Merit Scholars, handling detailed paperwork and encouraging students to work hard and complete the application process. Celeste was a member of the Selection Board for the South Carolina Governors' Program. She developed an alternative to the out-of-school suspension program and students were referred to her for intensive, one-on-one counseling instead of being sent home where many of them were unsupervised. This program became the model for in-school suspension programs and was implemented statewide. Celeste also served as a guidance counselor at Richland Northeast High School where she reached out to many students through individual and group counseling. She established a teen pregnancy program and encouraged students to stay in school to make a better life for themselves and their children. They received guidance in making college, vocational and career choices. As a result of her outstanding service to the school district and to the community, Celeste was honored by The National Council of Negro Women, Inc. as an Outstanding South Carolinian in 2012.

After a stellar career as an educator/counselor, she retired from Irmo High School where she served as Guidance Director, handling the arduous task of creating the master schedule, among other duties. She loved her work because it involved service to the students and the larger community. It was not just a vocation; it was an avocation, a calling from God. Many of the students whose lives she touched stayed in contact with her over the years, expressing gratitude to her for the love and guidance that she provided.

At the age of 13, she met the love of her life, James Walter Sweeney. They dated for several years before marrying in June of 1968 and served as Deacon/Deaconess together at Second Nazareth Baptist Church until James' untimely death in 1989. From this union, two sons were born: James Tyrone and Courtney Jermaine. She adored her sons and, after their father's death, continued to provide for them and demonstrate sacrificial love in raising them as a widowed mother with God at her side. As a Christian woman, she taught them about unconditional love and raised them in the fear and admonition of God. She encouraged them to give their best in whatever capacity they served. She doted on her grandchildren, whom she loved dearly and was proud of their accomplishments.

Celeste leaves to cherish her memories her two sons: James Tyrone (LaTisha) and Courtney Jermaine (Tazbah) Sweeney of Rock Hill; three grandchildren: Tyra René, Briana Nicole and Alexander James Sweeney of Rock Hill, SC; one sister: Inez Davis Thomas of Decatur, GA; a brother: Otis Davis, Jr. of Greenville; three sisters-in-law: Bobbie Hall, Bernice Calhoun and Sharon Smith, all of Greenville SC. She also leaves a host of adoring nieces, nephews, cousins, godchildren, as well as unofficially adopted children whose lives she positively impacted along the way. While she will be sorely missed by those left behind here on earth, she will join a host of family members who await her on the other side. Most importantly, she will be with her heavenly Father and will eternally rest in His bosom. TO GOD BE THE GLORY; FOR THE GREAT THINGS HE HAS DONE!!

Order of Service

Prelude
Processional.....“Soon and Very Soon”.....Choir
Viewing.....Funeral Directors
Old Testament.....Psalm 121:1-8.....Dr. James Adams
New Testament.....Romans 8:35-39.....Minister
Prayer of Comfort.....Minister
Musical Selection..... “You Fight On”Choir
Remarks.....Dr. Risha Young (Neighborhood/Friend)
(Two Minutes, Please) Mrs. Teresa Singleton (Friend)
 Mrs. Elouise Coleman (Friend and Colleague)
 Ms. Cirena Counts (Former Student)
Musical Selection.....“I Must Go On”.....Choir
Remarks.....Deacon Ron and Deaconess Lisa Willis (Godson and Goddaughter)
 Mr. Harrison Reardon (Deacon, First Nazareth)
 Mr. Aaron Lucas (Former Student)
Tribute from the Grandchildren.....Ms. Tyra Sweeney
Resolution(s).....Rehoboth Baptist Church
Silent Reading of the Obituary
Musical Selection.....“On the Distant Shore”.....Mr. Alvin Hinton
Eulogy.....Reverend Norman H. Thomas, Jr.
 Pastor, First Baptist Church, Gresham Road, Atlanta, Georgia
Recessional.....“Going Up Yonder”.....Choir
Postlude

Committal, Benediction, and Interment
Crescent Hill Memorial Gardens
2603 Two Notch Road
Columbia, South Carolina

Memories

