



Ms. Gloria Jean Cassel Fitzgerald

August 16, 1948 - January 20, 2016

Gloria Jean Cassel Fitzgerald, 67, of Peoria, IL passed away peacefully at her home surrounded by family and friends at 7:55 PM on Wednesday, January 20, 2016.

Gloria was born on August 16, 1948 in Benton Harbor, Michigan to Alvie and Betty (Coates) Cassel. Early in her childhood, Gloria and family relocated to Peoria, IL. She received her education in the Peoria Public School System and graduated high school from the Academy of Our Lady Spalding Institute. Gloria went on to earn her Bachelor of Science degree from Bradley University in 1971. She received her Master of Arts degree also from Bradley in 1978.

Gloria's commitment to helping others led her to state service beginning with the Department of Public Aid in 1971. From there, she transferred to the Department of Children and Family Services in 1974 and was employed as a Social Worker. Due to Gloria's dedication to helping children she was soon promoted to supervisor and also won Supervisor of the year in 1982. She then served in a variety of increasingly responsible positions including supervising Social Worker/Team Supervisor. DCFS and the State of Illinois took notice of Gloria's leadership abilities and eventually relocated her to Chicago where she became the Site Administrator for the East Area Office of Cook County. She was then promoted to Associate Deputy Director for Operations and Community Services, then to Deputy Director for the Division of Education and Transition Services while in Chicago. Her love for education led her to the University of Chicago where she received another Masters degree in Social Service Administration. In 2003, Gloria retired and returned to Peoria.

Gloria not only loved working with children; but was active in the community. Gloria was a lifelong member of the Peoria Branch NAACP. She was a member of the Peoria Tri-County Urban League and the National Association of Black Social Workers. In her spare time, Gloria volunteered her services at George Washington Carver Center, the Peoria City Council and taught part time at Bradley University.

In her leisure time, Gloria enjoyed reading educational literature, collecting paintings and sculptures. She also enjoyed exploring the world. Her travels led her to visit Africa numerous times including South Africa, Egypt, Rome, France, Alaska and numerous Caribbean Islands.

One of her greatest accomplishments was her son, Kimani (Angelita Guevara), Fitzgerald; he survives. She is also survived by one brother, Dewayne Cassel of Hanna City, IL and one sister, Verma Harris of Peoria; one grandson, Brandon Gregory. Additionally, she is survived by her Aunt Catherine Coates and niece, Jessica Schulte; and a host of friends and the Peoria Community. She is preceded in death by her parents.

Funeral services will be held at 11 am on Friday, January 29, 2016 at Higher Dimensions Praise and Worship Church with a visitation beginning one hour prior at 10 am. Pastor R. W. Randle will officiate. Gloria will be entombed at Swan Lake Mausoleum. In lieu of flowers, memorials may be made to George Washington Carver Center or The Peoria Tri County Urban League.

Simons Mortuary has been entrusted with arrangements. Online condolences may be made at simonsmortuary.com.

Cemetery Details

Swan Lake Mausoleum

4601 W War Memorial Dr
Peoria, IL 61614

Previous Events

Visitation

JAN **29**. 10:00 AM - 11:00 AM (CT)

Higher Dimensions Praise & Worship Church
2610 W. Nebraska Ave.
Peoria, IL 61604
<http://higherdimensionspeoria.org>

Funeral Service

JAN **29**. 11:00 AM (CT)

Higher Dimensions Praise & Worship Church
2610 W. Nebraska Ave.
Peoria, IL 61604
<http://higherdimensionspeoria.org>

Tribute Wall



“ *Simons Mortuary created a Tribute Video in memory of Ms. Gloria Jean Cassel Fitzgerald*



Simons Mortuary - January 28, 2016 at 03:58 PM



“ *Ms. Gloria Jean Cassel Fitzgerald*

January 29, 2023 at 06:10 AM



“ *Ms. Gloria Jean Cassel Fitzgerald*

January 29, 2023 at 03:12 AM



“ *To the Family of Gloria I say.. "GOD willed it so".. I pray for the healing and comfort that time will provide...*

Curtis Bond - February 03, 2016 at 03:44 PM



“ *Gloria was my special debutante date after high school. My prayers and blessings are with her family. Rest in Peace Gloria.*

A-Al-Uqdah (Patrick D. Leatherwood)

Beverly Travis - February 02, 2016 at 05:38 PM

BT

“ Verma and family. It is with great sadness that I pass on my condolences regarding the death of Gloria. Gloria and I both worked for the State of Illinois, Department of Children and Family Services in Peoria and Chicago and shared our love for the families and children we served. She will be sorely missed. May your faith and the faith of your family sustain you in this time of sorrow.

Beverly Travis (Buck)

Beverly Travis - February 02, 2016 at 09:32 AM

BM

“ I would like to share my deep respect for Gloria, who I have known for a very long time. I think of her as a courageous person and watched her strive to create a more caring world. She did this through her employment and other avenues. My closest association with Gloria was when we co-founded a local group called Women Against Racism. I did not see Gloria often, but when I did she always spoke of her love for her family. I am blessed to have shared some of her life and will always remember her.

Barbara Miller - January 29, 2016 at 05:06 PM

RH

“ It breaks my heart to speak of Gloria in past tense for my love for her is eternal! We have known each other from the age of 10 and 11 years old led. We celebrated when our moms got pregnant with our younger siblings Duane and Crystal. We were so happy to have a brother, even though it was hers! She and I agreed over the years to always be friends no matter how much time passed between calls or visits. So, my last visit, last week I couldn't say good bye, just I love you and "to be continued".

Rita Hinton - January 29, 2016 at 04:17 PM

JM

“ When your heart is empty, filling it with happy memories can help you find your smile. My love and sympathy for Kimani and Verma. Sherry Davis Mason. (Katy, TX)

Juanita Mason - January 27, 2016 at 02:17 PM

GR

“ *Georgia Johnson Richardson lit a candle in memory of Ms. Gloria Jean Cassel Fitzgerald*



Georgia Johnson Richardson - January 26, 2016 at 04:58 PM

PH

“ *Gloria was a very dear friend. She was my breakfast buddy getting up at the crack of dawn to have waffles and hot chocolate with me. I will miss her. Pat*



Pat Humbles - January 24, 2016 at 10:18 PM

SM

“ *Susan Ryan McQuellon lit a candle in memory of Ms. Gloria Jean Cassel Fitzgerald*



Susan Ryan McQuellon - January 24, 2016 at 02:31 PM

SM

I Graduated in 1966 with Gloria from The Academy of Our Lady. I remember her as so energetic, smart and so pretty. Our paths crossed many years later when we were both working in the Social Services. I'm so sorry for your loss. She was too young but know she is receiving her eternal reward for a life well lived.

Susan Ryan McQuellon - January 24, 2016 at 02:37 PM

MM

“ I was a classmate of Gloria's in high school. I am very sad to hear this news, because Gloria was an inspiration to everyone who knew her.

Mary Ann Muller

Academy of Our Lady Class of 1966

Also, another classmate asked if I would share her thoughts on here, too.

Following is from Michele McMorrow St. Marie.

Gloria and I went on a fundraising event together as a team in high school and she took me through neighborhoods I had never been in before and we went into homes I had never imagined before, asking for help for... I think the March of Dimes. We were Sophomores, I think. I just remember it as a time that I recognized her charisma among the folks we met and that she was steadfast in moving from household to household to explain our mission. That served her well as we grew up and went forward and she certainly applied that ability to her daily life and vocation. That experience was one of the first I had had in a world and community I had not really been exposed to and it was pivotal in my future decisions to pursue the things that I did in other cultures and communities. I am sorry for her passing, but thankful for the time I knew her and teamed with her for a good cause. Sincerely, Michele McMorrow St. Marie.

Mary Ann Muller - January 24, 2016 at 09:23 AM