



Mrs. Lela Mae Vernell

July 20, 1941 - March 24, 2022

Lela Mae Chesser Vernell was born on June 20, 1941 in Amite County (Magnolia), Mississippi. She was the eldest daughter of Jewel and Mary Chesser. The eldest sibling of eight, she was more than comfortable being the boss. Lela was a member of Jerusalem Baptist Church and was baptized there at

an early age and continued to be a financial supporter of her home church until her death. Her relationship with the Lord was her defining characteristic and because of her faith in God and generous nature, she leaves an amazing legacy in the earth.

Born with a degenerative hip disease, Lela was disabled from the age of 11 and did not let it deter her from one single thing she wanted to do in life. Lela endured a lifetime of surgeries, rehabilitations and challenges and fought them all head on. She left Mississippi during her senior year in high school and moved to Baton Rouge, LA to be loved on and reared by her mother's only sister, the family's beloved aunt and her namesake, Lela McGhee aka "Auntie". This move would prove to have life-changing impacts.

As a senior, Lela attended Capital High School in Baton Rouge and later attended the family's most-attended HBCU, Southern University. While living with "Auntie", Lela caught the eye of her next-door neighbor and class president, Raymond Vernell, Sr., and the rest as they say is history! Lela and

Raymond were married at Shepherd Air Force Base in Wichita Falls, TX on January 17, 1962.

Lela and Raymond lived in Texas, Louisiana, Ohio and finally settled in Milwaukee, WI.

To this union were born Raymond Vernell, Jr, Rodney Vernell, and the baby girl and only daughter Karen Vernell Williams, the author of this life story. Raymond and lela were career civil servants and raised their kids to respect education, intelligence, and hard work. They mostly listened. Lela had a twenty-year career in education with Milwaukee Public Schools and was a proud early retiree. Lela was serious about education and everyone who knows her can attest to her summer workbooks, reading assignments, and spelling drills.

Lela was a dedicated member of New Covenant Baptist Church, under the leadership of Rev. F.L. Crouther, in Milwaukee, WI for more than 30 years.

A Sunday School teacher and Missionary (Ruth Circle), she and her daughter were there several times a week and for many three o'clock programs. Lela relocated to Houston, TX in 2007. In Houston, Lela affiliated with New Light Church while mobile. She was loved on and cared for by that ministry until her death under the leadership of Founders Drs. I.V, and Bridget Hilliard and Senior Pastor, Dr. Irishea Hilliard. On March 11, 2022, Pastor Robert Forbes took great care to pray with her and her family and minister communion to her and her family for the final time. Her last prayers were powerful and full-throated with hands raised as usual.

An expert educator in common sense, Lela was an excellent financial advisor, world traveler, cook, baker and mother to anyone who needed love, help, or wisdom. Her commonsense life and financial lessons were shared in two books written by her daughter.

Lela LOVED her family and her friends, especially her "OUTSTANDING" son-in-law SANTANA! She stood by her husband, children and friends, no matter what the challenge, even unto death. She had two lifelong best friends, Lee Essie Amos of Nevada and Essie Johnson of Wisconsin. She also enjoyed and loved each one of her grandchildren! She spent her last years as the primary caretaker for Karsan and Kendall after her relocation to Houston and reminded everyone that she was the BEST BABYSITTER!

She was preceded in death by her husband, Raymond Vernell, Sr., her father, Jewel Chesser, Sr. beloved son, Rodney Vernell, and two brothers Jewel Chesser, Jr., George Chesser, and beloved aunt, Lela McGhee.

Lela leaves to cherish her memory, her amazing mother Mary Chesser (age 96), her eldest son and dedicated caretaker, Raymond Vernell, Jr., son-in law and daughter, Dr. Santana & Karen Williams, sisters, Stella Lockman, Gloria Brown, Peggy Chesser, Charlotte Turner of Baton Rouge, LA and Linda Lathan of Bay Area, CA. Her grandchildren who adore her memory: Lamont Redmond,

Raymond Redmond, Yvonne Brown, Leon Redmond Vernell, Robert Redmond, Jamar Redmond, Justin Redmond, Eric Redmond, Rodney Redmond, Yolanda Redmond, Kendra Redmond, Reggie Redmond, Levi Vernell, Aniyah Franks, Karsan Williams, and Kendall Williams, and will miss her tremendously, but will remember her firm instruction, love, and kind heart always. She also leaves a host of loving nieces and nephews throughout the country.

Her bonus children who will also mourn her memory and took great care of her in life include John Spence, Kharyhasan Johnson, Trina Johnson, Yetunde Bronson, Monica Simon, Davina Powell, Necole Montford, Lacritia Spence,

Delechia Johnson and Dr. Latish Reed.

Lastly, Karen's best friend Jeffrey McAlister, Jr. had an incredible friendship and bond with Lela, and she will most certainly be missed by him. There are so many more to name as her love really knew no bounds.

Our family would not have made it without the expert nursing team led by Katina DeVaughn, RN and her daughter Pamela Daniel, CNA. These two women loved our mom like she was their own and are now a part of our family always and they cared for her until her last breath.

Her last days were spent in comfort and peace. She also took great pride in knowing that her affairs as always were handled and in order. Special thanks to family friend and trusted funeral professional Rewa Durham of Northwest Funeral Home of Milwaukee, WI.

Cemetery Details

Graceland Cemetery

6401 N. 43rd St.
Milwaukee, WI

Previous Events

Visitation

APR 8. 9:00 AM - 11:00 AM (CT)

Northwest Funeral Chapel
6630 W. Hampton Ave
Milwaukee, WI

Memorial Service

APR 8. 11:00 AM (CT)

Northwest Funeral Chapel
6630 W. Hampton Ave
Milwaukee, WI

Tribute Wall

EW

“ Our sincere condolences to you and your family. You and your family are now, and always, in our hearts and prayers.

Love and blessings
The Wilson Family ❤️

Eric and Michelle Wilson - April 08, 2022 at 10:47 AM

MM

“ *Miranda Moore purchased the Blessed Heart for the family of Mrs. Lela Mae Vernell.*



Miranda Moore - April 06, 2022 at 06:46 PM

T(

“ *TA (Cowboy) purchased the Pretty Please for the family of Mrs. Lela Mae Vernell.*



TA (Cowboy) - April 06, 2022 at 04:33 PM

TA

“ *A beautiful woman of God... We are all better that He allowed her into our lives for this period. I thank the Good Lord for her and for the charge that He gave to her that she fulfilled... Cowboy*

T.A. Adams - April 06, 2022 at 04:29 PM

WK

“ *Such a beautiful women with so much wisdom. I often think about the wisdom she blessed me with and our political discussions. She was a rare jewel and full of strength. God took his angel home where she can continue to have those lively discussions and shake her head at us down here on earth! She always tried to tell us what was right and what was wrong. I’m so blessed to have spent quality time with her. Thank you for giving us your daughter for awhile God! Her dash definitely made an impact!*

Wanetta King - April 05, 2022 at 05:37 PM

PE

“ *In the midst of heartache and sorrow, we joyfully remember a sweet woman of God who’s name is written in the Lamb’s Book of Life.*

During this season, may you find comfort in the great Comforter- Jesus Christ, who has promised to never leave us alone! My prayers are with you and your family.

Paulia E.

Paulia Elam - April 03, 2022 at 05:26 PM

GG

“ *My love, thoughts and prayers continue to flow to the entire Vernell and Williams family. I called her Mama Lela because that’s what she was to me. I still have, and often reread, countless scripture-filled cards she wrote me either to cheer me up or just because. She was a special lady and will be sorely missed. But God has her now and her rest was well earned! Many Blessings to this family always, and May God’s Comforting Love keep you in His Perfect Peace!*

Gwendolyn Goins - April 03, 2022 at 12:01 AM

MT

“ To Vernell Family,

Aunt Lela was a beautiful, strong woman that did not let anything stop her from moving. Our fondest memory is when everyone would come together at the family holiday dinners, we truly enjoyed her laughter. She would share wisdom and past experiences with life and family during our talks. Although our latter years were quiet, we as the family will miss you, but we know you are with our Heavenly Father.

We thank God for the memories that fuel our hearts and souls to continue love and stay connected as a family.

Love:

Marsha Thadison (Vernell)

Martina Beason

Asha Jones

Marsha E. Beason

Markisha Beason

Laura English (Vernell)

Patricia Roberson (Vernell)

Gerline Echols (Vernell)

Marsha Thadison - March 31, 2022 at 07:02 PM

FJ

“ *Our hearts are with the Williams family during this difficult time. We know how much Ms. Vernell meant to you all. We love you, Fadale and Tanya Jefferson*

Fadale & Tanya Jefferson - March 30, 2022 at 05:24 PM

SR

“ Syntaktes Marshall & The Central Region purchased the Magnificent Life Spray for the family of Mrs. Lela Mae Vernell.



Syntaktes Marshall & The Central Region - March 29, 2022 at 04:12 PM

CA

“ *Blessed are those who mourn, for they will be comforted. Matthew 5:4*
With prayers and heartfelt sympathy may God be your comfort, bring peace and strength to you and your family during this difficult time. I will continue to keep your family in prayer.
Love Aunt Cathy Thomas

Cathy - March 29, 2022 at 03:12 PM

LH

“ *Our deepest sympathy and prayers goes out to the family. May God's loving arms comfort each and everyone of you.*

*Love and blessings,
James & LaTonia Harrell*

LaTonia Harrell - March 29, 2022 at 02:17 PM

 Trina Johnson

“ *Sending all of our love to you at this time. Mrs. Vernell was such an awesome witness and we will forever cherish her lovingkindness towards us - especially her affinity for Joshua.*
We Love You,
Khary, Trina & Joshua Johnson

Trina Johnson - March 28, 2022 at 09:46 PM

ED

“ *My prayers and thoughts are with the family", I will always remember you and Raymond in how we use to get together every Friday along with the children and just have fun.I will always remember those memories*

*Sincerely
Edwina Matthews (Dee)*

Edwina - March 26, 2022 at 10:12 AM