

ORDER OF SERVICE

Wednesday July 13, 2022 | 11:00am
Shorter AME Church
3100 Richard Allen Court
Denver, Colorado 80205
Pastor Edward Polite, Eulogist
Minister Naomi Harris, Officiant

Processional.....Minister Nathaniel Black & Tara Washington Everette
"Never Would Have Made It"
Parting Memories.....Pipkin Braswell Director
Comfort from Scripture.....Minister
Old Testament ~ New Testament
Prayer of Solace.....Minister
Selection.....Minister Nathaniel Black & Tara Washington Everette
"Let Go, Let God"
Acknowledgements, Condolences & Obituary.....Mrs. Thomasine Hallman
Video Tribute
Family Tributes
Honoring Naomi
Elder Albert R. Groves Rochelle Pegg Ted Hayes Monae Dapa
Selection.....Minister Nathaniel Black & Tara Washington Everette
"Amazing Grace"
Eulogy.....Pastor Edward Polite
Pipkin Braswell Funeral Directors
"No Ways Tired"
Committal/Closing Prayer/Benediction
Recessional.....Pipkin Braswell Funeral Directors
"You Know My Name"

Active Pallbearers

Darrell Armour Marcus Bland Gary Hardiman
Warren Hardiman Ken Hayes Michael Herrod Shay Herrod

Honorary Pallbearers

Ken Crawford Alex Dapa Dedra Davison Vivian Dudley Greg Hayes
John Hayes Steve Hayes Dallas Jackson Charles Lewis John Pegg
Laval Short Bruce Simpson Shun Tillman Jeff Tolliver David Vaughn
Denise Vaughn Frances Vaughn Norman Williams

Final Resting Place

FT. Logan National Cemetery
4400 Kenyon Avenue | Denver, Colorado 80236

Acknowledgement

Perhaps you sent a lovely card, Or sat quietly in a chair.
Perhaps you sent a funeral spray, If so we saw it there.
Perhaps you spoke the kindest words, That anyone could say.
Perhaps you were not there at all, Just thought of us that day.
Whatever you did to console our hearts, We thank you so much
whatever the part... *The Family Of Mrs. Naomi C. Odems*

The Family Received Personal Care from the Staff of

PIPKIN-BRASWELL
FUNERALS • CREMATION • RECEPTIONS

6601 East Colfax Avenue Denver, Colorado 80220
Phone (303) 996-0869 Fax (303) 996-0891 www.PipkinBraswell.com

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

CELEBRATING THE LIFE & LEGACY



Mrs.
Naomi
ODEMS

SUNRISE
JULY 14, 1934

SUNSET
JUNE 30, 2022

PROGRAM DESIGNED
WITH LOVE BY
mcc
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REMEMBER ME

Speak of me as you have always done.
Remember the good times, laughter, and fun.

Share the happy memories we've made.
Do not let them wither or fade.

I'll be with you in the summer's sun
And when the winter's chill has come.

I'll be the voice that whispers in the breeze.
I'm peaceful now, put your mind at ease.

I've rested my eyes and gone to sleep,
But memories we've shared are yours to keep.

Sometimes our final days may be a test,
But remember me when I was at my best.

Although things may not be the same,
Don't be afraid to use my name.

Let your sorrow last for just a while.
Comfort each other and try to smile.

I've lived a life filled with joy and fun.
Live on now, make me proud of what you'll become



PRECIOUS MEMORIES

Naomi C. (Copeland) Odems was born in Grangerville, Georgia, on July 14, 1934. She was the third child born to Johnnie and Pearl Copeland. Naomi was especially fond of her aunt Mary, "Ma Bell," who played a significant role in raising her.

As a child, Naomi was affectionately referred to as "Pig." She claimed to have been the favorite of her aunts and uncles and said she was often encouraged by them to "fake a headache" to get out of doing household chores. Naomi grew up in the country where the family had a pet pig named "Bessie" that Naomi said one day ate her sack lunch of sweet potatoes causing Naomi to cry all the way to school. Naomi attended grade school in Grangerville and graduated from Wayne County High School in 1951. She spoke fondly of her childhood, recalling her greatest wishes then were to have a "gold tooth" and a "pair of high heels." She was on the student council in high school and won a beauty pageant at the age of 16.

After graduating high school, Naomi's oldest sister Mary sent for Naomi to come to live with her husband and her on their ranch in Broken Bow, Nebraska. Naomi took a bus there and said it was from this travel she learned and made up her mind she would never have "raggedy luggage or bad teeth" and would have life insurance.

Naomi attended Secretary School in North Platte, Nebraska, where she met her dear friend Alleah and Alleah's cousin Frederick "Doug" Hayes. Doug was so smitten by Naomi that he broke off his then-current engagement to pursue her. They eventually married and moved to Murdo, South Dakota, where, in 1955, their first child, Sharon Ann, was born. When out with Sharon, women often approached Naomi on the street because they had never seen a Black baby before.



In 1956, pregnant with their second child, the family moved from South Dakota to Colorado. Theodore "Teddy" Hayes was born in 1957, and the baby of this union, Gary Douglas, was born in 1958. With intentions of having a hog farm, the family moved to Larkspur, Colorado. This plan abruptly came to a halt when Sharon swallowed a penny, and Naomi could not call for help because the remote area did not yet have telephone service. Naomi turned Sharon upside down, shook her, and pounded her on the back until the penny fell out. After this scare, Naomi insisted they move to a better-served location. They decided upon Aurora, Colorado. However, Blacks were not allowed to rent in Aurora then. This was one of many times Naomi had to "pass for White." By doing this, she was able to rent a home for the family. They did not last long there once their little Black children were seen through the windows. Luckily, there was an opportunity to move to Denver into a rent-to-own. In 1963 they purchased this house at 2825 Quebec Street. It was sold to them by Naomi's sister Mary who worked for Town and Country Realty. They were among the first Black families to live east of Colorado Boulevard and in the Park Hill neighborhood.

Naomi and Frederick's marriage dissolved, and Naomi became a single mother. She worked as a clerk at National Jewish Hospital. At the time, Blacks were only allowed to work in housekeeping, but, again passing for White, Naomi obtained a clerical position, and soon after that, a position at Colorado General Hospital (now University of Colorado), where she went on to work for 50 years.

Working swing shift at the hospital, Naomi managed as a single mother. She saved "Green Stamps" and worked part-time at May D&F downtown (still having to pass for White) during the holiday seasons. Naomi did this to provide for her children and to ensure they had nice gifts at Christmas. On one of many days, Naomi left her children with her brother Johnny while she went to work. She came home to find them being babysat by Johnny's friend Troy Lee Odems. Naomi found Troy and his "butch haircut" handsome, and he found her beautiful as well. Impressed by Naomi's caring for her children on her own, Troy asked Naomi to date him. She reminded Troy she had three children and was not going to "just hide them in the closet." Despite Naomi's youngest son eating the whole family's dinner all to himself one day, Troy was not scared away and began taking Naomi and her three children on dates. In 1967 they married, and in 1969, and to this union, the baby of the family, Tory Suzette, was born. Troy raised all the children as his own and never considered them a "blended family."

Naomi's faith was strong. She was a long-time member of Park Hill Seventh-day Adventist Church. When her health permitted, she prayed on her knees every night before bed and went to church every Saturday. She often said, "I'm tired today, but if it was work, I would go, so I'd better get to church." Aside from God, family was everything to Naomi. She was a devoted wife, mother, and grandmother. She cooked large meals and fed everyone. Over the years, she would drop food off to her mother, siblings, children, and neighbors. She still fried chicken every Sunday while listening to her favorite gospel songs.

Naomi took her work very seriously. She went on to become Supervisor in her department. Many of her staff said she went from a supervisor to a mother to them. Naomi's children and grandchildren were essentially raised at University Hospital. Tory and DJ came there in the afternoons, where they had to "wait under the desk" until her shift was done. Naomi finally retired at the age of 77, only to babysit her great-grandson, Kaleb Xavier. She became "Nanny Gran," and he became her "Sugar" and "Little Man."

Naomi loved to travel, once taking a 17-state road trip with her sister Olivia. She took her children and grandchildren with her, and later happily funded their vacations without her, wanting them to see as many places as possible. Naomi insisted on education, a strong work ethic, and keeping her family together. She kept in touch with everyone - friends and family all over the country, even her lifelong friend from kindergarten, Doris. Naomi attended family reunions and class reunions. Her phone rang all day long, but she knew, based on the time of day, if it was one of her children calling. Naomi kept up with the times, still read the newspaper, and watched The Price is Right and Wheel of Fortune daily. She texted with her family, even used emojis, and wrote a Christmas letter every year (telling the family's business). It was awe-inspiring to hear "I just talked to Naomi" from so many when delivering the news of her passing.

Naomi was preceded in death by ex-husband Frederick Hayes, daughter Sharon, father Johnnie, mother Pearl, sister Olivia, brother Johnny, and sister Frances.

Naomi C. Odems departed this life on June 30, 2022, at Rose Medical Center, the hospital where her three younger children were born. She is survived by her husband Troy, sons Ted (Paula) and Gary, daughter Tory (Derrick), sister Mary, brother-in-law Sam, sister-in-law Bernice, granddaughter Monae (Abel), grandsons Theo and DJ, and great-grandson Kaleb, grandchildren, great-grandchildren, and great-great grandchildren-in-law, and a host of nieces, nephews, cousins, and dear

