



## Mrs. Gladys Mae Owens

May 2, 1924 - August 27, 2024

### In Loving Memory Of

Gladys Mae Owens was born May 2, 1924, in Water Valley, Mississippi to Robert L. Varnado and Arneida Bouldin Varnado, both born in Mississippi. She was the youngest and only girl in a family of six brothers. When she was born, everyone was eager to name her. As a result, she was named Bennie Gladys Mary Elizabeth Angeline Arneida Vee Varnado after her aunt, both grandmothers, mother and another aunt, respectively. She ended up being called "Gladys Mae".

Gladys' mother died when she was only two years old and was raised by her father and two stepmothers, Cora, whom she described as being a cruel woman and Claudia (Hon), whom she loved. Her father was a Baptist minister and traveled frequently to other churches in the county. Gladys and her brothers spent summers with their grandfather, aunts and uncles or anyone who was willing to care for them. She attended public schools in Canton, Brookhaven, Hattiesburg and Vicksburg, Mississippi, since the family frequently moved around. In 1942, Gladys enrolled in Alcorn A&M College, graduating with a degree in Home Economics. While there, she fell in love with a picture of Emiel Owens and conversed with him by mail as he was in the Armed Services overseas. He returned home and moved to Detroit to work at Ford Motor company. Emiel sent for Gladys, who was then in Chicago. They married in Detroit, in 1946 and to this union, two boys were born, Jerel and Michael. Gladys loved those "2 little boys".

Gladys retired in 1983 from the City of Detroit after 33 years of service. During those years, she worked as a medical attendant at old Receiving Hospital, as a substitute teacher in the public schools and as a correctional officer at DeHoCo (Detroit House of Corrections).

Gladys joined Mt. Olive M.B. Church in 1946 and remained a member until 2016. While a member, she was a Sunday school teacher, choir director and mission member. In 2016, she joined Fellowship Chapel, where she was known as “Mother” Owens. She became known for her quick wit and a hug for anyone who needed one. Gladys loved to sing and passed her love for music to her children. She was an accomplished fund raiser for the Alcorn Alumni Society, Detroit Chapter. Mama Gladys embodied hospitality, creating a welcoming and loving home, not only for her children, but also to all her “adopted” children, neighbors and friends. She loved to travel, going to the gym, watching sports, dancing and listening to the blues. Gladys was kind, generous, and compassionate, who lived a full life. She showed strength and determination, reaching her 100th birthday, which was one of her lifetime goals.

Gladys will continue to live in the minds and hearts of all who knew her. She was preceded in death by her parents, (Robert and Arneida Varnado), her brothers, {Robert, Wille, (twins)Alvis and Alva, Ransom and Charles), husband, (Emiel Owens), and companion,(George Ferguson, Jr.).

Gladys leaves to cherish her memories: her loving sons, Jerel (Florice), Michael (Frances), grandchildren (Brian Owens, Stacey Owens (Kellie), Michael Owens Jr. (Dawn), Kendra Owens, great-grandchildren (Chase and Carter Owens), a host of nephews and nieces, “adopted “ children, extended family and friends.

Her legacy will live on through the memories we hold dear and may they be a source of comfort and inspiration to us all.

# Previous Events

## Visitation

Friday, Sep. **6.** 3:00 PM - 8:00 PM (ET)

O. H. Pye, III Funeral Home  
17600 Plymouth Road  
Detroit, MI 48227  
(313) 838-9770  
info@pyefuneralhome.com

## Family Hour / Visitation

Saturday, Sep. **7.** 10:00 AM - 11:00 AM (ET)

Fellowship Chapel  
7707 West Outer Drive  
Detroit, MI 48235

## Celebration of Life

Saturday, Sep. **7.** 11:00 AM - 12:30 PM (ET)

Fellowship Chapel  
7707 West Outer Drive  
Detroit, MI 48235

# Tribute Wall

MB

“ Aunt Gladys was such an inspiration to me ....a world of advice and knowledge ..... when Henry and I were traveling he/or she would always make an effort to include me in the conversation ....there were times when she would call me unannounced because she had a "feelin" that I needed her ...and she was usually correct ....I loved her and she loved me and I will miss her fiercely !!!

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**michael w boteler** - September 06, 2024 at 12:26 PM

TF

“ The Butchee Family planted a [Memorial Tree](/store/Product.aspx?ProductId=4518) in honor of Mrs. Gladys Mae Owens.

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**The Butchee Family** - September 06, 2024 at 11:36 AM

TF

“ The Butchee Family purchased the Full Of Love Bouquet for the family of Mrs. Gladys Mae Owens.



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**The Butchee Family** - September 06, 2024 at 11:36 AM

TF

“ The Neely family planted a [Memorial Tree](/store/Product.aspx?ProductId=4518) in honor of Mrs. Gladys Mae Owens.

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**The Neely family** - September 05, 2024 at 10:55 PM

TF

“ *The Neely family purchased the Enchanted Cottage for the family of Mrs. Gladys Mae Owens.*



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**The Neely family** - September 05, 2024 at 10:55 PM

GG

“ *Gloria G. planted a [Memorial Tree](/store/Product.aspx?ProductId=4518) in honor of Mrs. Gladys Mae Owens.*

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**Gloria G.** - September 05, 2024 at 09:43 PM

WF

“ *With love, Michelle Amici and Family planted a [Memorial Tree](/store/Product.aspx?ProductId=4518) in honor of Mrs. Gladys Mae Owens.*

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**With love, Michelle Amici and Family** - September 05, 2024 at 01:50 PM



“ *Peaceful White Lilies Basket was purchased for the family of Mrs. Gladys Mae Owens.*



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September 05, 2024 at 01:50 PM

CH

“ Grandmother Gladys! You came into my life and wrapped your warm and loving arms around me. I am forever grateful for that! I am also thankful for the fond familial memories and blessed times spent together. I cherish the delightful discussions and laughter filled smiles shared. My heart does ache...But, I take comfort in knowing that you have taken your ancestral rest in God's Grace!



Charmion - September 05, 2024 at 01:11 AM

BC

“ Beverly Moran and Willard Carter planted a [Memorial Tree](/store/Product.aspx?ProductId=4518) in honor of Mrs. Gladys Mae Owens.

Beverly Moran and Willard Carter - September 04, 2024 at 05:01 PM

BC

“ Beverly Moran and Willard Carter purchased the Lavender Reflections Spray for the family of Mrs. Gladys Mae Owens.



Beverly Moran and Willard Carter - September 04, 2024 at 05:01 PM

WS

“ *Wolverine Dental Society purchased the Full Of Love Bouquet for the family of Mrs. Gladys Mae Owens.*



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**Wolverine Dental Society** - September 03, 2024 at 09:12 AM

LO

“ *Rest in heaven Aunt Glady. I had the pleasure of visiting you recently and our conversation left me leaving with a smile on my face. Oh, what your eyes have seen. To God be the glory for the things he has done for you. My sincere condolences to your family and friends. I am so happy that Kim and Hildred introduced me to you. You are blessed. ❤️*

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**Lula Odom** - September 02, 2024 at 10:01 PM

RF

“ *Ronald & Verlie Ruffin and Family purchased the Full Of Love Bouquet for the family of Mrs. Gladys Mae Owens.*



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**Ronald & Verlie Ruffin and Family** - September 02, 2024 at 10:27 AM

FC

“ *From your Nieces and Nephews in Chicago planted a [Memorial Tree](/store/Product.aspx?ProductId=4518) in honor of Mrs. Gladys Mae Owens.*

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**From your Nieces and Nephews in Chicago** - August 31, 2024 at 02:00 PM

FC

“ From your Nieces and Nephews in Chicago purchased the Lavender Reflections Spray for the family of Mrs. Gladys Mae Owens.



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**From your Nieces and Nephews in Chicago** - August 31, 2024  
at 02:00 PM

CP

“ I remember the day I first met her. I was 8 years old and she came to visit her favorite brother — they were all her favorites 😊 — at our home on Anthony Avenue in Chicago. She had this big lap, strong arms and when she hugged me, I felt safe. Goodbye, Aunt Gladys. After 100 years, you too, are safe in God's arms.

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**Casandra Porter** - August 29, 2024 at 09:52 AM

BP

“ I will remember her with fondness, and laughter. She, andy mother were great friends traveling together years ago

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**barbara parker** - August 28, 2024 at 07:08 PM