



## Mrs. Helen George Jones

November 10, 1919 - September 21, 2016

Celebrating The Life Of Helen George Jones:

Helen George Greer Parham Jones was born on November 10, 1919 to the union of Willia Helen Washington and John Wesley George in Perry, Oklahoma. She was the eldest of six children: Armistice George White, Willie Reaves, Louis Reaves, Vernie Reaves, and Verla Izetta Reaves (who died in infancy). Her parents and siblings all preceded her in death.

During her childhood years, Helen was raised in a religious home that instilled Christianity in her heart. She was born again and baptized at an early age and attended Green Hill Baptist Church, which was pastored by her grandfather, the Reverend Sandy Washington. She relocated to Detroit, Michigan with her mother and sister Armistice after her father's death.

Following their relocation, Helen's mother married Joseph Reaves of Detroit, Michigan. Their union added three brothers to the family: Willie, Louis, and Vernie Reaves. Helen often referred to herself as her siblings' second mother, because she greatly assisted her mother in raising them, as well as taking care of the family home.

Helen received most of her early education through the Detroit Public School system, where she attended Columbian Elementary School, McMichael Junior High, and Northwestern High School—from which she graduated with honors.

Her higher education began at Langston University in Langston, Oklahoma, where she completed her freshman year. She continued her educational pursuits at Wayne State University in Detroit, Michigan, where she earned her Bachelor of Arts and Master of Arts Degrees in Elementary Education. She also earned more than 30 hours beyond her Master's Degree.

With regard to her personal background, Helen was first married to Antonio Greer, with whom she had her only child—a son, Orlando Greer (now deceased). Orlando's marriage to Janice (Trotter) Greer, which was celebrated on March 28, 1965, was blessed with one son, Erik Greer, born on June 21, 1968.

Helen's second marriage to James W. "Jimmy" Parham began on April 4, 1956, and ended 15 years later upon his death on December 12, 1971. Although Helen and Jimmy had no children of their own, Helen enjoyed a close relationship with the children of Jimmy's late sister Annie Ruth Parham Gist and her husband Andrew Gist: Grace Edith, Wanda Lavonne, Andrena, Joan Carolyn, and twins, Ricardo (now deceased) and Renardo. Even after Uncle Jimmy's death, his nieces and nephews never wavered in their undiminished feelings towards the person they always knew and loved as "Aunt Helen."

Helen's third marriage was to Lovelace Harvey Jones on February 24, 1977. The wedding took place at the New Hope Baptist Church in Toledo, Ohio, following a lengthy and persistent courtship. The couple remained happily married for over 35 years—up until Harvey's death on August 28, 2012. Helen's professional life was devoted to educating Detroit's youth. She realized her childhood dream of becoming a classroom teacher when she was hired by the Detroit Public School system (DPS) in September of 1945, at Higginbotham Elementary School. Helen achieved this goal in spite of the rampant racial prejudice that pervaded DPS at that time, during which only a

“handful” of African-Americans obtained teacher status. Regarding that period, Helen often stated, “If you really believe you can do something, then you can.”

Helen persevered during her early career in education, notwithstanding the many obstacles placed in her path. Her love of teaching and never-ending enthusiasm for her craft were demonstrated by her relentless punctuality and her aversion to leaving school before her next day’s lesson plans were complete.

In 1956, Helen was reassigned to Detroit’s Bunche Elementary School for one semester, due to decreased enrollment; and, in September 1956, she was transferred to Longfellow Middle School, along with her sister Armistice, where the sisters taught in adjoining classrooms for five years.

In 1961, Helen was appointed as the first math teacher at the newly-opened Peck Elementary School, where she taught until 1968, at which time she became a Math Demonstration Teacher. She thoroughly enjoyed this position—teaching teachers to teach. In 1973, Helen became a DPS Region 3 Staff Coordinator and was assigned to Sherrill Elementary School, where she remained until, Friday, October 31, 1986. Helen retired from public education altogether, after more than 40 years of dedication to a profession that she treasured.

Helen did not alter her ambitious pace after retiring, though. She continued her post-graduate education and career aspirations by embracing a second career as a licensed real estate agent at the tender age of 65. Amazingly, she won many awards as top salesperson over an 18-year period. Her final continuing education class in real estate occurred on June 9, 2004, when her declining health prevented her from fully engaging in this occupation. Her special friendship with Dellzena “Cookie” Neal commenced and evolved

during the course of her real estate vocation, and lasted until her transition.

Besides working in education and later, real estate, Helen was an active member of her church for many years. She remained a very socially-active proponent of Tabernacle Missionary Baptist Church in Detroit, Michigan, which was pastored by Reverend Dr. Fulton Bradley and later by Reverend Dr. Frederick G. Sampson. Among her duties was to facilitate the activities of the church's Travel Club by setting up trips and excursions for its senior members. She also participated for many years in the church's El Primero Club, for which she operated as president from 1973 to 1978. She also faithfully attended Sunday School. When her health did not permit her to physically attend to church activities commencing in early 2005, Helen became a shut-in congregant.

During her active years, Helen made significant contributions to her community through her individual endeavors, as well as by way of her membership in her beloved sorority, Alpha Kappa Alpha Sorority, Incorporated (AKA). Helen was initiated by AKA's Alpha Rho Omega Chapter in 1948—ascending her to the status of “Golden Soror” in honor of her more than 68 years of service as of the time of her death. Up until the last decade of her life, Helen faithfully attended sorority meetings, voted in every election; and served on numerous committees, including three of her favorites—Local Founders' Day Committee, Scholarship Committee, and June Breakfast Committee. She also enjoyed attending the sorority's International Conventions (Boulés). Helen received her coveted “Golden Soror” Crown and Certificate, awarded by the sorority upon a member's completion of 50 years of service, at the 58th Boulé, held at the McCormick Place Convention Complex in Chicago, Illinois, in July 1998.

In addition to her community involvement—including, but not limited to: holding a lifetime membership with the NAACP; serving as a member of the

Michigan Association of Retired School Personnel; and making frequent contributions to St. Jude Hospital—Helen’s participation in AKA led to the formation of two bridge clubs, commencing in the late 1950s, and extending until December 2013. Helen was an avid bridge player, who enjoyed the game with her fellow club members at least three times a month.

Helen’s other favorite pastimes included playing the piano and organ; traveling; and volunteering her time and talent toward helping others. Most will remember Helen as being a generous, warm, loving, kind, patient, and gentle woman, who sought peace over conflict in her daily life. She possessed a dry wit and infectious sense of humor, and was not afraid to speak her mind. During her declining years, Helen relished viewing old movies and reruns of television westerns, especially “Gunsmoke” and “The Rifleman”—often commenting that she remembered having seen those shows when they first aired decades before.

As she progressed in age and poor health, stemming from an injury and various illnesses, Helen began receiving in-home health care in 2014, and finally needed to leave her home on August 12, 2016. At that time, she relocated to the Manor of Farmington Hills Nursing Home. She has been the beneficiary of exemplary health care from a staff of excellent caregivers for the past two years. She made her transition on Wednesday, September 21, 2016, at 11:40 a.m., after having lived an inspiring and productive life for almost 97 years...

Those who will also remember this remarkable woman, and her legacy of sisterhood and service, is an entire sorority—comprised of 993 chapters throughout the world and more than 283,000 Alpha Kappa Alpha women. Helen will always hold a special place in the hearts of her family, friends, and sorors; her brilliant light will never be extinguished; and she will forever remain one of AKA’s—and society’s—most precious Pearls.



# Cemetery Details

## United Memorial Gardens

4800 Curtis Road  
Plymouth, MI 48170

# Previous Events

## Family Hour

Thursday, Sep. **29**. 10:00 AM (ET)

Tabernacle Missionary Baptist Church  
2080 W. Grand Blvd.  
Detroit, MI 48208  
(313) 898-3325

## Alpha Kappa Alpha Ivy Ceremony

Thursday, Sep. **29**. 10:15 AM (ET)

Tabernacle Missionary Baptist Church  
2080 W. Grand Blvd.  
Detroit, MI 48208  
(313) 898-3325

## Funeral Service

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Thursday, Sep. **29**. 11:00 AM (ET)

Tabernacle Missionary Baptist Church  
2080 W. Grand Blvd.  
Detroit, MI 48208  
(313) 898-3325

# Tribute Wall



“ *Mrs. Helen George Jones*

January 21, 2023 at 09:34 PM



“ *6 files added to the album New Album Name*



**Ester Cook** - September 27, 2016 at 04:57 PM



“ *DEEPEST SYMPATHY AND PRAYING  
GOD'S BLESSINGS AND STRENGTH TO  
THE ENTIRE FAMILY! MAY YOUR AUNT  
REST IN PEACE WITH THE FATHER WHO  
SURPASS ALL UNDERSTANDING. LOVING  
YOU ALL TO LIFE,  
MINISTER MILLIE SIMS*



**MILLIE SIMS** - September 27, 2016 at 02:02 PM

LC

“ *Love Ester and Ronald Cook purchased the Arrive in Style for the family of Mrs. Helen George Jones.*



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**Love Ester and Ronald Cook** - September 24, 2016 at 01:35 PM