



Desmona Naomi Harris

July 27, 1963 - June 21, 2020

DESMONA DALLIS HARRIS

Desmona Naomi Dallis Harris, 56, passed away at her home in Upper Marlboro, MD on Sunday night, June 21, 2020. Desmona (affectionately known as Desi), a native Washingtonian, was born in Freedman's Hospital (now Howard University Hospital) on July 27, 1963 to Omega Bowman Dallis and James Dallis. She was the youngest of four children, sister to Theresa T. Williams, Ozzalee "Pinky" Dallis, and James "Skip" Dallis.

As a young child, she lived in the small town of Thomasville, North Carolina, with her grandparents, Naomi and Leroy Dallis Sr. Her grandparents were significant influences in her life; Desi honored and emulated their work ethic and perseverance in all aspects of her life. In her grade-school years, she attended Thomasville City Schools, whose Bulldog mascot paralleled that of her eventual alma mater of Georgetown. She always returned to her native Washington, DC for summer breaks, before moving back to DC in the mid-1970s to live with her mother and siblings in the Shaw District.

Desi attended Shaw Junior High School and immediately showed her academic prowess, winning the DC Regional Spelling Bee Competition. A tenacious scholar, she was a member of the National Junior Honor Society and, in 1978, became the valedictorian for the first graduating class of the

open-space school at Shaw's Rhode Island Avenue Campus. Desi attended McKinley Technical High School where she was inducted into the National Honor Society and was active in the Student Government Association. Following her graduation from McKinley in 1981, she attended Georgetown University (with entertainer/humanitarian Pearl Bailey and basketball legend Patrick Ewing as classmates). She graduated with a degree in Business Administration from the McDonough School of Business in 1985.

Desi excelled not only academically but in sports as well. In high school, she was a member of the citywide Pom-Pom Squad and played baseball and basketball in the country with her cousins (earning the nickname "Tree"). She continued her cheering, sporting spirit at Georgetown, rooting for the Hoyas as they won the 1984 NCAA Basketball Championship. In later years, she enjoyed playing tennis and racquetball, and remained an enthusiastic, game-attending Washington football fan (regularly decked out in burgundy and gold).

In keeping with her lifelong tenacity and intelligence, Desi passed the CPA exam on her first attempt, and earned her accounting license in 1986. As a committed and consummate accounting professional, Controller, and business executive, her successful career spanned 35 years with prestigious Washington, DC firms and for the past 15 years, Blake Real Estate. In addition to working incredibly long hours professionally, Desmona tirelessly volunteered her accounting skills as Treasurer of Mt. Carmel Christian Faith Center and helped countless families with tax preparation and financial assistance. Throughout her life, Desi's perseverance, dedication, integrity, fairness, diplomacy and willingness to help were paramount.

It was at the age of 19 that Desi met her future husband, Leslie Phillip "Felipe" Harris, Jr. (whom she lovingly called Les). Lifelong partners, they were married on October 2, 1993, the beginning of a wonderful, fun-loving marriage. Desi was the touchstone in Les's heart and Les was the joy in

Desi's. A perfectly-suited couple, the two were constant companions and best friends for 37 years. Through good and bad, they kept faith in God at the center of their lives. They spent a lifetime supporting each other with their wisdom, laughter, tears and love. While not blessed with children of their own, they had the honor and joy of taking part in the upbringing of their nephews. They made their home in Northwest DC until 2016, when they built their dream home in the Parkside neighborhood of Upper Marlboro, MD. Desi and Les quickly became an integral part of their new community, making friends and hosting rockin' parties in full festive attire for Halloween, Thanksgiving, Christmas, and New Year's Eve. As usual, wherever Desi went, people marveled over her fashionable sense of style which was only surpassed by her beautiful personality and spirit. As long as there was friendship, fun, laughter and dancing, Desi and Les were all-in!

A true pink Warrior Princess, Desi was a nine-year survivor of Stage IV metastatic breast/lung cancer. She embodied incredible strength, courage and humanity in facing such a challenge. Inspirationally, she continued to live (and work) fully, while dealing with and pushing past the grueling side effects of ongoing treatments while dedicating herself to supporting the DC breast cancer community, even recruiting her friends, family and colleagues to join her in doing so. She was a member of GoPink!DC, the district's only dragon boat team for women affected by breast cancer. She participated in multiple walks for Susan G. Komen Race for the Cure. She faced this challenge in true Desi fashion, figuratively and literally (with a colorful personality, and clothes to match). She remained full of life (and style), not missing out on moments of joy and laughter. In 2010, with their "go-big-or-go-home" spirit, Desi (in a pink tutu) was supported by Les (donning a pink bra and full clown makeup and shoes), as she successfully completed the 60-mile course for the 3-Day for the Cure, camping out and raising thousands of dollars for breast cancer research and community programs. Subsequent medical challenges would

soon become a lingering storyline in her all-too-short time on earth. As always, Desi met the challenges with courage, grace, dignity, selflessness, and that incredibly warm Desi-smile.

Desi was a devoted Christian and a member of a non-denominational Zion Church, having accepted Jesus Christ as her Lord and Savior as a child. Desi continued her Bible study with the Zion Victory Small Ministries Group who met often to read and discuss fundamental principles of the Bible and applying them to everyday life. It was important to Desi to walk the walk (and she did!): volunteering often to help the Church Ministries with back-to-school supplies and feeding the homeless.

Desi is predeceased by her parents, James and Omega Dallis, sisters Theresa Williams and Ozzalee Dallis, and grandparents, Naomi and Leroy Dallis Sr., and Lee and Lula Bowman. Loved by many, Desi leaves to mourn her passing her husband Les, her brother James “Skip” (Vernell) Dallis, brother-in-law Nathaniel “Nate” Williams, nephews OnYango (Ariella) Williams and Ricardo Dallis II, niece Jennifer Dallis, parents-in-law Ana (Angel) Aviles and Leslie Harris Sr., as well as a host of aunts and uncles, cousins, in-laws, great-nieces and great-nephews, and countless friends.



Visitation (in moving rotation and guided by physical distancing) will be held at Marshall-March Funeral Home of MD, at 4308 Suitland Road, Suitland, MD 20746 on Saturday, July 18, 2020 from 9:30–10:30 AM EDT (www.MarshallMarchFH.com). A memorial service will follow immediately at the funeral home at 10:30 AM EDT, limited to 40 in-person attendees due to local pandemic guidelines. Family and friends attending are invited to celebrate Desi’s colorful spirit by wearing her favorite colors of pink and purple. Desmona will be laid to rest immediately following the service at National Harmony Memorial Park, 7101 Sheriff Road, Hyattsville, MD 20785.

During the COVID-19 pandemic, the family encourages family and friends to not take unnecessary risks. The mass will be live streamed with details to follow on the funeral home's website for family or friends that are unable to attend. In consideration for everyone's health and well-being during the pandemic, there will not be a repast at this time.

All attending the service are required to comply with local COVID-19 guidelines: WEARING FACE MASKS REQUIRED AT ALL TIMES, sanitize hands before entry, maintain six feet of distance between each other at all times (sitting or standing), avoid handshakes and hugging and physical contact.

In the kind and generous spirit of our dearest Desi's life, in lieu of flowers, donations can be made to Susan G. Komen National Capital at komennationalcapital.org, American Heart Association (at heart.org/en/affiliates/district-of-columbia/welcome-to-district-of-columbia), or, as Desi would say (and do), pay a little kindness forward to someone along the way:....maybe give some helpful advice to a young person (she'd love that), listen to a colleague (Desi's door was always open), or treat a friend to lunch (while staying safe, of course; above all, she'd want people to take good care of and love themselves)...and then think of our Desi, and say a prayer in her great memory. During the COVID-19 pandemic, the family encourages family and friends to not take unnecessary risks. For family and friends unable to attend in person, the service will be live-streamed, accessible by clicking the following link:

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<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/81489606264?pwd=RU5OSEFSTkhrV2RtUzFKaGJmWG5CQT09>. Enter Password: 324262

Or iPhone one-tap:

US: +13017158592,,81489606264# or +13126266799,,81489606264#

Or Telephone:

Dial (for higher quality, dial a number based on your current location):

US: +1 301 715 8592 or +1 312 626 6799 or +1 646 558 8656 or +1 253 215 8782 or +1 346 248 7799 or +1 669 900 6833

Webinar ID: 814 8960 6264

International numbers available: <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/81489606264?pwd=RU5OSEFSTkhrV2RtUzFKaGJmWG5CQT09>

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Previous Events

Visitation

JUL 18. 9:30 AM - 10:30 AM (ET)

MARSHALL-MARCH FUNERAL HOME OF MD
4308 SUITLAND ROAD SUITLAND MARYLAND 20746
SUITLAND, MD 20746

Service

JUL 18. 10:30 AM - 11:30 AM (ET)

Marshall-March Funeral Homes - Prince George's County
4308 Suitland Road
Suitland, MD 20746
(301) 736-1616
info@marchfh.com
<https://www.marshallmarchfh.com>

Tribute Wall



“ *To View the Webcast of the Funeral for Desmona Naomi Harris, Please Click the Link below.*



Marshall-March Funeral Homes - July 05, 2020 at 08:12 PM



“ *Desmona Naomi Harris*

October 23, 2023 at 08:15 AM



“ *Sending my deepest condolences to the family. May Desi rest well in Heaven.*

Peace and comfort to all that were blessed by her presence. God has taken his angel home. Her friend from McKinley High school, Sherry Steward Robinson.

Sherry Robinson - July 18, 2020 at 10:46 AM



“ *What a blessing Desi's life has been. I remember our days at McKinley Tech on the Pom-Pom squad. She was a joy and lived each day to the fullest. As a fellow breast cancer survivor, she won the fight and is resting in God's arms. May God's peace and comfort encircle her family and friends.*

Shari W Campbell - July 18, 2020 at 08:32 AM

OK

“ 1 file added to the tribute wall



Olivia Khoury - July 18, 2020 at 12:58 AM

SP

“ 1 file added to the tribute wall



Sonia Picado - July 18, 2020 at 12:55 AM

SP

“ Dear Desi,
Thank you for your kindness and caring, for sharing your passion for life. And, when tomorrow comes around and I see the sun rise, I shall always think of you. I'll know you are nearby cause you'll be right here in my heart. May God's glory surround you with peace and love. You'll always be My Desi, Love,
Tia Sonia



Sonia Picado - July 18, 2020 at 12:32 AM

LS

“ *Leatha Sanders lit a candle in memory of Desmona Naomi Harris*



Leatha Sanders - July 17, 2020 at 11:19 PM

SP

“ *Sonia Picado lit a candle in memory of Desmona Naomi Harris*



Sonia Picado - July 17, 2020 at 09:19 PM

KT

“ *It is hard to put in words when such a good person has gone so soon. We had many of laughs and fun times while being on the Pom-Pom squad at McKinley Tech. She was always a “get it done” type of person and strongly cared for others. Rest in peace my sister. Karen Tyler, class of “81”*

Karen Tyler - July 17, 2020 at 07:27 PM



“ *Arrive in Style was purchased for the family of Desmona Naomi Harris.*



July 17, 2020 at 07:20 PM

GC

“ My deepest condolences to the family of Desi Harris. Desi holds a special place in my heart. As a fellow breast cancer survivor, she was a constant source of encouragement and support. She dealt with her health issues head on with strength in character and emotional resilience. She could have given up but chose to fight. She could have complained but chose to persevere. She could have believed the odds but chose to believe in hope. She could have focused on the pain but chose to overlook the suffering. She could have dwelt in the darkness of sickness but chose to see the light of God’s grace. Having known her through our women’s spiritual life group has helped me realize the true meaning of freedom in life. She will be remembered as a woman with a larger-than-life presence and of incredible fortitude. May the Lord bring you peace and comfort in knowing her indelible impact on the many lives she touched.



Gail Carter - July 17, 2020 at 04:52 PM

VY

“ I feel so blessed to have had Desi as a part of our family and our lives for so long.

I miss her so much and can't imagine not hugging her or hearing her laugh again but, I feel so blessed and proud to have known her.

There is no one else on Earth like Desi, and I thank God for every single moment I had with her.



Veronica Yu - July 17, 2020 at 01:48 PM

AT

“ It is with sadness that I write this condolence message. I attended Shaw and McKinley High school with Desmona and she was such a sweet, mature person and always had a beautiful smile on her face. She was always encouraging to other students and loved school. It brings me joy that she fulfilled her dreams and enjoyed life through all the obstacles. Her courage and strength will keep your family comforted. It was an honor knowing Desmona and she will be missed by not only her current family and friends, but by friends of her past years. Thanking God for the Blessing of Desmona in our lives. May God comfort and keep your family.

*Arrica Tillman
Clinton, MD*

ARRICA TILLMAN - July 17, 2020 at 12:08 PM

LW

“ *My sincere condolences to the Family of Desmona. Your obituary depicted a well-lived life, with many accomplishments, loving moments, and you left memorable marks with those whose paths were in line with yours. Yes, I would say that your life ended way too soon because I'm sure you had many plans, tasks to complete, and more life to live. Your passing hits home for me as I'm the same age as you; I was your classmate and fellow Pom Pom Girl at Mckinley High School. I realize that we must make every day here on earth count, as you did. I pray that your sweet Soul is at perfect peace.*

LaDonia Wilkins - July 16, 2020 at 05:08 PM



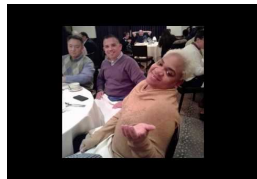
“ *Pink Tribute Spray was purchased for the family of Desmona Naomi Harris.*



July 16, 2020 at 05:01 PM

RA

“ *1 file added to the album Desi's Tribute Video*



Rachel - July 16, 2020 at 03:51 PM

RH

*My sincere condolences to Felipe and family. May the Lord continued to bless you and always remember that Desi was loved by many of us. One day we will celebrate all together in the presence of God. We will party together. Desi was well rounded, cheerful, can do attitude. She always radiated and illuminated any room with her smile, her love for people in-spite of her illness. Desi always acted like nothing was run with her. WE LOVE ❤️❤️Desi.
Rosanna Harvey and family 🙏🙏*

Rosanna Harvey - July 18, 2020 at 10:16 AM



“ *Blue Caribbean Bouquet was purchased for the family of Desmona Naomi Harris.*



July 16, 2020 at 10:12 AM

CR

“No one knows what is about to happen. It is happening each time, for the first time, for the only time.”--James Baldwin

My Dearest Desmona Dallis Harris, we have have been friends since we were 12 years old at Shaw Jr High School in Washington DC where you won the Regional Spelling Bee Competition and became our class Valedictorian. We both graduated from McKinley Tech High School. (Class of 1981). I was at your college graduation at Georgetown University. So many amazing life time memories, but, on this day, I chose this vibrant picture of you and I circa 2012 at my James Baldwin Book Salon in Washington DC at Coffy Cafe because Desi (as we all affectionately called you) would make sure all my book sales were in order. You were the Boss. Black Woman Magic. 45 years of friendship with my sister from another mother comes to a physical end, however, you will always remain in my heart forever. Thank you for being my friend, Desi. Welcome to the fold of the Ancestors. Rest in Power. And so it is. And it is so. Ase. Amen.

*Always,
Charles Reese
Los Angeles, CA*



Charles Reese - July 16, 2020 at 10:06 AM

JJ

“ *Jean Jordan lit a candle in memory of Desmona Naomi Harris*



Jean Jordan - July 16, 2020 at 07:57 AM

KW

“ *Kelliann Whitley lit a candle in memory of Desmona Naomi Harris*



Kelliann Whitley - July 13, 2020 at 07:10 PM

EF

“ *Our hearts goes out to you as you prepare to say goodbye to your love one. May your good and happy memories and remembering the love that God has for you comfort you and bring you peace and comfort. With caring thoughts.*

Evans family - July 09, 2020 at 05:19 AM

TW

“ *Sorry For Your Loss
Jesus Christ Loves Me
We Love You*



Thomas Widgeon - July 03, 2020 at 09:24 AM



“ We the March Family and Marshall-March Staff wish to extend our deepest and heartfelt sympathy in the passing of your loved one. Our prayers go out to you and your family in your time of loss. We know and understand that you have received many expressions of love and we will continue to lift you up in prayer. May the memories you cherish of brighter and happier days help to ease your sorrow and comfort you always.

Marshall-March Funeral Homes - July 02, 2020 at 09:25 AM