



## Mrs. Rachel Doris Graham

March 11, 1932 - January 18, 2016

Rachel Doris (Smith) Graham was born to Elder Gratnie Minor Smith and Mary Magdelene

(Maggie) Smith on March 11, 1932, in Claremont, Virginia. She was the youngest of 13 children.

At an early age, Gratnie and Maggie moved Rachel and their family from Virginia to the state

of New York, living in Harlem. After several years, in an effort to escape the despair of living

in the city during the great depression Elder Smith made a final move with his family upstate,

establishing a home in South Fallsburgh, New York.

Rachel attended elementary school in New York City at P.S. 1. Although she experienced

health problems and many hardships as a young child, she was an excellent student. She was

outgoing and popular both in school and church. Rachel graduated from high school at P.S.

136 with exceptional secretarial skills which would carry her professionally throughout her

life. She attended secretarial college for two years. She was employed in numerous executive

clerical positions throughout the year retiring from Milwaukee County General

Hospital in

1983, after 18 years of service.

Being the child of a pastor, Rachel had always been invoked in the church and she gave

her life to the Lord at an early age. She fellowshiped with other young people at the early

Church of God youth convention. At a separate youth outing in 1953, Rachel was introduced

to a fine young man named Edward Graham of Hartford, Connecticut. God's hand was on

this young couple and after several years of courtship, they were wed on Sunday, June 10,

1956, in Harlem, New York. Due to Edward's employment opportunities, they immediately

relocated to Milwaukee, Wisconsin. To this union were born Ragenia Edward [r., Rhenetta, and Indyria Rachel.

Rachel always knew she would be involved in the church; always knew she would raise her

family in the way of the Lord. However, upon arrival in Milwaukee, they discovered that the

largest established Church of God for "egroes" was located in Chicago. While they visited

other churches, Rachel and Edward were initially disappointed at the fact that they could find

no Church of God for them. Rachel's dream of attending and raising a family in a large church

was not being realized. God intervened again, and through the counsel of her youth leader in

New York, was directed to a small "union" that had been gathering in the home of a Roxie

Kern. Through the urging of her mother Maggie, Rachel and Edward joined this small group of mostly children and family members of Roxie Kern and Pauline ash and after some time established what became Northside Church of God.

Rachel, "Rae" to family and close friends, was always an active, vital and outspoken member of the Northside family. She was instrumental in establishing the Senior Choir which later became the Sanctuary Choir. She wa the choir directress, serving until she retired in 1986. Over the years, she held the position of church recording secretary, deaconess, assisted in establishing the first Children's Church, and worked with the first Children's and Jr. Choirs. She, along with her "good buddy Roylene Johnson, was known for "pushing the limit" when it came to drama and mu ic. They worked hand-in-hand preparing and presenting music that spanned all genres from hymns (0 spirituals to gospels, intricate classical anthems to complex cantatas. It was under the direction of Rachel and Roylene that the Sanctuary Choir traveled and ministered in song throughout the city and region. The programs and plays they co-produced have etched indelible memories in many young people who are now• adults. She provided counsel to many throughout the years. Racheland Edward were well known for their enormous gift of hospitality. Their

home

was never too good for the Saints and family. Rachel supported her husband in hosting

family reunions for both the Graham and Smith families. They regularly opened up their

home to the church and its members hosting picnics, choir parties, Easter egg hunts, youth

sleep-overs, both serving and housing visiting ministers. Even when they moved miles away to

Menomonee Falls, often the church van could be seen headed to the Grahams in "The Falls."

Rachel was a proud wife, mother, grandmother, and great-grandmother. God granted her

dream of raising her family in the Church of God. She was an active member at Northside

and served on the Deaconate Board until she was physically unable to do so.

Rachel Graham departed this life on January 18, 2016. She was preceded in death by

her parents, Gratnie and Maggie Smith. her loving husband of 50 years, Edward Graham;

seven brothers; and one grandson, Aaron Bridgewaters.

She leaves to mourn in her passing, yet celebrate in her home going, four children, Ragenia

Graham, Edward Cecil Graham, Jr. (Karen), Rhenetta Martin (Earl), and Indyria Wilson

(Rodney), all from Milwaukee, Wisconsin, seven grandchildren, Victoria Banks, Steven,

David, and Geoffery Bacon, Alexandria and Alanna Graham, and Lawrence Bridgewaters;

eight great-grandchildren; four sisters, Mary Searles, Naomi Haywood, Bethsheba Young, all

of South Fallsburgh, New York, and Orpha Battle of North Port, Florida; two goddaughters, Myra Bynoe and Jasmine Zapata; spiritual daughters, Emma Lyles and Sunella Jones-Ash; and a host of nieces, nephews, relatives, friends, and of course, the Northside Church of God Forever Family.

# Cemetery Details

## Wisconsin Memorial Park

13235 W. Capitol Dr.  
Brookfield, WI

# Previous Events

## Visitation

JAN **22**. 3:00 PM - 7:00 PM (CT)

Northwest Funeral Chapel  
6630 W. Hampton Ave  
Milwaukee, WI

## Service

JAN **23**. 11:00 AM (CT)

Northside Church of God  
4858 N. 19th Street  
Milwaukee, WI

# Tribute Wall

CC

“ *Sister Graham is who she was to the champion family, my God be with the Graham during your lost. Love Pastor Michael and Carla Champion*

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**carla champion** - January 27, 2016 at 06:42 PM



“ *Emerald Garden Basket was purchased for the family of Mrs. Rachel Doris Graham.*



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January 23, 2016 at 10:08 AM

MA

“ *Aunt Rachel was always a highlight of my summertime trips to Milwaukee. To think of Milwaukee family without her is heart breaking. She was always there: encouraging me to play, asking about school and family, or teaching me the joy of eat watermelon. I miss her, and am so glad for the peace that comes alongside her passing. Praying for the whole Graham family and the many other family members, friends, and connections who were touched by Aunt Rachel's life. We get to cry for our loss and celebrate her God-loving life.*

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**Matthew Armstead** - January 22, 2016 at 02:48 PM



“ *Full Of Love Bouquet was purchased for the family of Mrs. Rachel Doris Graham.*



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January 22, 2016 at 12:59 PM



“ *Our love and prayers are with the Graham family and friends. We know that her presence shall be missed. Words at the moment can't express what we are experiencing all the great memories at grandma's house (I called a mansion). Marjorie and Shirley and myself shall keep you all in much prayers and we send our love to you all.*

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**Creolla** - January 22, 2016 at 10:47 AM



“ *Simply Elegant Spathiphyllum was purchased for the family of Mrs. Rachel Doris Graham.*



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January 21, 2016 at 09:17 PM



“ *Pink Tribute Spray was purchased for the family of Mrs. Rachel Doris Graham.*



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January 20, 2016 at 02:12 PM

MC

“*Myra, Ness, Rox, Larin, Letise, Cosby, Dee, and children purchased the Divine Peace Bouquet for the family of Mrs. Rachel Doris Graham.*



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**Myra, Ness, Rox, Larin, Letise, Cosby, Dee, and children -**  
January 20, 2016 at 02:04 PM

MY

“*Aunt Rachel was not only my aunt. She was my godmother. When I moved to Chicago from New York State to attend graduate school, she became my mother away from home for ten years. Through her prayers, visits, telephone calls, hospitality, and godly example, she helped sustain me through grueling years of study. Her love of the Lord was infectious. She was a woman who believed in excellence in the work of Christ and in every facet of life. She was an inspiration to me and I loved her with all my heart. I will miss her deeply but I am REJOICING that she is in the presence of God fully now--no distractions, no troubles. Mann, Gina, Netta, Indy, grandkids, and great-grandkids, I am praying that you will be strengthened, encouraged, and comforted by the memory of this wonderful Mother. She left a rich deposit in all of you and you are greatly blessed by it.--All my love and with prayers, Myra.*

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**Myra -** January 20, 2016 at 11:57 AM

SI

“ Our dear baby sister was much beloved, and we cannot express how much we will miss her. She was beautiful inside and out--a woman of God who honored our mother and father and her husband. Rachel was a blessing to her children, grandchildren, great-grandchildren, her church, and so many others. It is only our age and infirmity that is keeping us from attending her home-going celebration, which we know will be glorious. She is with the Lord. "Well done, Rachel."--Lovingly, Mary, Naomi, Beth, and Orpha.

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**Sisters** - January 20, 2016 at 11:42 AM

CL

“ My sympathy to the Graham family on your loss. May the peace of Christ comfort you during this difficult time, and your fond memories bring you a smile.

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**Chris Luedke** - January 19, 2016 at 07:42 PM



“ Mom was a great mother in law, she was always kind and helpful, when she was able to get around we would go to the store and go ride to Brookfield, I will miss her.



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**Earl Martin** - January 19, 2016 at 04:34 PM