



Grace Leola Berry

December 9, 1930 - March 27, 2023

Grace M Berry, age 92, departed peacefully on March 27, 2023, at Ft. Belvoir Community Hospital. She was born on December 9, 1930, to Grace E. Merritt and Arthur Lee Merritt II in Ettrick, Virginia.

After graduating from Daniel Webster Davis High School in Virginia, Grace studied at Shaw University in Raleigh, N.C. where she was a member of the Women's Choir, the Student Christian Association, the Black Student Union, and Resident Young Women. While attending school, she made many friends and her classmates joked that she would appear on the cover of Vogue magazine as a high-fashion beauty. She graduated from college in 1954 with a Bachelor of Arts, and, shortly after, married Hilton Mills, Sr. To this union were born three sons and one daughter.

Having a love for children and education, Grace pursued a career in teaching and found her community among the students of Hendley Elementary School. There she served the Washington D.C. Public School system for thirty years. Her commitment to the students did not end in the classroom but overflowed into lunches, afternoons, summers, and weekends. Grace was a member of the Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development, and her lesson plans have been used to educate students across the D.C. school system.

After spending some time in D.C., Grace met Navy veteran and fellow

educator, George F. Berry, Jr. The two fell in love and married in August of 1978. Together, they raised a family where Christ and a good education took center stage while serving at both Kendall Baptist and Anna Johenning Baptist Church.

The only thing greater than Grace's love for children was her love for God. There was no better place to combine these loves than in the children's education ministry. Serving for over fifty years, she taught Sunday School and led Vacation Bible School, making sure her children and grandchildren had a front row seat in both. Grace understood that life's most precious gift is the love of Jesus. She shared this gift with everyone she encountered, opening her home to family members and even students from school to share the Gospel.

As a founding member of Johenning Baptist Center, Grace watched the ministry grow into Anna Johenning Baptist Church and, under the direction of Bishop Glen Staples, expand into the Temple of Praise. During her fifty-year membership she participated in and led many committees and groups, but her most important contribution to the church was her time. What she shared with the people of Temple of Praise and in the surrounding community can only be described as a mother's love. For this reason, she became known as Ma Berry. Before her death she was awarded the title and honor of Mother of the Church.

Preceding her in death are her loving husband, George; two parents, Grace and Arthur; four sisters, Ercelle Louise, Maxcine Roslyn, Evelyn Louise, and Jean Ann; two brothers, Arthur Lee III and William Bernard; and two stepchildren Valerie and George III.

Grace leaves to cherish her memory two brothers, Eugene Milton and Winston Leroy; one brother-in-law, Troy Merritt (Brenda); one sister-in-law, Mary Berry; three devoted sons, Hilton Jr. (Ianther), Stephon (Karol), and Kevin (Renee); her caring daughter Melony. Her memory also lives on with her

grandchildren Ian (Kya), Ashley, Kamrin (Najah), Lourdes, David, and Grace. Grace's legacy of love, her teaching spirit and kind smile will be remembered by all. With her life she honored God, and, in her death, she may rest forever with Him. Temple of Praise livestream link is as follows: [Tribute of love.org](https://www.tributeoflove.org), then click on Gone but not forgotten. Streaming will begin at 10:30am on Monday, April 24, 2023.

Cemetery Details

Cheltenham Veterans Cemetery

11301 Crain Hwy
Cheltenham , MD 20623

Previous Events

Visitation

APR **24**. 10:00 AM - 11:00 AM (ET)

Temple of Praise
700 Southern Avenue SE
Washington, DC

Service

APR **24**. 11:00 AM - 12:30 PM (ET)

Temple of Praise
700 Southern Avenue SE
Washington, DC

Tribute Wall



“ *Grace Leola Berry*

October 23, 2023 at 08:15 AM



“ *My name is Sandra R. Dixon; I worked years ago with Mills in DCPS. You will probably remember me and my husband, Mr. Robert L Dixon and our sons, Bobby and Todd. I am sending condolences to the family and I am extremely sad about the news. I wanted to talk to Ms. Grace just one more time. You can be assured that she is with the Lord.*

Sandra R. Dixon - May 08, 2023 at 04:14 PM



“ *Arrive in Style was purchased for the family of Grace Leola Berry.*



April 20, 2023 at 04:57 PM



“ *Full Of Love Bouquet was purchased for the family of Grace Leola Berry.*



April 11, 2023 at 08:30 PM



“ 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 - March 31, 2023 at 06:32 PM