

Funeral Service
for
Matilda Brandon Samuda
January 22, 1905 - April 12, 1999



*"The Lord is my light and my salvation: Whom shall I fear?
The Lord is the strength of my life; of whom shall I be afraid?"*
Psalm 27:1

Thursday, April 15, 1999
7:00 P.M.

First United Presbyterian Church
201 East 7th Street, Charlotte, North Carolina
Rev. Gregory M. Busby, Sr., Pastor, Officiating

Obituary

MATILDA BRANDON HAIRSTON SPEARS SAMUDA was born in Halifax County, Virginia on January 22, 1905. Her parents were the late William and Sallie Oliver Brandon. She was the second of thirteen children. Her siblings who have preceded her in death are Eunice Brandon, Sarah Galbraith, Myrtle Woody, Lucius Brandon, Willie (Jack) Brandon, Howard Brandon and Joseph Brandon.

She graduated from Mason Chapel Elementary School in three years and began teaching in her early teens. After a year of teaching, she married Reverend George Howard Hairston in Williamston, West Virginia and lived there after they married. During this time, the Hairstons became the proud parents of a son, George Benjamin Hairston, Jr. The family then moved to Greenville, Tennessee. In her husband's junior year, Matilda attended high school with him and completed her high school studies in two years and was instrumental in helping her husband obtain his high school diploma.

Matilda and her family moved to Cleveland, North Carolina when her husband was assigned to an A.M.E. Zion Church. She attended Livingstone College for two years, during which time the Bishop transferred her husband to a church in Winston-Salem, North Carolina. Matilda then attended Winston-Salem State Teachers College and graduated with a Bachelor of Science Degree in 1935. She began teaching in the field of early childhood education.

Matilda attended Temple University in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, and in 1954, received a Masters of Education Degree in Psychology of Reading. She completed post-graduate work in Supervision and Administration at New York University in New York.

Reverend Hairston was the pastor of Clinton Chapel A.M.E. Zion Church on Mint Street in Charlotte when he died in 1950. She later married Mr. A. E. Spears, who served on the Board of Directors of North Carolina Mutual Life Insurance Company and who established Mechanics and Farmers Bank of Charlotte, North Carolina.

After the death of Mr. Spears, she married Mr. A. James Samuda, who is a retired Engineer for the Department of Commerce—supervising the Southern Region. Mrs. Samuda believed in marriage and considered each experience and each husband a blessing. She believed that marriages should be nurtured and cultivated.

Her son, George Benjamin Hairston, a high school science teacher and football coach in Halifax County, died in 1976.

Matilda Brandon Samuda was a pioneer in the field of education. She was one of the first black female elementary school principals to work in an integrated community when she became principal of Park Road Elementary School and one of the first black principals to serve during the beginning of integration at Park Road Elementary. She also taught elementary school in Yanceyville, North Carolina, after finishing elementary school; taught elementary school in Fayetteville, North Carolina; taught 5th grade in Red Springs, North Carolina; was Coach of Basketball and taught Language Arts in Rockingham, North Carolina; taught elementary school in Cherryville, North Carolina; taught 5th grade and was School Secretary in Bessemer City, North Carolina; taught 4th, 5th, 6th and 7th grades at Myers Street School, Charlotte, North Carolina; taught 3rd grade at Marie G. Davis School in Charlotte, North Carolina; supervised reading workshops at Allen University and Benedict College from 1951-52 in Columbia, South Carolina; was school Principal at Zeb Vance Elementary School and retired from Park Road and became Associate Professor of Education at Barber Scotia College in Concord, North Carolina.

Community and civic activities which Matilda was active in included: Ministers' Wives Alliance, Art and Literary Club, Winston-Salem Teachers College Alumni Association, Young Women's Christian Association, Chairman of the Committee of the Reading Workshops for the City and County Schools United Negro College Fund Campaign, Chip & Dip Club Charter Member, Habitat Partners Council, Vice President/President of Quettes of the Omega Psi Phi Fraternity/Psi Phi Chapter, former Chair of the Committee on Administration in the Phyllis Wheatley (YWCA), United Way Allocations Panel, Association of American University Women, Former Delegate to the YWCA Post World Council, Berea, Kentucky, and elected Delegate to represent the YWCA in the World Conference in Australia.

Matilda was a Life Member of the National Education Association, North Carolina State Teachers Association, City Teachers Association—Vice President 1952-1953 and 1953-1954, Assistant Secretary for the Classroom Teachers Association in 1951-1953 and Delegate to many National Education Association Seminars and Workshops in Miami, New York City and Chicago, Illinois.

She has a long list of religious experience and affiliations. As previously indicated, she was formerly married to an African Methodist Episcopal Zion Minister. In the Presbyterian Church, she served the Church as Supervisor of Religious Education, Sunday School Teacher, ordained Deacon and Elder, Assistant Secretary to the Board, Treasurer of the Missionary Society, actively involved with the Woman's Home and Foreign Missionary work, member of the Young Women's Christian Association and member of the First United Methodist Church.

Matilda traveled extensively during her lifetime to destinations such as Africa, Tokyo, Japan, China, West Indies, Jamaica, Canada, Cuba, Puerto Rico, St. Thomas, Virgin Islands, Spain, Newfoundland, Germany, Austria, Hawaii and most of the states in the United States. Her hobbies included Creative Art, Duplicate Bridge and Reading.

She is survived by her husband, A. James Samuda; five sisters, Estelle Coleman, Anne Cunningham and Alma Brandon of Halifax County, Virginia, Mary Barnette of Plainfield, New Jersey and Doris Lawson of New Jersey; two grandsons, George Benjamin Hairston, III and Rawn Derico Hairston; three great-granddaughters, Carreba Hairston, Maya Danielle Hairston and Angelica Vawn Hairston. She leaves many members of the Brandon and Hairston Families; the sons and grandchildren of the Spears Family; many nieces and nephews and a host of dear, loving and caring friends.