

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.*

Pallbearers

Family and Friends

Floral Bearers

Family and Friends

Acknowledgement

We, the family of Ms. Ora Lee Whaley, would like to thank each of you for your prayers, love, and support shown to us during the passing of our loved one. It is our prayer that the Lord blesses each of you in a very special way.

Celebration of Life In Loving Memory of Ms. Ora Lee Whaley



Saturday. April 11, 2026

1:00 p.m.

Leevy's Funeral Home Chapel

1831 Taylor Street

Columbia, South Carolina

Reverend Luther Scott

-Officiating-



Obituary

Ms. Ora Lee Whaley was born on February 28, 1952, in Florence, S.C. She was the beloved daughter of the late Silas and Mamie Whaley. Ora was raised in Brooklyn, NY, and later relocating to Columbia, SC to be closer to her parents. Ora loved her parents and helped care for them during their illnesses.

Ora attended public elementary and junior high schools graduating from Sarah J. Hale High School, in 1970, Brooklyn, NY. She furthered her education at Kings Borough Community College, earning her first college degree. Ora worked at St. John's Queens Hospital, in Queens, NY for many years. After relocating to Columbia, SC, she attended the University of South Carolina and Midlands Technical College, where she received her certification as a surgical technician. She was employed for twenty years as a Surgical Technologist at Richland Memorial Hospital, now known as Prisma Health Richland Hospital. She also did private care for in-home seniors and was requested to care for others that needed home medical assistance. Ora loved helping those who were sick, as this was her passion. She was excellent in her field of nursing.

She later met the father of her children, Nathan U. Ashford, they were blessed with three sons. After becoming a mother, she devoted herself fully to raising them with love, strength, and guidance. She was both nurturing and firm, always encouraging them to do their best in school and in life. Ora shared a unique and special bond with each one of her sons, loving them deeply in her own way.

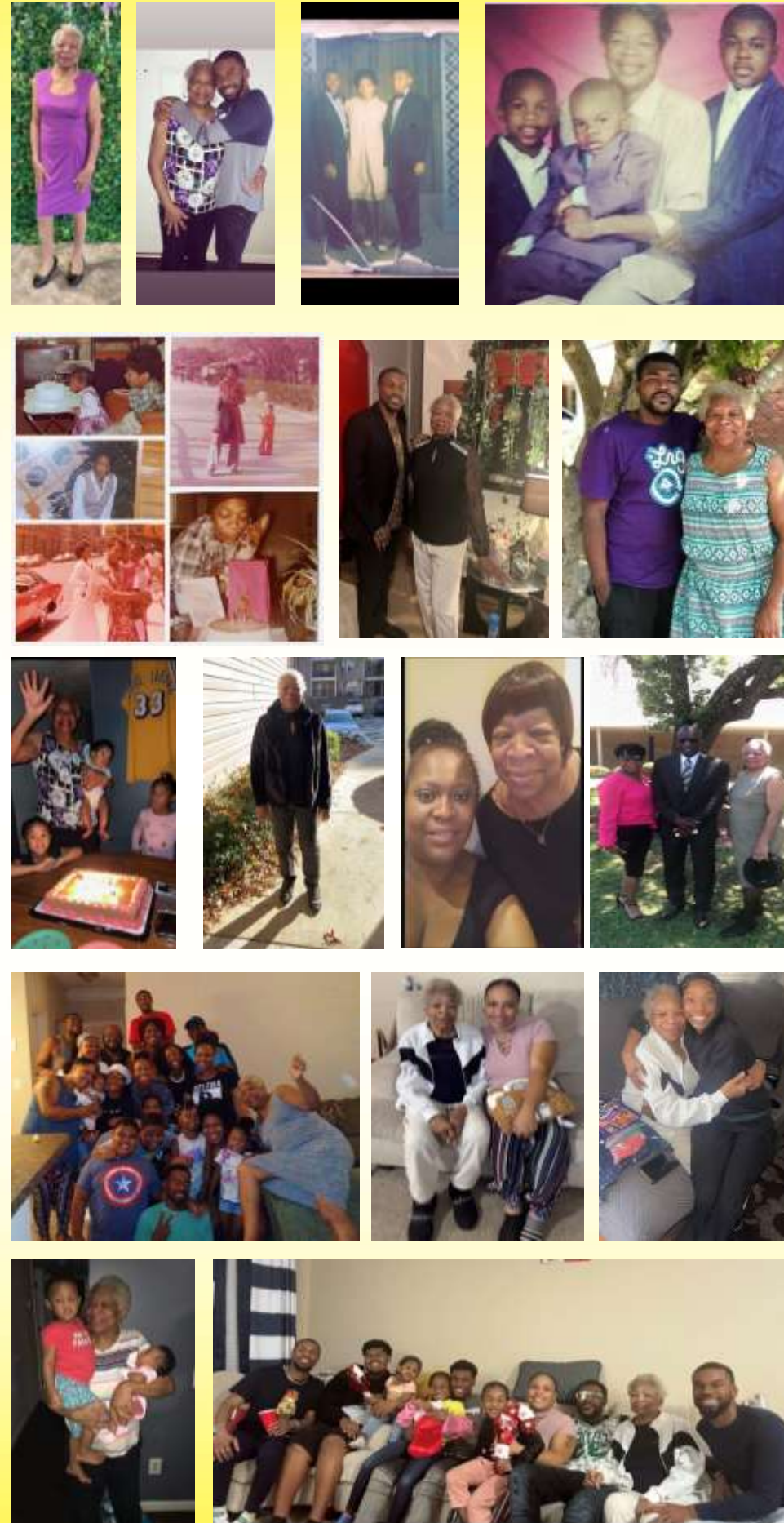
When Ora's nieces and nephews traveled from New York to South Carolina in the summers, she embraced them as her own, caring for them as her first children and creating memories filled with love, comfort and joy, that they could carry forever.

She loved animals and sports of all kinds. Ora loved to travel around the world. She was a very knowledgeable person and loved sharing with everyone she met.

Ora became the (mom, friend and adviser) to the neighborhood children. They loved talking to her and spending time with her at her home. She showed warm, unconditional, tough, and fair love when needed. They respected her for that. The impact that she had on so many will be remembered.

Ora leaves to cherish her loving memory: her three sons, Brandon J. Ashford (Lasha), Micah S. Ashford, and Miles Whaley-Ashford, all of Columbia, S.C; father of her children, Nathan U. Ashford; five grandchildren; Brandon J. Ashford Jr. (B.J), King Ashford, Aroyal Ashford, ZyKiya Ashford, and Nyla Ashford; one brother Silas Whaley (Camilla) of Columbia, S.C; one sister, Ida Whaley-Lockett of Charlotte, N.C; a host of nieces, nephews, great-nieces, great-nephews, cousins and friends. She was also cherished by a close circle of special friends who meant the world to her; Rose Scott, Ulanda Clinton (Isaac), Rita Cancer, Joyce Mosby, Renee Wilson, Greg Williams, Danny Lewis, Thelma Neal, Sally Dickerson, and Jackie Tarver.

Memories



A Service of Remembrance

- Prelude
- Processional
- Viewing.....Funeral Directors
- Opening Selection.....Ms. Teila Cromer
- Prayer of Comfort.....Minister
- Old Testament.....Minister
- New Testament.....Minister
- Selection.....Ms. Mahalia Gethers
- Remarks..... A Family Member
A Friend
- Selection.....Mr. Claude Ashford
- Solo.....Ms. Teila Cromer
- Words of Comfort..... Reverend Luther Scott
- Recessional
- Postlude



Committal, Benediction and Interment

**Woodlawn Cemetery
10216 Farrow Road
Columbia, South Carolina**

