

A Celebration of Life



Mrs. Della Hemphill Oliver

Monday, January 28, 2019 - 12:00 p.m.

Rogers Memorial Baptist Church

520 College Street
Knoxville, TN 37921

REVEREND MICHAEL S.E. CALDWELL, OFFICIATING

Obituary

Della Hemphill Oliver was born on July 10, 1927 in Knoxville, TN to the parents of Robert Nealy and Louise Hemphill. An educator in the Knoxville community, she entered eternal rest on Saturday, January 19, 2019 at her home. Della Oliver was destined to become a leader: an educator in the Alcoa Schools System and in the Knoxville City and Knox County Schools; and in her spiritual life at the Rogers Memorial Baptist Church.

Her educational preparation began in the Knoxville City Schools where she graduated from Austin High School as the Class of 1945 Salutatorian. She received the Bachelor of Science degree from Knoxville College in 1952 with a double major in Sociology and Elementary Education and a minor in Physical Education, Health and Religion. She later earned the Master of Science Degree in Elementary and Special Education from the University of Tennessee. She additionally completed ninety-eight hours toward a doctoral degree at UT.

Mrs. Oliver's first job was the Alcoa School System, where she taught Health and Physical Education and served as Girls Basketball Coach. She became employed by the Knoxville City Schools and its successor, Knox County Schools. For thirty-three years, she was at Maynard Elementary School where she taught Special Education from 1956 to 1975 and then served as Principal from 1975-1989. She was a distinguished educator who focused on academic excellence.

She served as the Superintendent of the Primary Division as well as Assistant General Superintendent of the Sunday School Department at Rogers Memorial Baptist Church. She was a member for over seventy years.

She joined Delta Sigma Theta Sorority, Inc. Gamma Mu Chapter in 1952 at Knoxville College where she met her future husband William and became active with the Knoxville Alumnae Chapter in 1953. She served in many capacities: Treasurer, Fundraising Chair; Gamma Mu Chapter Advisor; and Delta Patroness Board Advisor (Mothers of Deltas). She was a Diamond Life Member of the sorority.

As an educator, she joined the National Sorority of Phi Delta Kappa, Inc. Beta Psi Chapter in 1968. She held numerous appointed and elected offices on the local, regional and national levels such as: Southeast Region Member-At-Large, Southeast Regional Director; and National Member-At-Large. In 1993, she was elected the 20th Supreme Basileus (National President) and she served in this capacity until 1997. Her leadership platform emphasized professional development for teachers and strengthening classroom management and human relation skills.

Other community involvements included but not limited to: Beck Cultural Exchange Center; and Life memberships with the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People, National Council of Negro Women, National Education Association, Knoxville Education Association and Tennessee Retired Teachers Association. She was a member of the Helen Ross McNabb Mental Health Board of Directors, Knoxville College Alumni Association and Chartering Queen Mother of the Fabulous Red and Pink Hatters Society.

Della Oliver was honored by many organizations such as: the Iota Phi Lambda Sorority Bronze Woman of the Year, 1981; "Unsung Hero" by the Knoxville Chapter of NAACP in 1991; named one of the 100+ Most Influential Black Americans by Ebony magazine in 1996; the Southeast Region of Phi Delta Kappa established a scholarship in her honor; and she shared the position of Grand Marshall with musician, Aaron Staples, in the East Knoxville Neighborhood Parade in 2009.

Mrs. Oliver was preceded in death by her parents Robert & Louise, stepmother Katherine Kinnebrew, husband William "Pete" Oliver, Jr., and brother Sidney E. Smith, Sr. She leaves behind to cherish her memories her daughter Cheryl Oliver Lewis (Michael) of Lithonia, GA; step grandchildren Dustin Lewis (Japan), Dereak Lewis (Knoxville), and Durego Lewis (California); step great grandchildren Devin and Asha Lewis (LaVergne, TN); brother Rev. Thurman Kinnebrew (Rebecca); nephew Rev. Victor E. King Sr. (Stephanie), niece Karen Whitaker all of Knoxville. Extended family and friends to include Kathleen Davis, Belinda and Kia Folsom, William and Edna Folsom, Benjamin, Kevin, and Lyriq Davis, Bradley and Brylen Holden, John Folsom & Family; Godchildren Rosalyn Frazier Fruge' of Fort Worth, TX, Valerie Woods Miller of Charlotte, NC, Mary Bates, Hildrith Gillespie, Bonnie Lowery, Lula Chesney, Beverly and Lois Shands; Grand Goddaughter Jessica Ann Greenlee and her son Easton.

Our family would like to thank Steve Greenway and Lydia Nicholson for their devoted care.

Mrs. Oliver was a caring, loving, and charitable individual. She personified the words from one of her favorite hymns: "If I can help somebody along the way, then my living shall not be in vain."

In lieu of flowers, the family is requesting contributions to Phi Delta Kappa's Della H. Oliver Scholarship Fund.

Miss Peggie Myles
1111 47th Street Ensley
Birmingham, AL 35208

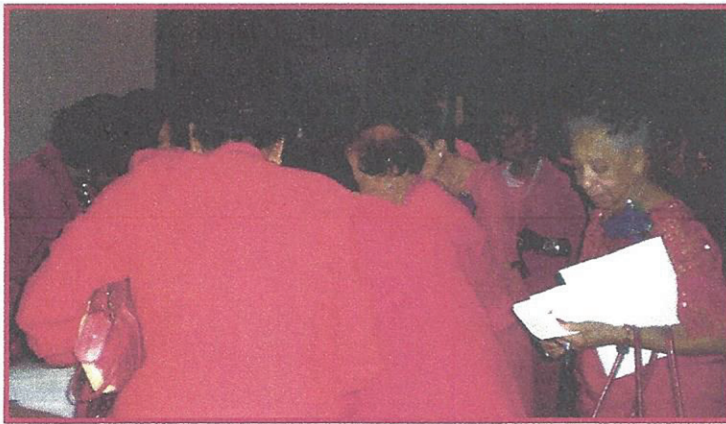
Please make checks payable to: National Sorority of Phi Delta Kappa Inc. Southeast Region. In the memo line: Della H. Oliver Scholarship Fund.

Order of Service

Processional	Clergy and Family
Call to Worship	Rev. Michel S.E. Caldwell
Opening Hymn	"I Am Thine O' Lord"
Musical Selection	Tamara Osbourne
Scripture Readings	
Old Testament	Faye Queener "My Help" Psalms 121
New Testament	Rev. Victor E. King, Sr. Hebrews 11
Prayer.....	Rev. Michel S.E. Caldwell
Musical Selections	Mary Kirk Lawrence Washington
Reading of Obituary	Read Silently
Words of Comfort.....	Rev. A.D. Baxter
Resolutions.....	Dr. Etta Carter, Supreme Basileus National Phi Delta Kappa Sorority, Inc. Annetta James, Fabulous Red Hatters of Knoxville Beverly Shands, Fabulous Pink Hatters of Knoxville Edgewood Chapel A.M.E. Zion Church Rogers Memorial Baptist Church
Family Tribute.....	Rev. Thurman Kinnebrew
Musical Selection	Rev. Thurman Kinnebrew
Eulogy	Rev. Michel S.E. Caldwell
Benediction	Rev. Michel S.E. Caldwell
Recessional	

Welcome Home

When I am gone, release me, let me go.
I have so many things to see and do.
You mustn't tie yourself to me with too many tears,
But be thankful we had so many good years.
I gave you my love, and you can only guess
How much you've given me in happiness.
I thank you for the love that you have shown,
But now it is time I traveled on alone,
So grieve for me a while, if grieve you must.
Then let your grief be comforted by trust.
It is only for a while that we must part,
So treasure the memories within your heart.
I won't be far away, for life goes on,
And if you need me, call, and I will come.
Though you can't see or touch me, I will be near,
And if you listen with your heart, you'll hear
All my love around you, soft and clear.
And then, when you come this way alone,
I'll greet you with a smile and a "Welcome Home".



Pallbearers
Family & Friends

Floral Bearers
Family & Friends

Interment
Highland Memorial Cemetery

Card of Thanks

Blessed is the home when God is there, and true love fills every breast. We are blessed to have family, friends, neighbors and loved ones to comfort and assist our spiritual, physical and emotional needs during this time of bereavement. Thank you for your visits, calls, cards, flowers, prayers, food and every act of kindness you have shown. May God's continuous blessings shower upon each of you is our sincere prayer.

~The Family