



## Nelba McClenon

June 6, 1933 - January 11, 2022

Nelba McClenon was born on June 06, 1933, in Trenton, South Carolina to George and Alberta Mathis, the eighth of their nine children. As a young child Nelba and her family, all worked as sharecroppers and attended Shaw's Creek Baptist Church. Her family later moved to Aiken, South Carolina.

Nelba attended Bettis Academy<sup>1</sup> established for Black students in Trenton and funded by local churches including Shaw's Creek. At the age of 17, Nelba moved to Washington, D.C. joining some of her siblings, where she worked various jobs while studying to become a nursing assistant. Eventually, she took a position as a nursing assistant at Georgetown University Hospital, where she cared for newborn babies and new mothers for over 30 years until her retirement in 1990.

In 1958 she married Ernest McClenon. Out of this union came their three daughters and a granddaughter. They began their family in LeDroit Park and eventually moved to Riggs Park in 1967. They remained loving and faithful to one another for the next 56 years until Ernest's passing in 2014.

Mrs. McClenon was a member of Mt. Bethel Baptist Church, where she served as one of the past presidents of the Carolina Club, on the Deaconess Board, and as a member of the Senior Choir. Her soprano voice also carried through her home as she sang favorite songs such as "Victory is Mine." Nelba

was also active in her community, participating in the Block 12 committee of the Lamond-Riggs Citizens Association.

Nelba was a nurturer, serving as a mentor to many young women in the church, some of whom called her their “spiritual mother” and was a devoted friend. In addition, Nelba was passionate about crafting, cooking, crocheting, quilt making, and gardening, including making an award-winning quilt at the Salvation Army Senior Center. She grew many vegetables, plants, flowers, and cacti in the yard of her Riggs Park home and made hats, scarves, afghans, and art (oftentimes with recycled objects). One of her favorite sayings was “Waste not, want not.” Above all that, she made the best bread pudding ever!

She was a loving and devoted wife, mother, grandmother, sister, aunt, cousin, and friend. Her faith, wisdom, and inner strength was and will continue to be greatly admired.

Nelba is preceded in death by her eight siblings:

George Mathis

Josie Ruth Jones

Samual Mathis

Thomas Jeffrey Mathis

Helen Smith

Albert Mathis

Alberta Mathis

Freddie Mathis

She’s survived by her daughters Cassie McClenon, Patricia McClenon-Harris, and Anita Ernell McClenon; son-in-law Kenneth Harris; her granddaughter, Ashley (A.J.) McClenon; her sister-in-law Edith Mathis and her spiritual daughters Juanita Wells and Leona Cousar Sprow; a whole lot of nieces and

nephews she loved so much, cousins, friends and her favorite four-legged friend, Boris.

Praise the Lord, Give thanks to the Lord for he is good; his love endures forever. Psalm 106:1

God is our refuge and strength and ever-present help in trouble. Therefore we will not fear, though the earth give way and the mountains fall into the heart of the sea...Be still and know that I am God; I will be exalted among the nations, I will be exalted in the earth. Psalm 46:1-2, 10

My soul finds rest in God alone; my salvation comes from him. He alone is my rock and my salvation; he is my fortress, I will never be shaken. Psalm 62: 1-2

Bettis Academy and Junior College, established in 1881 and closed in 1952, is significant for its role in the primary, secondary, and higher education of African Americans in what is now Edgefield, Aiken, Greenwood, and Saluda Counties from the late nineteenth through the mid-twentieth century. During this period black education was neglected by many of the public and private institutions in South Carolina. Alexander Bettis (1836-1895), founder of Bettis Academy, was born a slave on a nearby Edgefield District plantation owned by a Widow Jones and worked as an overseer and sawmill manager during the Civil War. In 1868, after the local Baptist association refused to ordain him, Bettis and a group of seventeen other free blacks, helped by three ministers affiliated with the association, organized Mt. Canaan Baptist Church. Bettis Academy was an outgrowth of the Mt. Canaan Education Association, founded in 1880 by Bettis, other ordained ministers, and representatives of various black Baptist churches in the area. The complex, once a campus of fourteen

classrooms, a dormitory, and related buildings, now consists of three historic buildings and one triangular historic landscape, all dating from the last twenty years of the institution. The rock-faced Alexander Bettis Community Library (1939) is a bungalow-form building with a dual-pitched pyramidal roof clad in V-crimp metal sheeting. The stuccoed brick Classroom Building (1935) is a bungalow-influenced building featuring exposed rafter tails, gable hoods with knee-braces, and a V-crimp metal-clad hip roof. The rock-faced Biddle Hall (1942) is more akin to the classically inspired or Colonial Revival secondary schools of the rural south. Listed in the National Register May 20, 1998. (South Carolina Department of Archives & History)

# Cemetery Details

## Lincoln Memorial Cemeteey

4001 Suitland Road  
Suitland, MD 20746

# Previous Events

## Viewing

JAN 25. 10:00 AM - 11:00 AM (ET)

Michigan Park Christian Church  
1600 Taylor St. NE  
Washington, DC

## Service

JAN 25. 11:00 AM - 12:00 PM (ET)

Michigan Park Christian Church  
1600 Taylor St. NE  
Washington, DC

# Tribute Wall



“ *Marshall-March Funeral Homes created a Webcast in memory of Nelba McClenon*



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**Marshall-March Funeral Homes** - January 25, 2022 at 11:34 AM



“ *Nelba McClenon*

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October 23, 2023 at 08:15 AM



“ *Sweet Tenderness was purchased for the family of Nelba McClenon.*



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January 23, 2022 at 07:51 PM



“ *Sentiments of Serenity Spray was purchased for the family of Nelba McClenon.*



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January 23, 2022 at 05:11 PM



“ *Sweet Tenderness was purchased for the family of Nelba McClenon.*



January 23, 2022 at 09:15 AM



“ *Full Of Love Bouquet was purchased for the family of Nelba McClenon.*



January 21, 2022 at 05:33 PM



“ *Strength & Solace Spray was purchased for the family of Nelba McClenon.*



January 19, 2022 at 12:17 PM



“ *Mrs Ruth Ramsey & Family purchased the Sweet Tenderness for the family of Nelba McClenon.*



**Mrs Ruth Ramsey & Family** - January 19, 2022 at 12:04 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.

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**Marshall-March Funeral Homes** - January 14, 2022 at 01:11 PM