



Letitia J. Byrd

February 15, 1927 - February 14, 2018

Rosa Letitia Johnson Byrd was born to Pete William Johnson and Harriet Victoria Johnson on February 15, 1927 in Bluefield, West Virginia. She was their second child, joining her older brother Pete William Johnson, Jr. and followed by her younger brother, Claude Lee Johnson. Growing up, her family indulged her as the middle child and only girl.

Letitia was a life-long active learner. She earned a Bachelor of Science degree in Music Education and Business Administration from Bluefield State College in West Virginia and a master's degree in Guidance and Counseling from Eastern Michigan University. Letitia later earned a Gerontology Certificate from the University of Michigan 1980.

After graduating from college Letitia moved to Washington, D.C. where she was the first paid staff person at the headquarters of her beloved sorority, Delta Sigma Theta. There she married Dr. Kennedy Lightfoot, and from that union had one son, Kip Kennedy Lightfoot.

Family was always a focal point in Letitia's life. In 1960 she moved with her family to Ann Arbor to be near her brother Claude and his family. In 1966 Letitia married her beloved David Byrd, and flourished as a public school educator, counselor, and stalwart community leader.

Letitia's community involvement was a hallmark of her well-lived life. She was an active member of First United Methodist Church and held a special place in her spiritual life for the Episcopal Church of the Incarnation. She was an extremely active member of numerous organizations and boards: Charter Member and first president of the Ann Arbor Alumnae Chapter of Delta Sigma Theta Sorority; member and chapter president of The Links, Inc.; member National Council of Negro Women; Dawn Farm Board of Directors; Peace Neighborhood Center; SOS Community Crisis, Board of Directors; UMS Board of Directors; member Kiwanis Club of Ann Arbor; founder of the David R. Byrd Center; and supporter of the African-American Cultural and Historical Museum of

Washtenaw County. Not surprising, Letitia was selected as the Ann Arbor Citizen of the Year in 1997.

Music and travel were two of Letitia's greatest passions. She found great joy in singing with the First United Methodist Church choir, Our Own Thing Chorale, and UMS Chorale. She explored the cultures of many places including China, Alaska, Europe, several African countries, and the Caribbean. Her last trip at the age of 82 in a motorhome proved she was still a 'travel bug.'

Letitia leaves to cherish her memory her loving son Kip Kennedy Lightfoot; her sister-in-law Elginne Johnson; nieces Tamera Johnson-Roy (Richard), Susan Johnson (Randy Kinder); great nieces Paula Johnson, Perryn Johnson, and Alexis Sowell; nephews Pete William Johnson III (Patricia Sturgis-Johnson); great nephews Patrick Johnson, David Sowell, Cameron Kinder, and William Roy; cousin Lois Wheeler and family; dear sisterfriend, Joetta Mial, and many other family and friends. Her beloved husband David Byrd, brothers Pete Johnson and Claude Johnson, nieces Terri Johnson and Courtney Roy preceded her in death.

In lieu of flowers or fruit baskets please consider making a contribution to Our Own Thing Chorale or Episcopal Church of the Incarnation.

Events

FEB **Masonic Service** 01:30PM

24

First United Methodist Church of Ann Arbor
120 S. State Street, Ann Arbor, MI, US, 48104

Comments



“ To the family of the Letitia J. Byrd, I extend my heartfelt sympathy to you. She was a delightful woman whom I admired. When I was a young professional starting my career as editor of the DELTA Journal in 1978, I met my esteemed Sorority sister of Delta Sigma Theta Sorority, Inc.-- Letitia. She was always encouraging, upbeat, and quickly began to mentor me. Her life is an inspiration and her legacy will be everlasting. May your hearts be comforted.

Sincerely,
Deborah Peaks Coleman
Baltimore, MD

Deborah Peaks Coleman - March 15, 2018 at 12:02 PM



“ Dear Kip,
I'm so sorry that Ron & I were out of town for your mother's memorial service. She was an incredible lady. I'll always remember her as a bright candle of huge character, dignity, kindness, wisdom, gentle humor, focus and persistence for any purpose she undertook, or anyone needing help. Ann Arbor is a smaller place now that she has left us. I'll never forget her smile, and will keep all of you who've lost her in my heart.
Sadly,
Eileen Weiser

Eileen Weiser - March 05, 2018 at 09:44 AM



“ Letitia was my colleague at Huron High, a Northside/Brookside neighbor, close friend and counselor for our sons David & Danny. The Spriggs family send our condolences to Kip and Letitia's relatives/family. We will miss her and cherish the many years of memories shared since 1968..Sorry we could not attend her service.
Daniel A. Spriggs Kauai, Hawaii

Daniel A. Spriggs - February 24, 2018 at 02:53 PM



“ Our sympathies to the family and friends of our beloved Letitia Byrd. She warmly welcomed us to Ann Arbor in 1997-98. We remember her as a smiling presence at many UMS performances, often with Joetta Mial, and as a persuasive community leader and fund-raiser for good causes, including the David Byrd Center and SOS. We served with her on the Board and the Senate of the University Musical Society. She was also an articulate community voice as we led greater involvement with the community for the UM Health System. And we are aware of her enormous

influence at Huron High School, where our son David was a student during 1998-2001. We relish her memory and will attend the memorial service.

Gil Omenn & Martha Darling

Gil Omenn & Martha Darling - February 24, 2018 at 12:11 PM



“ Letitia Byrd was an inspirational woman and a strong bright star of the Huron High School faculty. She was so respected and beloved by staff and students alike. Huron was never quite the same after Tish's retirement. They broke the mold when they made this wonderful lady.

Stan Bidlack - February 24, 2018 at 10:31 AM



“ Basket Full of Wishes was purchased for the family of Letitia J. Byrd.



February 23, 2018 at 08:52 AM



“ 1 file added to the album New Album Name



Myra Hamilton - February 22, 2018 at 09:56 AM



“ Enchanted Cottage was purchased for the family of Letitia J. Byrd.



February 21, 2018 at 04:31 PM



“ Religion & Race and Church and Society Committees. purchased the Beautiful in Blue for the family of Letitia J. Byrd.



Religion & Race and Church and Society Committees. - February 20, 2018 at 09:41 PM



“ Letitia was a magnificent human being who influenced my life and lives of many for the good. The work we shared at First United Methodist in the Religion and Race and Church and Society Committees was a treasured experience. She was a mentor to me, broadening and deepening my understanding of race, justice, and tolerance. I will never forget her wisdom, moral strength, deep faith, and cheerful embrace of life and of others. Her spirit cast its light into a troubled and often darkening world. and in this she was an example for us all. She will be sorely missed. Eternal Memory, Letitia.

Ken Brostrom - February 20, 2018 at 09:31 PM



“ Doctor Wallace King,Wife Nancy, Daughters Wanda & Deborah purchased the Divine Peace Bouquet for the family of Letitia J. Byrd.



Doctor Wallace King,Wife Nancy, Daughters Wanda & Deborah - February 19, 2018 at 09:21 AM



“ To Letitia's family, we offer our deepest sympathy. She contributed much to the community. As she aged with grace, she still stayed active with several organizations. Her personality and wonderful smile were infectious. We are honored to call her our friend.

George and Judith Goodman - February 18, 2018 at 10:46 AM