



W. D. CROWDER FUNRAL HOME

1800 John L. Patterson Street
Springfield, Tennessee 37172
615-384-7984 Fax 615-384-7916



NORA LEE GARDNER PAYNE SMITH was born February 14, 1930 to the late Elnora Dowdy and Aaron Gardner. She transitioned to be with the Lord on February 20, 2023. In addition to her parents, she was preceded in death by her siblings, Robert Aaron Gardner Sr., James Riley Gardner, Frank Gardner, Joseph Gardner, Dorothy Gardner Hines, Glodena Gardner, Martha Gardner, Goldie Gardner.

She married Charles Edward Payne and to this union one daughter was born, Carolyn Elaine Payne Woodard. Nora later married Joseph F. Smith, a devoted and loving husband until her death.

Nora was educated in Robertson County Schools, a proud graduate of Bransford High School Class of 1948. She was a graduate of Tennessee State University with a bachelor's degree in Business. She furthered her education with a Masters in Supervision Administration from Tennessee State University.

Nora was an Administrative Assistant at American Baptist Theological Seminary Nashville, Tennessee under Dr. Maynard Turner. While there she was involved with the Civil Rights Movement. Included were John R Lewis, Jesse Jackson, Ralph Abernathy, all Civil Rights Activists with the sit-in movement in downtown Nashville to stop segregation. Nora was employed by the Robertson County School System for 29 years. Within those years Nora taught at North Robertson Elementary where she was the first African American teacher, Cheatham Park Elementary, and Westside Elementary. Superintendent Whitman hired Nora for her first teaching position. Nora taught elementary school under principals Steve Moss, Billy Paul Carneal, and Ronnie Meador.

Nora was a founder of Greater Faith Apostolic Church (now City of Faith Church) and served under the pastorate of Elder Harold C. Hines for 28 years and continued to serve under her nephew Pastor Robert Gardner until her illness. For more than 40 years, Nora was faithful in service as a church Trustee, Vacation Bible School Director, Finance Ministry Assistant, Intercessory Prayer Ministry, and Sunday School Teacher. Many other acts of kindness and service can be contributed to her walk with the Lord.

She leaves to cherish her memories a devoted husband; Joseph F. Smith; a devoted and loving daughter, Carolyn (The Late Raymond) Woodard of Springfield, Tennessee; Step son Jefferey Smith of Springfield, Tennessee, Stepdaughter Heleen Smith (deceased), stepdaughter Cathy (Gregory) Ford of Hendersonville, Tennessee; Grandchildren; RaCarol Woodard of Springfield, Tennessee, Randall Woodard of White House, Tennessee, Blake and Phillip McCarthy of Chattanooga, Tennessee, Ashley McCarthy of Tampa, Florida, Courtney McCarthy of Houston, Texas, Angeli Nicole Smith of Springfield, Tennessee, Jocelyn Morton of Springfield, Tennessee, Ashley Payne and Catilyn Ford of Hendersonville, Tennessee, Zachery Ford of Franklin Tennessee; One sister in law; Helen Gordon of Nashville, Tennessee; One brother in law; Nobel Smith of Springfield, Tennessee; Nieces; Robin Stover of Hendersonville, Tennessee, Pamela (The Late Earl) Williams of Springfield, Tennessee, Corrine (Hewitt) Sawyers of Franklin, Tennessee, Teresa and Sonya Gardner of Springfield, Tennessee, Lisa (William) Savage of Springfield, Tennessee, Grenae (Howard) Young of Goodlettsville Tennessee, Linda (Eddie) Cook of Harrisburg, Pennsylvania; Nephews; Michael (Kumiko) Gardner of Greenville, Kentucky, Robert (Peggy) Gardner, Jr. of Springfield, Tennessee, Alfred (The Late Cindy) Gardner of Springfield, Tennessee, James Gardner of Springfield, Tennessee, Glenn (Gertrude) Belcher of Gallatin, Tennessee. Nora also leaves to cherish devoted friend Irene Holman, Springfield, Tennessee, and a host of great grandchildren, cousins, and friends.