

*In Loving Memory*  
*of*  
***Rita L. Grays***

*Sunrise: December 1, 1948*

*Sunset: January 12, 2021*



***Tuesday, January 26, 2021***

**Family Hour: 10:00 a.m.**

**Service: 11:00 a.m.**

***From the Heart Church Ministries®***  
***Annex at 5055 Allentown Road***  
***Suitland, Maryland 20746***  
***Bishop John A. Cherry, II - Pastor***

# Obituary

Rita Louise Grays was born on December 1, 1948, to Walter and Catherine Stewart. She was raised by her grandmother, Luretha “Big Ma” Green. Rita was educated in the District of Columbia Public Schools, and graduated from Paul Lawrence Dunbar High School in 1967. She furthered her education at Federal City College, Strayer College, the University of the District of Columbia, and Prince George’s Community College, respectively.

On May 13, 1971, Rita married Freddie Grays, and from that union three children, Kimani, Tarik, and Rashid were born. The couple divorced in 1982, and Rita became a very energetic single parent who involved her sons in track, soccer, gymnastics, football, and Boy Scouts.

Rita, a woman of faith, accepted Jesus Christ as her personal Lord and Savior as a child; and she was subsequently baptized at Mt. Pleasant Baptist Church in Washington, D.C. She sang in the church choir and served on the Junior Usher Board. Rita later rededicated her life and joined Maple Springs Baptist Church. In 1981, she joined From the Heart Church Ministries and was actively involved in the life of the church. She was a faithful member of the Senior and Fine Arts Ministries.

Rita was a professional whose career included clerk-typist, statistical assistant, and senior statistical assistant positions with the Board of Governors of the Federal Reserve System where she worked for 20 years before leaving to homeschool her youngest son, Rashid. She re-entered the workforce as a preschool teacher assistant, and several years later, a preschool teacher at National Christian Academy. In 1996, Rita accepted a K-3 teacher position with From the Heart Christian School (FTHCS). In her 24 years with FTHCS, she was privileged to teach multiple generations of young children. Rita loved the children and she enjoyed teaching and instructing them. Moreover, she understood the importance of recognizing their gifts, observing their personalities, and partnering with their parents to help train them in the nurture and admonition of the Lord. The deposit she made in FTHCS is irreplaceable. A colleague often referred to her as the “Michael Jordan” of K-3 students. Just as Michael had a legendary impact on the game of basketball—Rita had a legendary impact on the lives of many students, parents, and families at FTHCS—she left an indelible impression on them all.

In 2009, Rita was introduced to the Maryland Senior Olympics where she discovered a passion and talent for running. The avid runner was awarded seven gold, three silver, and two bronze medals at the state games. In 2014, Rita set an all-time track record in her age group with her 5k fun run and obstacle course. A year later, she received a bronze medal for relay events at the national games held in Minnesota.

Rita had many joys in life; however, the greatest one was spending time with her grandchildren—taking long walks, having tea parties, baking cookies, and making up songs and games. Additionally, she enjoyed shopping and fellowshiping with her Red Hat Society sisters. Rita will be dearly missed by all who knew and loved her.

Rita leaves to cherish her memory her sons: Kimani Yero Grays (Angelique), Tarik Mahndell Grays (NaKhia), and Rashid Aswad Grays (Sequoia); grandchildren: Aja-mi Wiseman, Deja Grays, Kimani Butler, Mia Joyce, Destiny Grays, Kash Grays, Dakota Grays, Daniel Grays, and Christian Grays; great-grandchild, Ezra James Wiseman; sister, Denice Jenkins; a host of other relatives and friends; and her From the Heart Church Ministries and From the Heart Christian School families.

Rita was preceded in death by her parents, Walter and Catherine Stewart, and sister, Cynthia Williams.

# **Order of Service**

***Invocation***

***Scripture Reading***

*Old Testament: Proverbs 31:10, 25-28*

*New Testament: 2 Timothy 4:7-8*

***Prayer of Comfort***

***Selection*** ..... *FTH Psalmist*

***Acknowledgements***

*Ms. Mary Alexander  
Mrs. Crecynthia Crawley  
Minister Steven Battle  
Grays Family Representative*

***Special Presentation*** ..... *From the Heart Christian School*

***Obituary (Read Silently)***

***Song of Preparation*** ..... *FTH Psalmist*

***Message of Hope*** ..... *Bishop John A. Cherry, II*

***Call to Christ***

***Benediction***

***Recessional***

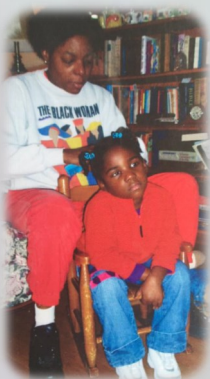
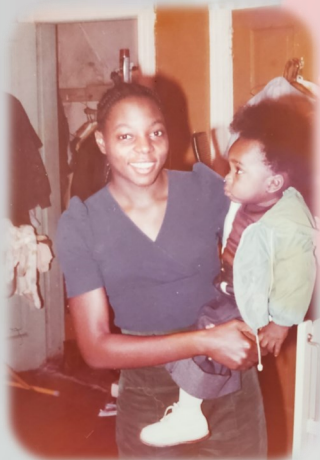
*Drawing by: Mia Joyce*



## ***If Tears Could Build A Stairway***

*By Karen White*

*If tears could build a stairway  
And memories were a lane  
We would walk right up to Heaven  
And bring you back again  
No farewell words were spoken  
No time to say goodbye  
You were gone before we knew it  
And only God knows why  
Our hearts still ache in sadness  
And secret tears still flow  
What it meant to lose you  
No one will ever know  
But now we know you want us  
To mourn for you no more  
To remember all the happy times  
Life still has much in store  
Since you'll never be forgotten  
We pledge to you today  
A hallowed place within our hearts  
Is where you'll always stay*







## **Flower Bearers**

*Family and Friends*

## **Acknowledgement**

*The family of Rita L. Grays sincerely thanks all of you for your prayers, comfort, love, and support. Your many acts of kindness and expressions of sympathy have been a blessing to us. May the Lord Jesus Christ bless and keep you in perfect peace!*

*Services Entrusted To:  
Hodges and Edwards Funeral Home  
Suitland, Maryland*