

The Active Pallbearers

ALLEN CLARK
G. MAURICE HENDERSON
K. MARC HENDERSON
HAMZAH AZIM
JONATHAN HAYES
ORVAL VANDUVALL

The Honorary Pallbearers

RONNIE AND JACKIE CALLOWAY
JAMES "SONNY" HOLMES
DONALD NERO
CALVIN SAYERS, JR.
PRENTIS L. VANDUVALL
H. ERIC EDWARDS
KEVON JADEN HENDERSON
ROBERT M. J. GRIFFIE

Final Resting Place and Committal Service

FORT LOGAN NATIONAL CEMETERY
DENVER, COLORADO

Acknowledgment

DURING A TIME LIKE THIS, WE LEARN HOW MUCH
OUR FRIENDS REALLY MEAN TO US. YOUR EXPRESSION OF SYMPATHY
WILL ALWAYS BE TREASURED. MAY GOD RICHLY BLESS EACH OF YOU.
THE FAMILY OF VELMA R. GRIFFIE VANDUVALL

The Family Received Personal Care from the Staff of

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"When Someone You Love Becomes A Memory; The Memory Becomes A Treasure."

A WOMAN OF
God and Grace

Velma Rae Griffie-Vanduvall

OCTOBER 12, 1925-AUGUST 30, 2020





Velma Rae Griffie-Vanduwall

A GREAT SOUL SERVES EVERYONE ALL THE TIME.
A GREAT SOUL NEVER DIES.
IT BRINGS US TOGETHER AGAIN AND AGAIN.
MAYA ANGELOU

This Is My Story; This is My Song

On October 12, 1925, in Murphy, Oklahoma, Velma Rae Ward was born to Sylvester and Esker Green Ward. Her mother died when she was six months old leaving Velma to be cared for by her father and much-older siblings. Neighbors helped out from time to time with food and hand-me-down clothes. She and "Daddy" moved around a lot. Living, as she called it, from "pillar to post."

Always an inquisitive and bright girl, Velma went to school here, there, and wherever she and Daddy happened to be living. Like many Black children of her time she was introduced to Christian church-life early. She learned many Bible verses, stories, and how to sing the old spirituals. Velma recalled the lean times of her childhood and was glad she'd managed to survive. She would speak too, of the many acts of kindness people bestowed upon her; like the teacher who told her to come early to school so she could comb her hair. These experiences would become a foundation of grit, grace, and goodness she carried deep in her heart.

Velma was sixteen her father was killed after being hit by a car. Her two older brothers, ArCephus and James travelled to Oklahoma to get her and bring her to live with them in Parsons, Kansas. They agreed one would feed her and one would buy her clothes.

Love Finds Its Own Way

At seventeen, Velma met a young man at a local weekend party named Maurice Griffie. He took a fancy to her and soon asked her to marry him. She agreed. And so on December 5, 1942, wearing the blue dress that he had bought her, they married at the local courthouse. The couple set off for Maurice's hometown of Nicodemus, Kansas where they lived with his mother and step-father Ola and Henry Wilson. Here the couple's two sons—Maurice and Robert—were born.

In 1945, Maurice moved his wife and kids 300 miles west to Denver, Colorado where he found employment with Gates Rubber Company. Within a few years daughter Karen Antoinette would join the family. Velma loved learning and was determined to get her G.E.D. And she did— all while managing the house, caring for a husband and three kids, and working at odd jobs from time to time.

Within a few years Velma and Maurice had saved enough money to move their young family into a house of their own. The new neighborhood became a vibrant village of care and support.

Velma found steady employment with the Veterans Administration, taking promotions as they were presented. For a while she worked with Internal Revenue and retired from government service in 1991. In retirement she fell in love with daytime television. *The Price is Right* and *Judge Judy* were favorites.

Every soul is to be cherished; every flower is to bloom

A committed Christian, Velma led a devout and ongoing prayer life. She knew firsthand the power of prayer and as to how her very life was a witness to the goodness of God, His grace and His mercy. She was a proud member of Macedonia Baptist Church for six decades. Her melodic first soprano voice blessing members and church-goers on Sunday mornings for years. Precious Lord and Only Believe among her favorites. She was a member of Saturday Morning Bible Study, Young at Heart Auxiliary, and Missionary Circle #3. She modeled how to share time, talents, and treasures.



Celebration Service

Friday, September 11, 2020 – 11:00 am
Macedonia Baptist Church
3240 Adams Street | Denver, Colorado 80205
Reverend Victor Lamont Lane, Officiating and Eulogist

The Organ Prelude.....Nathaniel Black
"Order My Steps"

The Processional and Viewing

The Word in Song.....Irene Mitchell
"Amazing Grace"

The Scripture Lesson.....Reverend James Pruitt
The Old Testament
The New Testament

The Prayer of Consolation.....Evangelist Ola Pruitt
The Word In Song.....Musician

"Total Praise"
The Acknowledgements, Condolences, and Resolutions
Evangelist/Missionary Rhneea Juniel

The Obituary.....Read Silently
Instrument Speaks
The Remarks

The Word In Song.....Irene Mitchell
"Precious Lord"

The Words of Consolation.....Reverend Victor Lamont Lane
The Recessional.....All
"Let The Church Say Amen"

A Tribute to Our Grandmother

Grandmother you were something else.

Throughout our lives you were always the first to advocate for us, and the first to celebrate with us. You were part guardian, part inspiration, part cheerleader and champion. And so much more. Thank you.

You had this way of making each of us feel like we were the stuff. But the real stuff Grandmother—was you. So, yeah, our hearts are hurting.

You were our all-time Scrabble champion, best cook, and best secret-sharer. We promise to pass on all the shining nuggets of wisdom you dropped into our hearts and along our paths. Whether spoken aloud, whispered privately in an ear, or written in a letter—we have them still. And we treasure them.

We promise that the life you lived—devotion to God, respect for self and others, and commitment to family—will be our compass.

We love you Grandmother. You were something else. Two times.

The Grandchildren of Velma Griffie VanDuvall

A Tribute to Our Great Grandmother

As a grandmother, you were simply the best.

With you it was like skipping down a candy aisle full of assorted candy and special goodies. Our hearts spill over now with all kinds of memories. Some memories are soft and chewy. We savor them and let them roll around in hopes the taste will linger on the tongue long after the last swallow.

Some are like cotton candy. So tender and delicate they're gone almost instantly.

Some memories are sugary and candy-coated. They make us smile.

And then there's the memories that are tart and tangy. They pucker our lips, swell our tastebuds, and make tears come to our eyes.

Like now.

We will cherish them all and our hearts will overflow with their sweetness. We will remember. We will remember you.

Your Great-Grandchildren
and Great-Great Grandchildren

Pride and Panache

While Velma relished her role as wife, mother, and homemaker, she didn't let it stop her from enjoying life's more fashionable offerings like clothes, shoes, handbags, and hats. Whether from a high-end department store or a next-to-new shop, she knew quality when she saw it and she bought it. She thrilled at wearing stylish outfits for Sunday church or other special occasions. She would choose an outfit—usually something fitted—then jazz it up with a dashing and bedazzled crown. Breton to beret, from tam to pillbox, Velma had "hattitude" and the confidence to match.

Velma believed in sharing her blessings with others. Her house was a kind of stop-by house. If you stopped by you were sure to be offered a seat, a plate, and invited to share in whatever was on the stove. And there was always a pot of something good and soulful, rich and nourishing cooking. Whether it was turnip and mustard greens, fried green tomatoes, creamed corn, cobbler, or potato salad and sweet potato pie, few turned her down. She'd say, "Come on in. Grab a plate, help yourself and find a seat where you can." Her turkey and dressing and hurt-yo'self German Chocolate Cake were legendary. No wonder friends and family stopped by on their way to almost everywhere.

Straightforward, fun-loving, and feisty

Velma was never timid when it came to letting a person know her position. You didn't have to wonder if she loved you—you knew it because she told you so—and she expressed it a thousand ways. Likewise, if she was displeased with you—you knew that, too. She'd state the facts as she understood them and wait for your viewpoint. If an apology was required of her, she offered it. If one was expected—she waited. Once the air was clear again, the relationship went on—richer, deeper.

By and By When the Morning Comes

Ninety-four trips around the sun is a long life by any measure. But for those she leaves behind it is not nearly long enough. We wanted more. Much more. On Sunday, August 30, just as the sun was shooing the night away—the angels came. Gently they fastened her wings and whispered, "Velma, your work here is done. You're going to sing in a new choir. We've come for to carry you home."

A happy family is but an earlier heaven

As a mother she was the "what-can-I-do-to-help-you" type. Even after her children were grown-ups, she wanted to lift them. She felt it was her right and her duty to nurture, help, and bless. From birth through early years to adulthood, she provided on-going support and advice.

Velma Griffie Vanduvall was preceded in death by her husband Maurice Griffie in 1968. She was widowed again in 2012 after 37 years of marriage to Leroy Vanduvall.

She leaves to cherish her memory sons: Maurice (Deborah) Griffie, Robert Griffie, Prentis Vanduvall, and daughters Karen Henderson and Shirlea Neal. She leaves also adored daughters-in-love: LaVonne, Judith, and Vera. Daughter-in-love Barbara preceded her in death.

Velma thought grandchildren were a special delight. Called Grandma, Ga-Ga, Grandmother, G.G., and The Grampster, she fairly beamed when they were around or whenever she talked to them on the phone. She loved and understood each individual personality and was mindful of each one's unique gifts and quirks. Upon hearing of a new accomplishment—whether it was taking first steps alone, starting kindergarten, riding a bike, or a graduation from high school or college—no one applauded longer or cheered louder. And she made it a point to be present—in all of her splendor—for every wedding ceremony.

Velma knew well that "while blood makes you related—bonds of love make you family. Her pride in her grandchildren was uncontainable. Beloved grandchildren include: **Maureen Hollines (Robert); Melissa Douglas (Jerry); Kelly Rambo (Charles); Robert Griffie (Princella); Michael Griffie, Esq. (Evette); Maurice Henderson, K. Marc Henderson, Kimberlee Vanduvall, Prentis Vanduvall II (Ricki), Shawn Vanduvall (Jeanette), Adrienne N. Hester, and Lee Hester.**

Velma also leaves behind treasured great-grandchildren. She relished in giving them sweet treats that their parents frowned on, or gifts they thought frivolous. She made full use of her Grandma license. Her great grands include, **Tyler Griffie, Aryn Wainwright, Marcella Hollines, Robert Hollines, Kenji Hollines, Kevon Henderson, Ethan Griffie, Josiah Griffie, Marissa Rambo, Langston Griffie, Juwairiyah Azim, Hamzah Azim, J'Shawn Vanduvall, Prentis Vanduvall III, Tyler Vanduvall, Kennedy Vanduvall, Mario L. Jones, Jr., Alex J. Jones, Jaslyne A. Jones, Dorian L. Hester, Sierra R. Hester, and Raylyn Montoya.**

To know and love great great grandchildren is a rare blessing. Velma will be missed by her 13 great-great grandchildren.

Velma also leaves to mourn sister-in-law, Valeria Thomas; as well cousins, nieces, nephews, and special friends. They include: **Sally Edwards, Evangelist Ola Pruitt (Reverend James); Kim Thomas, Goddaughter Rhneea' Juniel, and long-time best friend Mary Key.** A host of other relatives and friends mourn her passing.

