



Mrs. Olestia Cleaves Emerson

July 8, 1937 - April 27, 2022

Olestia Cleaves Emerson was born in Fayette, County, TN on July 8, 1937, to the late Eligah and Bessie Cleaves. She was known by many names such as Mama, Granny “O”, Grandma, Madea, First Lady but Christian was the name that she was most proud to be called when she put on Christ in baptism.

Sis, Emerson received her early education via Fayette County School System where she and her siblings had to walk dusty roads to get to class. The Cleaves Family moved to Humboldt for better Share-Cropping opportunities, but it was also where they would find better employment opportunities and better education opportunities. She found Domestic work to start her employment journey.

Sis. Emerson had a love for God, HIS word, and HIS word in song, which is how she met her husband, James Emerson. They were united in marriage May 2, 1959, and started a family.

Employment opportunities included, The City Café, ITT in Milan, TN, the Milan Arsenal, and Eaton Axle Division where she was the first female and first African American female welder for the Humboldt location. She excelled as a welder and did so for many years until her retirement.

She showed strength in her ability to take on many trials and/or tasks at once

by tending her husband's needs in his sickness simultaneously with tending her daughter's needs in her battle with breast cancer. She took on another source of employment by caring for Special Needs Adults to compensate and support the need to care for her husband and daughter. Caring for people came very easy for her as she was such a woman of compassion and a desire to help those in need.

Sis. Emerson found her ministry in supporting God's work behind the scenes; never needing to be seen or to be out front. She just wanted to always see the work done properly and as God would want it done. Because of her husband's ministry, she has been known to feed entire singing groups and choruses all alone and maintain a great reputation for hospitable work.

Many don't know that she had a great sense of humor but would only let it be seen with immediate family or those with which she was very comfortable. She even nicknamed herself "TOMBSTONE TERRITORY" because she was so tough.

She had a love for gardening, sewing, and canning; not to even mention her handy work with cooking. Those good ole moist strawberry cakes, chicken and dumplings, sweet potatoes yams, stewed potatoes, cabbage casseroles, and such like, will be greatly missed.

Preceding her in death were her husband, James, her daughter Bettye Porter, her bonus son, Anthony Henderson, her bonus granddaughter, Lashonda Owens, her sisters, Lizzie Mae Perry, Myrtle Cleaves, her brothers, E. L. Cleaves, Albert Cleaves, Richard Cleaves and Charles Cleaves.

She leaves to cherish her memory, her daughters, Joann Waddell of Memphis, TN, Janice Emerson of Nashville, TN, Casaundra Emerson of Jackson, and a bonus daughter, Helen Buie of Chicago, son-n-law Ben Port,

grandchildren, Lamanda, Simone, and Siarra Gillespie, Ashton Jackson, Katelyn Emerson, Christopher Taylor, bonus grandchildren Julian and Jermell Martin, Great grandchildren, Brooklyn Emerson, Leila Gillespie, Amani, Addison, Aryn Taylor and bonus Great-grandchildren Joshua Elam, Jayden Martin, her sisters, Adeline Williams of Memphis, TN, Verleria Taylor of Humboldt, TN, and Mattie Gowens (Calvin) of Lake, CA, Brothers-in-law Harold (Inez), Bennie (Laurine) of Milan, TN, Charles Emerson, Terry Emerson of Humboldt, TN, Joseph Emerson (Carolyn) of Jackson, MS Rosetta Burrow (Johnnie) of Atwood, TN, Sisters-n-law, Clara Boykin of Erie, PA, Rosetta Burrow (Johnnie) of Atwood, TN, Arlene Emerson, Glinda Berry, and Diane Jones (Sam) all of Jackson, Tennessee; and Minnie Emerson of Humboldt, Tennessee. A host of nieces, nephews, cousins and her loving church family at the West Humboldt Church of Christ.

Previous Events

Visitation

MAY 6. 6:00 PM - 7:00 PM (CT)

West Humboldt Church Of Christ
5 Nicholas Drive
Humboldt, TN

Visitation

MAY 7. 10:00 AM - 11:00 AM (CT)

30th Avenue Church Of Christ
1515 North 30th Avenue
Humboldt , TN

Service

MAY 7. 11:00 AM (CT)

30th Avenue Church Of Christ
1515 North 30th Avenue
Humboldt , TN

Tribute Wall



“ *Stephenson-Shaw Funeral Home created a Webcast in memory of Mrs. Olesta Cleaves Emerson*



Stephenson-Shaw Funeral Home, Inc - May 07, 2022 at 12:11 PM



“ *Mrs. Olesta Cleaves Emerson*

January 28, 2023 at 12:37 PM



“ *Larry And Mary Davis lit a candle in memory of Mrs. Olesta Cleaves Emerson*



Larry and Mary Davis - May 07, 2022 at 11:22 AM



“ *Dewayne Chumney lit a candle in memory of Mrs. Olesta Cleaves Emerson*



Dewayne Chumney - May 06, 2022 at 03:28 PM

DS

“ Extending Heart-felt condolences to the family. Mrs. Cleaves was a precious lady. I have known her for many years and twice as a neighbor. She always maintained a beautiful smile and pleasant attitude. She has gained her place in God's garden ! R.I.P. Mrs. Olesta Cleaves.

Donna Seymour - May 06, 2022 at 11:05 AM



“ Simply Elegant Spathiphyllum was purchased for the family of Mrs. Olesta Cleaves Emerson.



May 06, 2022 at 10:31 AM

BF

“ Benita Cleaves and family purchased the Simply Elegant Spathiphyllum for the family of Mrs. Olesta Cleaves Emerson.



Benita Cleaves and family - May 06, 2022 at 12:08 AM

CT

“ Catherine Taylor lit a candle in memory of Mrs. Olesta Cleaves Emerson



Catherine Taylor - May 05, 2022 at 04:45 PM



“ *Loved One Vertical Blanket was purchased for the family of Mrs. Olesta Cleaves Emerson.*



May 04, 2022 at 08:51 PM



“ *Beautiful in Blue was purchased for the family of Mrs. Olesta Cleaves Emerson.*



May 04, 2022 at 06:17 PM



“ *Sending my condolences the Emerson family, Joann, Janice, and San ! She was a sweet lady! May she rest in eternal peace !!*



Mary Wynne - May 01, 2022 at 09:53 PM

CT

“Granny O was such a special and Phenomenal grandmother. She was always so giving. Whether it was of her time, love or resources. Her simplest dress but classy look was everything. Her mild and sweet demeanor was a drawing mechanism to strike up a conversation. Granny O was a First Lady that could dress and knew how to carry herself. Now that voice has been silenced and will be greatly missed. But we don't weep as those who have no hope. Because we are living to live again. Granny O you are and will always be loved and missed. Love you in life and in death Chris Taylor (Beelz)

Christopher Taylor - May 01, 2022 at 03:30 AM



“Sentiments of Serenity Spray was purchased for the family of Mrs. Olesta Cleaves Emerson.



April 28, 2022 at 08:45 PM

OB

“Ollie Brooks lit a candle in memory of Mrs. Olesta Cleaves Emerson



Ollie Brooks - April 28, 2022 at 10:05 AM