



## Shirley Mae Brent

July 29, 1936 - October 26, 2020

### The Soul of a Mother

Shirley Brent, the Matriarch of the family, was born to the late Milton and Irma Smith on July 29, 1936 in White Castle, Louisiana. She was the oldest of five children. At the age of eight, the family moved to Michigan and attended New Bethel Baptist Church under the leadership of Rev. Rasberry. It was there that Shirley confessed her love for Christ at an early age. In her early 20's, she united with Progressive Baptist Church under the leadership of Dr. Daniel E. Cook. She was treasurer of Recreation, sang in the Gospel Chorus and was on the Mission Board. And, she loved participating in the annual Easter Play. Shirley was one of the oldest members of the church....which is now under the leadership of Rev. James O Childs. Tithing was God's request and she honored it until the day she passed. Anyone who knew Shirley, knew she LOVED her Church home and its members!

The late Willie B. McGee was her first love, and they were united in holy matrimony. To this union, seven children were born. Later in life, she married the late Jesse Brent with whom she loved traveling around the U.S.A. until he took ill.

Shirley's parents taught her the importance of family and carrying on traditions. This year will be the family's 84th Christmas Eve tradition. Shirley never skipped a year of bringing the family together until the torch was passed to one of her children and, in recent years, passed to her grandchildren. She

learned from her parents and stressed to her children that whenever a family member was ill, and could not speak for themselves, they were never to be left alone at the hospital. She insisted that someone spend the night with them until another relative could take their place. That was UNNEGOTIABLE!

As a Mother...

Shirley saw no color. To Shirley, every baby was cute, all children need love; some need more than others and she never sent anyone home without offering them something to eat. In addition to her own children, Shirley was like a mother to their friends, boyfriends, girlfriends (even ex's) and all the neighborhood kids who came to meet her.

She freely gave you advice as if you were her own and had no problem punishing you and calling your parents before she sent you home. Every Sunday was filled with the Gospel and Holy Ghost, a good meal, love, laughter, and more food. If Sports was on, she was watching with one of her two best friends, sons, Raymond, or Milton. Her favorite players were Serena & Venus Williams, Tiger Woods, Michael Jordan, and LeBron James. From Sonny Listen to Floyd Meriwether, Notre Dame vs Michigan, the Chicago Cubs vs White Sox she enjoyed them all!

Work History...

Shirley did what she had to do, to help the late Willie, support her children. She worked as a school janitor for a few years until she became an employee of the United States Postal Service. As a mail carrier, she carried a 50lb sack of mail 3-5 miles a day for the first year when she only weighed 99lbs herself! For a few years she had to travel back and forth to Kalamazoo until she was promoted to a clerk back in the Benton Harbor office. At the age of 56, she retired from the Post Office. After her husband Jesse passed, her love of children drove her to become a day care provider. She happily did this for years until the requirements (including testing, hurdles, training, and red tape) became too much. Some of the children, now adults, were still in her life when

she passed.

#### God's Secretary...

Shirley to others was a Poet because she was always asked to write a poem for various events. However, those close to her knew she was God's Secretary. He put the words in her head, and she wrote them down on whatever was available at the time. Sometimes, it was on the back of a check deposit, on paper towels from a restroom, on unused envelopes or on a church program in between the writing. Sometimes she entered poetry contests and once won honorable mention (4th place) out of 5000 entries. Maya Angelou was one of the judges. Shirley also won Golden and Silver Poet Awards from World of Poetry.

#### Her Legacy of Love...

Shirley was called home by Our Father, who art in heaven on October 26, 2020 as her daughter watched her take her last breath. She was preceded in death by her daughter Stella, son Willie McGee Jr. and her sister Lois Patterson, grandchildren Corey Thomas, baby Tony Bailey and Larry Clabin Jr.

She leaves to cherish and honor her memory and legacy of love, her five children who live in Michigan, Susan (Donald) Roseman, Julia Turner, Raymond McGee and Milton McGee all of Benton Harbor, and Cynthia (Vaughan) Stevens, in Kentwood, 9 grandchildren, 9 great grandchildren and 1 great-great grandson all who are truly a part of her living legacy.

She also leaves her sisters Irma (Rogers) Simon of Ellicott City, MD.; and Priscilla Smith of Washington DC., and her brother Milton (Katrina) Smith Jr., of Houston Texas; She also leaves her close and long-lasting friend, Darlene Wiggins, many nieces, nephews, cousins, and church friends who will love, embrace and carry on her traditions and celebrate her memory forever.

### Loving Care Givers...

Shirley , outside of her children, had beautiful and loving care givers that spoiled her and treated her like she was their own Mom for five years. They are Connie Kirkwood, Elizabeth Harmon, Shirley Valentine, Granddaughter Phoenix Pryor, Pat Malone, Margaret Grant, and extended daughter Valarie Le'Sure. A special recognition to Willa Mae Ickom, a retired RN who always jumped in when we needed her the most.

### Medical Team...

Shirley , was treated like a loving patient by the, University of Chicago Medical Team, Dr. M. Saleh and his Medical staff of East Paris, and last but just as important, Spectrum Health Hospice & Palliative Care, both in St. Joseph and Grand Rapids, MI.

Shirley you will be deeply missed!

# Cemetery Details

## North Shore Memory Gardens

5027 M 63 N  
Coloma, MI 49038

# Previous Events

## Visitation

NOV 7. 10:00 AM - 11:00 AM (ET)

Progressive Missionary Baptist Church  
245 Pipestone  
Benton Harbor, MI

## Services Celebrating Her Life

NOV 7. 11:00 AM (ET)

Progressive Missionary Baptist Church  
245 Pipestone  
Benton Harbor, MI

## Burial

NOV 7. 2:00 PM (ET)

North Shore Memory Gardens  
5027 M 63 N  
Coloma, MI 49038



# Tribute Wall

VH

“ *Veronica Harmon lit a candle in memory of Shirley Mae Brent*



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**Veronica Harmon** - November 10, 2020 at 09:46 AM

PS

“ *Condolences to Mother Shirley Brent's family.*

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**patricia stewart** - November 08, 2020 at 01:36 PM

DI

“ *Always smiling when we talked, she spoke of her home in Louisiana and how she grew up. We laughed and enjoyed each other everytime I called, she will truly be missed.*

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**Dianna** - November 07, 2020 at 01:17 PM



“ *Arrive in Style was purchased for the family of Shirley Mae Brent.*



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November 06, 2020 at 09:46 AM



“ Joyful Memory was purchased for the family of Shirley Mae Brent.



November 06, 2020 at 08:07 AM



“ Carla & Jeff Taylor, Elnora Pryor and Family purchased the Peaceful White Lilies Basket for the family of Shirley Mae Brent.



**Carla & Jeff Taylor, Elnora Pryor and Family** - November 05, 2020 at 05:39 PM



“ With heartfelt sympathy to Shirley's family. Thank God for Shirley's well-spent life for the cause of Christ. It was always a pleasure to be in her company and to fellowship with her at church. God bless the family. We loved Shirley but God loved her best. Rest my friend and I'll see you later.



**Josephine Smith** - November 05, 2020 at 12:52 PM



“ Full Of Love Bouquet was purchased for the family of Shirley Mae Brent.



November 03, 2020 at 08:20 AM