

*Celebrating the Life
of
Rhonda Alane Graham*

*Sunrise
June 23, 1964*

*Sunset
February 23, 2022*



Wednesday, March 2, 2022

*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

Rhonda Alane Graham was born on June 23, 1964, to William McCants and the late Dorothy McCants in Sumter, South Carolina. She was the fifth of nine children.

Rhonda grew up in nearby Mayesville, South Carolina, where she attended Lee County Public Schools for her primary and secondary education. After high school, she furthered her learning at Winthrop University earning a Bachelor of Science degree in business administration and information systems.

Rhonda was married to Dennis Graham for 20 years. And from their union one daughter, Deidre Alicia Graham was born. She also became a mother to two sons, Rashad Graham and Dennis Graham, Jr.

Rhonda was a co-founder of EBED Community Improvement Inc., a non-profit organization which supports adults with developmental disabilities. Additionally, she served as the Executive Director for over 23 years. In that role, she was very hands-on in the day-to-day activities of the individuals in her care. Rhonda also was the company's Realtor. EBED, was born out of a vision God gave her to serve an under-served population of people. Her undeniable love and compassion for them is irreplaceable; and her tremendous contribution has left a significant impact on the company, as well as the community.

At an early age, Rhonda accepted Jesus Christ as her personal Lord and Savior at her home church, Mt. Moriah United Methodist Church in Mayesville. In 1999, she joined From the Heart Church Ministries (FTH) and was an integral, devoted, active member of the Church. She faithfully served in the Prison, Intercessory Prayer, and Outreach Ministries; and often attended the Women of God Lifegivers Fellowships, Women's Retreats, and Marriage Retreats. Rhonda also volunteered at From the Heart Christian School (FTHCC) where she was a "mom" to many of the students, especially her daughter's classmates. And she was a Coordinator the FTHCC Parent Teachers Association.

Furthermore, she was uncompromising in her faith and love for God. And, that same faith instilled in her a deep love for her husband, children, and the rest of her family. Rhonda was a wonderful wife, mother, daughter, sister, and friend. And her vivacious and giving spirit will be missed by many. Rhonda loved traveling, shopping, scrapbooking, spending time with family, designing, and exercising. She undoubtedly lived a high-impact and extraordinary life surrounded by the people who adored her most.

Rhonda will be greatly missed by all who knew and loved her. She leaves to cherish her memory her husband, Dennis Graham; daughter, Deidre Alicia Graham; sons, Rashad (Ruth) Graham and Dennis "DJ" Graham, Jr.; father, William McCants, Sr.; siblings: half-brother, Miller (Shelley) Mack, Karen (Lavern) Burgess, Yvonne Henry, Carl McCants, Gwendolyn (Paul) Williams, William (Noemi) McCants, Jr., Gloria McCants, Donna (Ronnie) Brown, and Roderick McCants; mother-in-law, Maggie Bailey; five nephews; seven nieces; and a host of grand-nephews and nieces, aunts, cousins, friends and her From the Heart Church Ministries family.

Rhonda was preceded in death by her mother, Dorothy Minnie McCants.

Order of Service

Invocation

Scripture Reading

Old Testament: Psalm 139:1-14
New Testament: 1 Thessalonians 4:13-18

Prayer of Comfort

Selection *FTH Psalmist*

Acknowledgements

Remarks

Mrs. Kabrena Severn, Friend
Mrs. Jacqueline Duncan, Neighbor
Ms. Tawanda Eastwood, Family

Poem *Miss Deidre Graham*

Obituary (Read Silently)

Song of Preparation *Mr. Gerald Washington*

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

Call to Christ

Benediction

Recessional

An Amazing Wife

An amazing God created an amazing woman for a man of God!

Lord, you awakened me this morning as you always have; no alarm clock, just a whisper that did not startle me or harm me. I remember her saying to me "You do not need to set the alarm clock sweetie. He is faithful to wake us up on time every time." An amazing person who always trusted God.

I learned to trust God from this amazing woman that He blessed me with for more than two decades of an amazing marriage. We shared life together. Driving up and down Interstate 85 and 95 to visit our parents and families in North Carolina and South Carolina, our places of birth.

And yes, a detour or two to look at new construction sites, something she loved to do. She often told me that she should have majored in architectural design. I will miss those times of fellowship with no music playing, just sweet fellowship with one another. We ministered together in the Community Outreach, Prison, and Intercessory Prayer Ministries; and, wherever God spoke to our hearts to share His Love.

God blessed us with a beautiful daughter together to begin this journey of bringing up a child in the nurture and admonition of the Lord.

We worked together; our office was close enough to hold a conversation without a phone when the two of us were the only two people in the building, which was often.

We went through this adversity together day after day, month after month, and year after year and experienced the faithfulness of God every step of the way.

My heart is saddened that we will not continue this journey together as we once did. However, I choose to be grateful and thankful to a Holy God who allowed me to experience His Love with an amazing wife, an amazing mother, and an amazing ambassador for the Kingdom of God. I have not known anyone who loved God and trusted Him at His every Word as this amazing person.

Who am I that you are mindful of me? I must say that I cannot fully comprehend the Love of God for mankind, but for two decades I can say I experienced such love with an amazing WOMAN.

Your loving husband, Dennis

A Special Mother

God blessed me with a special mother. A mother who made sacrifices for her family and friends. A mother who was dedicated to her business. A mother who was a fighter. A mother who was unique in being who God made her to be. A mother who refused to lose a competitive game of Phase 10. A mother who would stay up late to make sure my oratorical speeches were the best they could be. A mother who would be willing to drive my friends and me on all our little adventures. A mother who wouldn't let me leave the house unless my uniform was fully ironed. A mother who was supportive in my athletic and educational endeavors. A mother who loved to travel. A mother who enjoyed her daily walks in the summer. A mother who wouldn't pass up an opportunity to look through houses. A mother who loved to shop. A mother who liked to make her own food dishes with random ingredients. A mother who certainly wasn't the biggest fan of dogs but tolerated Teddy. A mother who would always speak life and be positive. A mother who was ALWAYS right, whether I wanted to accept it or not. A mother who desired the best for me. A mother I loved and appreciated. A mother who most importantly loved and served God with all her heart. I aspire to have a relationship with God, just as she did. I can't even begin to fathom that my mother is no longer here with me. Though some may say I'm a daddy's girl, which may be true, but a mother's love is irreplaceable.

There are certain memories with you I will cherish forever. Such as when I was younger, on my way to school, when I wanted to get a couple more minutes of sleep, you would give me a "nugget," also known as a bit of Word from God for that morning and a prayer. I didn't realize it then, but I now know you were imparting wisdom in me that I will now carry with me for the rest of my life. Whenever I would come home ready to share one of my accomplishments, you would always say, "Thank God," and I now realize how essential God is in all our lives. Through CONSTANTLY getting on me about my school grades and character, you taught me to be a kind, strong, respectful, and hardworking young lady, and I am grateful. I will forever strive to be the best I can be and to "overcome evil with good" and not only be the beautiful daughter you made on the outside, but the inside as well through the help of my Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ.

When I went to see my mother in the hospital, I would have never thought it would be the last visit. The day I went to see her, I remember feeling an unconditional love that made every disagreement we ever had seem unimportant in the vast span of things and made everything around me fade away. I'm thankful and grateful for all the time I was able to spend with her and that she can now be in Heaven with her Heavenly Father at peace.

I am deeply saddened that you will not be here to continue on with me and my father, but I now realize we "never have to be alone." I know you are watching and guiding us from above with God. I'll be sure to take that trip to Paris for you. I'll forever miss you. Thank You, Mommy. I Love You.

Your Daughter, Deidre

Family Sentiments

Rhonda Graham, the true definition of a strong, powerful, and educated woman. The first time I met my stepmother, I was moving up from Charlotte, NC, and I immediately felt her presence in the room. She was always straightforward. She would look you in the eyes, and you could sense the love in her heart. She would always make sure that I was good with any problem or situation brought upon my life. She used to pick me up from school and always asked how my day was, and soon after that, we would leave Largo High School. It was either us going to the mall, or somewhere else to go shopping. She loved to see her family looking good. We would be out all day until my dad would call and say, “Y’all need to come on home.” I also could never forget about her cooking, she used to throw down! She made sure that we ate a full course meal every day. She loved her career as a businesswoman. She made sure all her staff at EBED had everything possible, if not more. I’ve never met a woman in my life with so much love and character. She really taught me a lot about life and how to carry myself as a man. I really appreciate Rhonda Graham being in my life. She really made a significant impact on my life.

Dennis Graham, Jr.

Time is something that we often take for granted and it seems as if it passes away in the blink of an eye. On the other hand, there are precious moments that you can spend with someone that seem to last forever. Being in college in North Carolina and then living and working in Georgia, I didn’t take advantage of making more trips to Maryland as I should have; but that made the moments I did have even more meaningful. Regardless of the meeting location, Rhonda and my father would always have some type of “project” waiting on me to work on once I got there. Occasionally, we would also engage in a board or card game together and always had a good meal.

During down times, there were often moments in the kitchen or living area when everyone else was off or taking a nap that Rhonda and I would be able to have a one-on-one conversation. In those moments, I could be transparent about any challenges I may have been facing and knew that I would receive heartfelt and godly wisdom. She would push me to understand the consequences for our disobedience to God’s Word which often didn’t feel comfortable in the moment but stretched me and helped me to become a better man of God.

Rhonda has been able to help transform the life of my father, when he was in a place of hurt and despair for many years. After meeting Rhonda, I could hear the joy and hope return to his voice when I would talk to him on the phone. I am forever grateful for bringing that light back into his life and supporting my brother and I as if we were her own because we were. For those that know my father, they know he can be a bit rigid at times so I’m sure Rhonda helped provide us some grace as well especially during my college days.

As I have become a husband and father, I’m grateful to have found a wife with the same zeal and passion for the Lord as Rhonda. I’m appreciative of the love and support that she has always shown to my wife and kids. Above all else, I am thankful for the sister that Rhonda has given my brother and me. Deidre has the strength and character of her mother, and I will do my best to make sure she continues to honor her mother’s legacy and hopefully I can provide those same life conversations that I had with Rhonda!

Love, Your Son Rashad

Family Sentiments (continued)

“Rhonda” - strong, independent, artistic, expressive, loving, nurturing, fearless, and restless. Honestly seeks the Lord with renewed strength each day. Selfless in giving and doing for others. The best friend one could have. In work ethic none stands taller! Beautiful, inside and out. Cherished by all who know her. Thank you for your relentless crying unto to the Lord for the salvation of your siblings. God was faithful and allowed you to see all your siblings come to the Lord.

Your Loving Siblings

As Rhonda’s youngest sister, I always looked at her through rose-colored glasses, admiring and adoring her, always wanting to emulate her. As a teen, I admired her fashion style and always wanted to wear her clothing. So, whenever she would come home from college, I would mischievously go through her clothes early in the morning while she was asleep, to pick out a cool designer top or snazzy shoes. Most of the times, she would pretend she didn’t hear me rummaging through her things, and she allowed me to wear what I wanted. As a young adult, I admired her love of God. She would share with me all the great mercies and blessings that God was doing in her life. Those talks were instrumental in strengthening my personal relationship with the Lord. Witnessing Rhonda’s grace, peace, thoughtfulness, and steadfast faith amid her challenges was a true testament of God’s favor and grace. There were times out of concern for her, I would reach out to her, only to have her comfort me by hearing her joy, peace, and calmness. I will greatly miss you, Rhonda. There will forever be an irreplaceable void in my heart, but you have left such an indelible legacy of faith, love, joy, and integrity. I am thankful I was able to call you my sister ♥!

Your Sister, Donna

My beautiful sister Rhonda, you were my best friend growing up. I know you are with God now and He’s saying to you well done my child, job well done. I’m going to miss you so much. Just listening to how people talk about you these last few days, you are the model I wish and hope to be. Rest well my sister, job well done. I love you. P.S. Thank you for introducing me to Prince’s music that Saturday morning way back when. Love you!

Your Brother, Will

To my wonderful sister—confident, a flare for being “dramatic,” possessor of great taste, are immediate words that come to my mind when I think about growing up with you. Thank you for being an instrumental part of monumental “FIRSTS” in my life. You allowed me to come to stay with you for a summer break, which allowed me to work my FIRST job in the nursing field, which led to me purchasing my FIRST car. You were the FIRST person I called when I rededicated my life back to the Lord. You said you were just on your way home crying out to the Lord to “save my brothers and sisters,” and the Lord responded, I have heard your cry when you received my call. We rejoiced and cried together about the faithfulness of GOD. You were the realtor for my “FIRST” home.

Those “FIRST” moments are irreplaceable, but they could never compare to the times we spent and shared together. You were the reason I moved to this area. You were not only my sister, but my boss. The unique bond I shared with you as a sister and the leader I needed on the job, is one that I greatly appreciated and valued. Finally, the imprint you have left on my heart as a WOMAN OF GOD, to witness firsthand your love for, and faith in GOD was remarkable. I love you and will miss you.

Your Loving Sister, Gloria ♥

Family Sentiments (continued)

First, I would like to start off by saying thanks for being one of my six sisters I grew up with. One of the most beautiful things I loved about Rhonda was her love for God through His son, Jesus Christ, and the faith she had in Him. I'm thankful for the love and concern she had for me as her brother, and for God's plan in my own life. I can truly say that you will be missed on earth but not forgotten. I still think about those conversations Rhonda and I had just in the past couple of years about life itself. I'm thankful for when I first moved up here from down south. Rhonda opened her door and allowed me to live with her for several years; I am grateful and thankful for that time together. Sometimes we don't realize how much impact an individual can have on one's life until we stop and think about it. So, I would like to say in my closing, thanks for allowing me to share some of my thoughts.

Your Brother, Carl

To my wonderful Daughter-in-love not in-law,

My sweet Rhonda, although you were my daughter-in-law, you were more of a daughter like my very own. I think back to the first time we met when you and my niece Tawana would come and visit, and at the end of every visit we would always have church. The love you showed me was like you always knew me and we were family at that very moment. But when you married my son, it got sweeter and sweeter. I know you knew this, but I thank you for being a part of our family, for being a wonderful wife to my son, a great mother, and for giving me an amazing granddaughter. You will forever be loved and missed.

Your Mother-in-love, Maggie Bailey

My Sister, My Friend!

As I sit here thinking of what to say, all I can hear and feel in my spirit are the words "missing you." You were my sister, my friend and only God knows why. I am so thankful to God for allowing us to become friends and family some 20 years ago. I never imagined you would be gone so soon; I know I can get through this. It is hard; no one knows the bond we shared and what we went through together. I am thanking God for allowing me to spend that much needed time with you before you went home. Words can't express how I feel, how I'm hurting on the inside because you are not physically here; but I am rejoicing that you are with our Heavenly Father. Rhonda I will never forget the trips we shared, the talks we had, and the plan and vision God gave us when we started our company together; one of our great earthly accomplishments. I am thanking him for the memory. So, I say farewell my friend farewell. I will miss you but never forget you. You are forever my sister, and my friend. Until we see each other again.

Love Always, your sister, your friend, Tawana Dickerson Bynum

Rhonda has always been an inspiration to me with her unwavering Faith. I would always tell people it was good to have anointed sisters. I saw her love for the family. She would always have encouraging words when we spoke. In the mist of her trials she never complained, not one negative word when you talked with her. I will miss you and your loving spirit. Another link has been taken and a void will be there but your legacy of love for all will always be present.

Your Sister, Gwen

Family Sentiments (continued)

I will miss my dear sister very much. Rhonda was always a dependable and strong person who loved family. She was always there to help. Love you. Rest now!!!

Your Sister, Yvonne

One of my favorite sayings from my sister was "If you don't stand firm in your Faith, you won't stand at all."

Your Sister, Karen

My Aunt Rhonda was a greatly spiritual women and whenever I needed any words of encouragement, she would not hesitate to give them to me. I never got to tell her how she was there for me at a new and scary time in my life. I was a young tired new mother. She came into town for a visit and took care of my daughter while I slept for hours. She knew I was tired and did not mind stepping in and helping. She was a blessing; and I was blessed to have her as an aunt. I will miss her. Thank you, Aunt Rhonda. I love you so much!

Your Niece, Latoya

I know I was a true bonus child since our encounter and relationship really started after Rashad and I got married. Rashad and I always enjoyed our Maryland visits, especially as we grew from a party of two to a family of four. I would watch you as you would purposefully walk in your role as a daughter of God, wife, mother and businesswoman. I truly felt our relationship grow exponentially as we joined our faith together in prayer. Sharing God's Word and encouragement during this season and journey in life is my greatest memory, forcing my spiritual maturity to grow in accepting all is well and His Will be done. You have left a legacy impact in all the lives you've touched.

Love Always, Ruth

Aunt Rhonda, I love you and will miss you dearly. Thanks for the laughs, memories, and wisdom.

Love, your nephew Tony

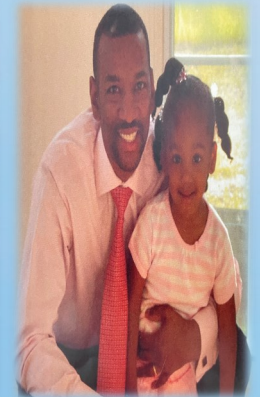
As a young girl, I adored her from afar like a little mentee. Her quiet yet strong presence resonated adoration in my little heart. The saying is true, we don't know whose life we are impacting. Because of the way I saw Rhonda confidently strut through the halls of MPHS, that made me hold my head just a little higher. I was kind of shy and a borderline introvert. I was just gaining my confidence and gaining footage when my big sister had left for college. So, my mentor was gone as I entered high school.

I was figuring life out. Rhonda helped me without ever uttering one word of encouragement or even having much of a conversation. She was kind and sweet to me as an underclassman when it mattered in my young life. I never said that to her. She would speak to me now and then but no long conversation.

Today when I heard she passed into her new life, it saddened me that I never said these words to her. I hope she is enjoying her new existence in eternity. I am sure I am one of many whose life she touched with her quiet spirit. People like her make the world a better place.

Patricia B. Ortiz







Flower Bearers

Family and Friends

Acknowledgements

*The family of Rhonda Alane Graham acknowledges with deep appreciation every act of kindness and expression of love shown to us during our time of bereavement.
May God richly bless you. We love you all!*



Services Entrusted to:

*Hodges and Edwards Funeral Home
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