



Helen J. DuBose

March 23, 1919 - January 24, 2015

Helen J. DuBose was born to John Ellis and Idella McGee on March 23, 1919 in Madison, Florida. Helen's early years of development were overseen by her maternal grandmother, Shellie Martin, who provided the foundational principles that guided the remainder of Helen's life. Helen lived in Madison Florida during a time when children were expected to pick cotton full time once they reached a certain age. When Mrs. Martin was pressured to take Helen out of school and send her to the cotton fields, Mrs. Martin with all of the courage she could call upon, informed them that Helen was not going to pick cotton, but would be attending school. That decision of her grandmother provided the path for Helen to satisfy her thirst for learning, and to pursue educational goals that propelled her to uncharted achievements. Her desire for knowledge and learning continue throughout the remainder of her life.

Helen was first person in her family since slavery to finish the 6th grade but went on to complete the 9th grade. Helen often told the story of an 8th grade field trip to Tuskegee Institute (now "University"), where she was able to observe George Washington Carver, wearing a white apron while working in his laboratory. During that time Blacks could only be educated up to the 9th grade in Madison County. Her grandmother determined that Helen would finish the 12th grade, arranged for Helen to live with family members while she continue her education in South Florida and later West Palm Beach, Florida where she completed the 12th grade.

Helen eventually identified her desire to make a difference in the lives of disadvantaged small black farmers. With the help and encouragement of her grandmother who picked cotton, and Helen who sold newspapers, and life insurance, was able to earn enough money to enter college. She attended Florida A&M College (FAMC) where she earned a BA degree. During her years at Florida A&M, she met and married Richard DuBose and to their union three children were born, Janice, Xandra, Shelley. Also, while at Florida A&M, Helen was chosen “Miss FAMCEE – Campus Queen”, and Homecoming Queen. She was also the first majorette to the FAMC Marching Band and was initiated into Alpha Kappa Alpha Sorority, Inc. Helen continued her educational pursuits by attending Tuskegee Institute earning a Master’s Degree in Agricultural Economics. This field of study, being a traditionally male profession, resulted in Helen being the first Black woman in the United States to earn a degree in Agricultural Economics.

After receiving her Master’s Degree, Helen worked as Head of the Department of Agriculture at Alcorn College in Mississippi. Helen went on to teach and conduct research at Tennessee State University. Helen earned her second Master’s Degree from San Diego State University in the field of Social Work. For several years she worked as a Social Worker for the National Urban League in Milwaukee, Wisconsin.

Helen eventually moved to Georgia where she lived out her final years, growing and selling a variety of vegetables, as well as managing and marketing her black berries and blue berry crop from her “Healing Acres” produce farm. Helen enjoyed writing and reciting poetry for many different occasions.

Helen was a member of the African American Family Farmer Inc., and the Federation of

Southern Cooperatives.

Helen was preceded in death by her grandmother, Shellie Martin, her mother, Idella McGee, and her daughter, Xandra Ever DuBose.

Helen is survived by her daughters Janice Yamini and Shelley Cheatham (Wendell), seven grandchildren, Adam (MaryBeth), Mikal (Keola), Joseph (Lorice), Jonathan (Tinisha), Katrina, Najah, Naazir (Brooke) and 14 great grandchildren, family and friends.

Previous Events

Viewing

FEB 2. 10:00 AM - 6:00 PM (ET)

W.D. Lemon & Sons Funeral Home - McDonough Chapel
300 Griffin Street
McDonough, GA 30253
(770) 957-4337
info@wdlemonfuneralhome.com

Interment

FEB 3. 11:00 AM (ET)

Eastlawn Memorial Park
640 McGarity Rd.
McDonough, GA 30252

Service

FEB 3. 11:00 AM (ET)

First Lithonia Seventh-day Adventist Church
3533 Ragsdale Rd.
Lithonia, GA 30038

Tribute Wall

JR

“ Bless you all, family and friends of one I considered a friend who considered me a spiritual son. May the Lord God Almighty comfort you with His love and sweet memories of Sis Dubose, in the name of Jesus. Sincerely,
Julius Ross

Julius Ross - October 07, 2015 at 03:44 PM

LB

“ My family and I loved and adored Ms. Debose...such a feisty young lady..always eager to learn and was not afraid to ask questions...Ms. Debose had such a beautiful heart..we would take her lunch and sit with her and just laugh and talk while my husband would work on little things that she needed fixed....she also had a sweet tooth and always would ask about my chocolate chip and peanut butter cookies...the last time I talked to Ms. Debose, she was just as lively as ever and full of life and vigor...My family love you and miss you dearly.....you are in God's ...Love always, The Bynum Family.....

Letha Bynum - August 04, 2015 at 03:33 PM