



Doris J. Mitchell

August 17, 1930 - July 11, 2021

Doris Mitchell was born Doris Jean Ganges on August 17, 1930, the 6th of 8 children born to Rowland Ganges and Mamie Young Ganges. She passed from this life peacefully in her sleep at the Riderwood Senior Community in Silver Spring, MD on July 11, 2021.

Doris was born in Baltimore and grew up as a young child in Philadelphia. Her mother died when she was 5 years old and she was adopted by her Uncle Herman Ganges and Aunt Melba Ganges of West Chester, PA, where she lived throughout her teenage years. Doris was known for her athleticism and love of the outdoors. She was an exceptional field hockey player and an avid member of the Girl Scouts of America, which she participated in through her high school and college years. In 1952, Doris graduated from West Chester State University Teachers College and moved to Boston to become the District Director of the Boston and Newton Girl Scouts Council.

Soon after she arrived in Boston, she met her husband-to-be Joseph S. Mitchell Jr., a newly admitted attorney and army veteran. On December 26, 1953, they married and began a partnership that would span more than fifty years. They had three children, Joseph III, Michael and Marcene. The family moved to Newton where Doris raised the kids before returning to work. From 1969-1974, Doris held various positions at Radcliffe College (now Harvard University), rising from Assistant Director of Admissions to Assistant

Dean of the College. While working at Radcliffe she spearheaded the historic conference “Black Women: Myth and Realities” and earned a certificate in Higher Education Administration from the Harvard University Graduate School of Business Administration. She was honored for her work by the Harvard Black Alumni in 2006.

In 1974, Doris left Radcliffe to become the Director of Personnel for Abt Associates, a consulting firm with several hundred employees. She worked at Abt for 10 years, eventually becoming Vice President of Administration and Personnel. In 1984, Doris left Abt and became Corporate EEO Manager for Digital Equipment Corporation in Concord, Mass. She worked at Digital until 1992, rising to the position of US Affirmative Action Implementation Manager before she retired.

Doris maintained a very active social life and presence as a community volunteer. She was a member of the Links and the Circle-Lets, and was co-founder of the non-profit Blacks Helping Blacks, Area Chairwoman for the United Fund, Regional Coordinator for the United Negro College Fund Drive and Board Member of many non-profit organizations including Freedom House, American Museum of African American History and the Ruggles Street Nursery School.

Throughout her married life, Doris and her family were part of the community on Martha’s Vineyard Island where they spent almost every summer. This love of the Vineyard was passed down to her children and grandchildren who still retain the family home on the Island. Doris also passed on her love of sports. She was an avid tennis player helping the Mitchell family win many of the famed Oak Bluffs tennis tournaments and supporting their lifelong involvement in the sport.

In retirement, Doris and Joe moved to Sarasota Florida where they lived for

nearly thirty years and were active members of the community. Doris entertained, golfed, became an accomplished bridge player, was a supporter of the West Coast Black Theatre Troupe, and a dedicated volunteer and “Friend of the Betty Johnson North Sarasota Public Library.”

Doris was preceded in death by her husband Joseph S. Mitchell Jr., and leaves behind her three children, Joseph S. Mitchell III, Esq., Michael David Mitchell, Esq. and Marcene Diane Mitchell; her grandchildren, Thomas Delano Broadwater III, Mitchell Ganges Broadwater, Maya Michelle Broadwater and Erica Jones; daughter-in-law, Carolyn Mitchell; her sister, Annette Stradford; and a host of nieces, nephews and extended Mitchell, Holland, Ganges, Stradford, Miller and Broadwater family.

Cemetery Details

Private

Previous Events

Visitation

JUL 31. 12:00 PM - 12:30 PM (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>

Service

JUL 31. 12:30 PM - 2:00 PM (ET)

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Tribute Wall



“ *To View the Webcast of the Funeral for Doris J. Mitchell, Please Click the Link below.*



Marshall-March Funeral Homes - July 26, 2021 at 04:15 PM



“ *Doris J. Mitchell*

October 23, 2023 at 08:15 AM

“ Many reflections have been occasioned by the sad notice I received on August 2nd about the death of Doris Jean Ganges Mitchell one month ago today. A fellow Harvard student forwarded me the link posted on Facebook.



As I read her obituary, and watched the webcast of her funeral, I felt acute regret about all the years I had missed out on the incredibly accomplished life of "Mrs. Mitchell". Realizing that she had spent her final days in my hometown left me feeling even more forlorn and bereft. How I wish I had kept up with her. How I wish I had been able to visit her one last time. I would have hugged her, and thanked her, for having been such a loving presence in my life during my final years at Radcliffe College.

I remember her as though it were only yesterday, and not nearly fifty years later - her lively intellect, her vivacious personality, her athleticism, her wisdom, her optimism, her extraordinary warmth. Those were the qualities which comprised the inner and outer beauty of the woman her late husband, Judge Joseph Mitchell, used to call "Doris Jean" with obvious admiration and affection.

Mrs. Mitchell arrived in Cambridge after black women students at Radcliffe College decided in 1969 that we were not going to keep our heads down, and go along to get along at Harvard. We demanded to be seen, heard, and be reflected in every aspect of our college lives. After all, we didn't see ourselves on the faculty. We didn't see ourselves in the administration. We didn't see ourselves in the residence halls. We were often reminded that we were unwelcome, unwanted and merely tolerated. So we planned and staged a sit-in at Fay House, the administrative offices of Radcliffe College, where we confronted President Mary I. Bunting with our grievances.

In response to these demands, a highly qualified Mrs. Doris Jean Ganges Mitchell stepped up, ready to come to our rescue. Once we

gave her our collective seal of approval, she began the fraught, difficult work of meeting all of us, addressing our needs, and running interference with the Radcliffe Administration on our behalf. She listened. She was kind. She was compassionate. She was smart. Most of all, she was an excellent interlocutor and no pushover.

I have needed several days to mourn her before writing this tribute. At a time when I creaked beneath the strain of student protests, academic studies, difficult family circumstances, and my own mental and emotional health challenges, Mrs. Mitchell took me under her wing, welcomed me into her family, and crossed the invisible boundary between us to become my mentor, teacher and friend. For all of these reasons, I shall honor and cherish her memory until the day I, too, shall behold the face of my Creator, receive my starry crown, and hear the words Mrs. Mitchell surely heard: "Well done, my good and faithful servant."

Although we might wish to avoid it, prevent it, or stop it altogether, in the end death is inevitable. Along with it comes an awareness of our own mortality. As the saying goes, "No one gets out of this life alive."

This is why I wanted to share these memories, and extend my sincere sympathy, to the responsible, accomplished, wonderful adults that little Joey, Mikey and Marcene have become. I know how hard it is to go through this passage. I just hope the pain of grief will be tempered by sweet memories of the mother they loved so dearly, and who loved them with fierce devotion. I also offer my heartfelt condolences to her surviving sister, the grandchildren, the extended family, and all of Mrs. Mitchell's many friends and associates.

*May light perpetual shine upon you, Doris Jean Ganges Mitchell.
May you rest in eternal peace,*

D. Cassandra Fletcher, Ph.D. - August 11, 2021 at 10:07 PM

AG

“Doris was always there to help, encourage and console her friends. She gave of herself freely and generously. It was such a pleasure to enjoy the magnificent tribute her children provided by her celebration ceremony. Thank you for making it possible to be part of it virtually. I miss her already.

Adele Garrison

Adele Garrison - July 31, 2021 at 02:28 PM

LS

“Aunt Doris was a inspiration to everyone who crossed her path. Kind and compassionate. As all of the Ganges, our family members served people. I am proud to have known her and grateful that I had an Aunt so dedicated to her family and her service to others. This is a person we can learn from and her life journey can be placed in the hand book of how to live your life. Sending much love to my cousins and Aunt Doris will live in my heart forever.

Lili Smack aka Ganges

Lili Smack - July 31, 2021 at 12:01 AM

EF

“We would like to extend our condolences to the family. In times of distress we need comfort that soothes our hearts. May the peace of God guard your hearts.

Evans family - July 30, 2021 at 04:18 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 23, 2021 at 12:08 PM