



Essie Mae Casimere

October 2, 1928 - April 4, 2011

A Life Well Lived

Essie Mae Casimere was born October 2, 1928 in Coweta, Oklahoma and passed away April 4, 2011.

Essie Mae Presley was born to her proud parents, Benjamin Sr. and Hattie Buycks Presley on October 2, 1928, in Coweta, Oklahoma. She spent her early childhood in Tulsa, where she attended Dunbar Elementary School, Carver Junior High School and one year at Booker T. Washington High School.

As a child, Essie spent much of her free time with her next door neighbor and closest friend Stella Mae Webb, and it was Stella Mae's mother, Ms. Irene, that took them to the Holiness church. Essie also spent time in the home of her grandmother and her namesake, Grandma Essie. Grandma Essie was remembered as a prayin' woman who was very, very sweet and ministered to the sick. It was also Grandma Essie's home where the family enjoyed Sunday dinner, every Sunday, and all of the holidays. As an adult, Miss Essie would have her grandmother's mantle.

When Essie was 14 years old her family moved to Stockton, California. Her father then decided that he did not want his daughter growing up and going to school in Stockton; he sent her and her cousin Josephine to live with her Uncle Joe and Aunt Lessie in Berkeley. Essie attended and graduated from Berkeley High School. She then enrolled at San Francisco State to study nursing but love was soon to change her course.

In 1946, Cornelius Lewis Casimere Jr. was back home from the war knowing that he wanted to get married. He returned to the Carleton Street Church of God in Christ where he met and pursued Essie. They were married on July 10, 1947 and over a period of sixteen years had six children, Ronald, Donald, Bonita, Rickey, Christopher and Kay. They later adopted another daughter, Mary.

Miss Essie was passionate in her purpose; serving God, her family and others. As her children grew up she decided to start her own home based business and became a licensed day care provider. She nurtured and cared for more than twenty children through the years. And only God could have given her the strength that she needed to minister to the needs of the elderly, sick and dying. When Cornelius' grandfather, and Miss Essie's father and mother were no longer able to care for themselves, Cornelius and Miss Essie brought them into their home where she fed, bathed and cared for them. She also provided the same level of care for Sister Whiteman in her own home until her passing.

At the Ephesian Church of God in Christ (formerly Carleton Street COGIC), Miss Essie was a member of the Young Women's Christian Council (YWCC), participating in bible study and prayer meetings. She was a founding member and president of the Crystalettes, a Christian social club. Recognizing the need for fellowship outside of the church, The Crystalettes, whose members came from multiple churches, sponsored couples and family events such as holiday parties and summer barbeques..

Subsequently, as Elders and District Pastors at Shiloh Christian Fellowship (for the north Oakland, Berkeley and Richmond area), Miss Essie and Cornelius opened their home to counsel many couples and held home groups in their home and throughout their district.

Miss Essie had many gifts and did all things well. She practiced the art of interior design; loved to shop for furniture and accessories and spent many nights, when her family was asleep, arranging and rearranging her furniture. She enjoyed planting and tending to her beautiful flower garden and

entertaining in her large backyard. She loved to dress, and had the ability to find beautiful quality clothing at the best prices, a skill that she passed down to her daughters. She was a skilled seamstress and she made clothes and accessories for her home, herself and her daughters. She had the gift of hospitality and her delicious Sunday dinners were the highlight of each week. There was always enough food and with family and extended family there would often be more than thirty people laughing and eating at the Casimere's. A more detailed description of Miss Essie's life can be found in Proverbs 31:10-31.

Miss Essie loved family- and for her- family extended far beyond the nucleus. She was always reaching out to others who not only came for Sunday dinner, but celebrated holidays or traveled with the family to southern California. As mentioned in their book, extended family included Charlie McGee, Vicki Madden and her children, Jabari, Mika and Cierra, Nick and Vel Dillard and their children, Nick, Lauren and Gordon, Mike and Fay Blackmon and their children, Fay, Michael and Jessica, Robert and Joyce Love and their daughter Jennifer and Michael and Valerie James and their daughters Aris and Asha. It is hard to imagine an event more spectacular than their 50th anniversary celebration at the Claremont Hotel but on the occasion of their 60th wedding anniversary, Miss Essie and husband Cornelius presented a very precious gift to their family, a book of their memoirs, "Our Long Journey Together". Each child and grandchild and future generations will forever cherish their beautiful life story. "Our Long Journey Together" is available in the history room at the Berkeley Public library. The event was covered by The POST newspaper. Miss Essie will be greatly missed by her husband of 63 years, Cornelius Lewis Casimere Jr.; her sons and daughters, Ronald Casimere and wife Ladelle, Donald Casimere and wife Marjorie, Bonita and husband Carl Vinson, Rickey Casimere, Christopher Casimere and wife Kelley, Kay and husband Michael Lopez, Mary and husband Johnny Richardson.

Affectionately, "Grams" will be missed by her seventeen grandchildren: Jamila

and husband Ivery Smith, Lincoln Casimere, Jeffrey Casimere, Donald Casimere II, Daniel Casimere, Heather Casimere, Erika Vinson Price and husband Charles, Erin Vinson, Lauren Brittany Vinson, Linnie Casimere, Olivia Lopez, Joshua Lopez, Caleb Casimere, Krista Casimere, Raphaelle Richardson, Raquelle Richardson, Rachelle Richardson; and her three great grandchildren; Isaiah Johnson Smith, Ja'de Smith and Aria Price.

Cemetery Details

Rolling Hills Memorial Park

4100 Hilltop Drive
Richmond, CA 94803

Previous Events

Visitation

APR 7. 6:00 PM - 8:00 PM (PT)

Harris Funeral Home Legacy Center
1331 San Pablo Ave.
Berkeley, CA 94702
(510) 525-1331
<http://www.harrisfuneralhomelegacycenter.com>

Service

APR 8. 11:00 AM - 1:00 PM (PT)

Harris Funeral Home Legacy Center
1331 San Pablo Ave.
Berkeley, CA 94702
(510) 525-1331
<http://www.harrisfuneralhomelegacycenter.com>