



## Mrs. Olean Lathen

November 12, 1930 - June 9, 2014

OLEAN LATHEN

NOVEMBER 12, 1930 - JUNE 6, 2014

“From the beginning to the end, what matters most of all . . . is the dash between the years”

Olean Lathen was born on November 12, 1930 to Arthur and Mamie Jackson in Coffeerville, Mississippi. She left Coffeerville as an infant when Arthur and Mamie divorced moving to Council Bluffs, Iowa with her mother who wed Lucius Taylor. Olean was soon joined by two sisters, Ethel Taylor (Latiker) and Shirley Taylor (Kimbrough).

In Council Bluffs, they lived in a small immaculate house with a bright red kitchen and attended Bloomer Grammar School and Thomas Jefferson High School. The girls played under a grand weeping willow tree and ate fresh vegetables from their parent’s large garden. Railroad tracks surrounded the house and Olean heard the rumble of the trains and felt the whole house shake as they passed day and night. Surely, this must have fueled her life long desire to travel and see the world beyond the golden cornfields of Iowa. At sixteen she took a trip that would prove to be the most important voyage of her life. She moved to St. Louis, Missouri to live with her father, Arthur Jackson and her Aunt Sophie. A natural beauty, Olean had the attention of many young men. However, it was the boy next door, Levi Lathen, with his trumpet, dazzling smile, high cheek bones, velvety chocolate skin, unlimited intellectual curiosity, and unconquerable drive that captured her heart--

completely. Amidst a chorus of nay-sayers, because of their youth Levi and Olean married on April 15, 1950. United as one and bound by their faith in God, they believed that time on this earth must not be spent in pursuit of one's own self-interest, but that God's gift of life was a trust bound by a covenant to help others.

Married 33 years, Olean and Levi began their journey as a young couple in Jefferson City, Missouri at Lincoln University where Levi studied for his bachelor degree in music and Olean began raising their family. Three children were born during this time, Gail, Deborah and Levita. The next decade took them to Kankakee Illinois where Levi taught school and Olean worked. They added a baby boy to the mix, Levi Kevin. Then it was off to Ypsilanti, Michigan, with four children in tow. Levi pursued a Master's Degree in special education and Olean worked to help support the family. She recalled them reusing coffee grinds and tea bags and selling pop bottles to make ends meet. A better teaching job took them to Elgin, Illinois where Levi worked as a special education teacher and Olean worked at The State Hospital. They settled there for almost a decade. They purchased a home for their four children and added twins, Lorraine and Elaine. Life was easier now; no more reused coffee grinds for Levi, but frugal Olean continued reusing tea bags. Their dream was that all their children would go to college. They were not just concerned for their children, but for all children. Olean worked the night shift at St. Joseph Hospital and baby sat during the day taking in just about any child in need. Their home was an open door through which many entered and Olean kept a pot of spaghetti or chili on the stove.

Their dream was being realized. When Olean and Levi moved to Springfield, Illinois, three daughters were in college, Levi was Assistant Superintendent of Schools for the State of Illinois and Olean was working with disabled children at McFarland Zone Center. In 1975 Olean relocated to Wisconsin with her family so that her husband could complete his doctorate degree at Marquette University. In December 1983, death suddenly parted the young couple who 33 years earlier found each other and grew a life of family, faith, love,

education and sharing. A legacy, that Olean, in her own powerful and loving way would carry on. Olean worked at St. Aemilian Child Care Center until her retirement in 1998.

With all her children educated, living and building their dreams, Olean, at age 60, moved to Abidjan, Ivory Coast with her daughter, Lorraine. While her daughter worked, Olean explored with her young grandson, Kyle Taylor Parker, and volunteered at orphanages. Olean fell in love with the people of Abidjan and they with her. Walking down the street she was warmly greeted as “Mommie.” In earnest she began her world travels, throughout West Africa and Europe, always making time to care for others. One of the first things she did was look for an AME church, but finding none they attended the International Christian Fellowship Church.

In 2001 she returned to Brown Deer where she resided with daughter Lorraine and grandchildren Nia and Kyle, until she left us on June 9, 2014. She was our earth angel, the center of her family’s universe. Her children were the tiny stars that orbited around her. It was a long journey from the cornfields of Iowa, she came, she gave and her gift of love resides in the hearts of all she touched. Her earthly journey has ended. We now mourn her leaving, but celebrate and cherish all that she will always be to us—love pure and eternal. Her faith was a guiding force in her life and she lived it by showing love and kindness. As an active member of St. Mark AME Church for 39 years, she was a Sunday school teacher, and a member of the Women’s Missionary Society. Outside of church she was a beloved member of the Red Hat Society and the Rite Hite YMCA water aerobics class.

Olean Lathen is survived by her sister Ethel Latiker, daughters, Gail (Victor) Farewell, Deborah Lathen, Florence Levita Lathen, Levi Kevin (Carrie) Lathen, Elaine Lathen and Lorraine Lathen. Six grandchildren, Jaggen(Vanessa) Farwell, Ty Harris, Kyle Taylor Parker, Zachary(Naomi) Lathen William, Nia Kamara , Livia Lathen and one great grandchild, Calia Lathen Williams.

In lieu of flowers donations may be made in her memory to the Aaron Ardoin Foundation for Sickle Cell, 19141 Stone Oak Parkway #10417, San Antonio, Tx 78258, (210) 481-2277.

# Cemetery Details

## Wisconsin Memorial Park

13235 W. Capitol Dr.  
Brookfield, WI

# Previous Events

## Visitation

JUN **16**. 10:00 AM - 11:00 AM (CT)

St Mark AME  
1616 W. Atkinson Ave  
Milwaukee, WI

## Service

JUN **16**. 11:00 AM (CT)

St Mark AME  
1616 W. Atkinson Ave  
Milwaukee, WI

# Tribute Wall

GH

“ Wonderful Woman , Im trying to get a hold of Kevin , Levi please call 813 648 2334 Gary. 89th and Capitol street.

gary hayden - September 16, 2022 at 05:25 PM

RA

“ Olean and Levi accepted me as one of their own.  
I miss both of them.  
Look at her beautufful smile. So pure and perfect as she was.  
Levi was a great mentor.  
Thank you very much for being kind to me.

random - June 16, 2022 at 09:26 AM

RA

“ Random lit a candle in memory of Mrs. Olean Lathen



random - June 16, 2022 at 09:12 AM

RA

“ A kind person. I loved her.

random - June 16, 2022 at 09:11 AM

RF

“ To Florence Levita, and the entire Lathen family,  
I will never forget your mom, from the first time I met her and that  
big old horse of a dog whipped me with his tail, she made me feel  
like family. You all have great memories and so much love between  
you. The love that she had for each and everyone of you will carry  
you through this difficult time. Keeping you all in Prayer  
Love Ya Rhonda Franklin

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**Rhonda Bell Franklin** - June 17, 2014 at 03:55 PM

AC

“ My deepest sympathy to all in your family for the loss you have  
suffered. May you find comfort in your family, friends and the future  
promises in God's word. He has promised to end death forever and  
reunite us with our dear loved ones (Rev 21:4; John 5:28, 29) May  
you continue to have fond memories of Olean.

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**A. Coleman** - June 17, 2014 at 02:41 PM

AM

“ Dear Gail and Victor

Our hearts are heavy. We are praying for you. Keep those  
memories fresh in your mind of your mother. Call anytime for an ear  
or a shoulder.

Hope to see you soon

Arlene, for Arlene and Will

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**arlene moore** - June 16, 2014 at 04:48 PM



“ 3 files added to the album Memories Album



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**Northwest Funeral Chapel** - June 16, 2014 at 04:07 PM

DB

“ To Florence and Family from the parents of Dana Beauford:

*We sincerely extend our deepest sympathy to you and your family during this sad time.*

*May you be comforted by the love and support of family and friends and by the words of the Psalmist at Psalm 94 verse 19 that says in part: "...when anxieties overwhelmed me you comforted and soothed me."*

*Please know that you are in our thoughts and prayers. We hope that your "soothing and comfort" will come in a great portion as you move through the coming days...with deepest sympathy.*

*James and Diane Byrd, Jr*

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**Diane Byrd** - June 16, 2014 at 03:08 PM

HD

“ *Gail and Victor,*

*Gail, I do not think that I ever actually met your mother, yet I feel that I knew her because of the depth of love and admiration that you, and Victor, expressed regarding her. Clearly she was extraordinary, as are her immortality (her children and grandchildren and other members of her extended lineage).*

*I know that she is a far better place and that God met her with a big smile, open arms, and the statement "Job well done." I know you are trying hard to replace grief with a joyous and reflective celebration of her life.*

*I bet that she is celebrating her immortality and will remain close to all whom she loved; and that her wisdom will remain available to all who simply ask and carefully listen.*

*We pray that your lives will continue to be an extension of her love, and strength, counsel, compassion, and example.*

*.We dearly love you both.*

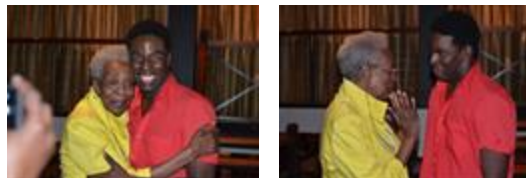
*Howard, for Howard & Vickie Denson*

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**Howard & Vickie Denson** - June 16, 2014 at 02:40 PM



“ *2 files added to the tribute wall*



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**J** - June 16, 2014 at 02:23 PM

LO

“ Dearest Florence and family,

*Although I never had the honor of meeting your Mother, I have heard plenty of wonderful things about her through my sister (Dana Beauford) and know that she was truly an amazing woman!*

*Please know that our thoughts, prayers and deepest sympathies are with each of you. 2 Corinthians 1:3,4 assures us that God comforts us in our trials. May you feel this aspect of God's love during this especially difficult time.*

*Very sincerely,*

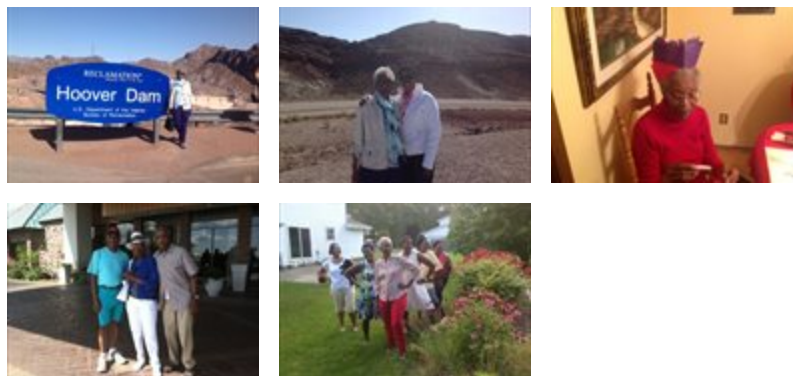
*Lona, Dani'elle and Nadia Cornish  
lona.1415@gmail.com*

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**Lona** - June 16, 2014 at 09:42 AM



“ 5 files added to the album Memories Album



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**Northwest Funeral Chapel** - June 15, 2014 at 12:46 PM

GW

“ I will truly miss my first cousin. She taught us all how to be a lady. Farewell and rest peacefully in the arms of God surrounded by our loving ancestors who have preceded us. We know that God will comfort and heal us all as we mourn our loss.

Love,  
Gloria

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**Gloria Walton** - June 15, 2014 at 10:45 AM

FA

“ 9 files added to the album *Olean Lathen*



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**Farwell** - June 14, 2014 at 10:23 AM

FA

“ 1 file added to the album *With the Family*



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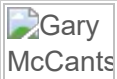
**Farwell** - June 13, 2014 at 07:52 PM

FA

“ 1 file added to the album Family Photos



Farwell - June 13, 2014 at 07:48 PM



*Thanks for the wonderful opportunity to participate in your Mom's home going celebration! My prayers continue for all of you !*

Gary McCants - June 16, 2014 at 07:25 PM

FA

“ 14 files added to the album Olean Lathen- Happy Moments



Farwell - June 13, 2014 at 07:41 PM



“ *Written in the Stars was purchased for the family of Mrs. Olean Lathen.*



June 13, 2014 at 11:29 AM