

CELEBRATING THE LIFE OF  
DR. JUANITA ODESSA  
JONES ABERNATHY





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**Monday, September 23, 2019**

**12:00 PM**

Friendship Baptist Church  
80 Walnut Street, Southwest  
Atlanta, Georgia 30314





**Dr. Juanita Odessa Jones Abernathy** spent her life making a difference for others and transforming society to benefit the common good. As the chief architect of the Montgomery Bus Boycott, key organizer for the 1950 - 60s American Civil Rights Movement, teacher, businesswoman, wife, mother and independent thinker, she changed the world in positive ways.

The youngest of eight children born to Alex Jones, an esteemed dairy, beef and cotton farmer, and Ella Beatrice Gilmore Jones of Uniontown, Alabama, Mrs. Abernathy graduated from the prestigious Selma University Boarding School. While a 16-year-old student at Selma University, she met young Army Sergeant Ralph David Abernathy. Immediately, they became friends and pen pals, keeping in touch during Sergeant Abernathy's stint in World War II and her college years at Tennessee State University, from which she earned a Bachelor of Science degree in Business Education. After graduation, she taught Business Education at Monroe County High School in Beatrice, Alabama, and at Tuskegee Institute High School.

On August 31, 1952, she and Sergeant Abernathy married at the First Baptist Church of Uniontown. Her new husband was the young pastor of the historic First Baptist Church of Montgomery (AL), Dean of Men at Alabama State University, a professor of Sociology and the first black radio show host in Montgomery. Rev. and Mrs. Abernathy soon became leaders in the Montgomery NAACP, creating the most successful membership drive in the organization's history and participating in the newly formed Women's Political Council to address discrimination toward Negro patrons riding the Montgomery Bus System.

Her husband's friend, Martin Luther King, Jr., whom he had met while earning his master's degree in Sociology at Atlanta University, unexpectedly arrived at the Abernathy's Montgomery home and dined with them the evening before Dr. King was to preach his trial sermon at Dexter Avenue Baptist Church. King was elected pastor and the Abernathy and King families became best friends.

On Mrs. Abernathy's birthday, December 1, 1955, Montgomery NAACP Secretary Rosa Parks refused to give up her legally-protected bus seat to a white man and set in motion the beginning of the greatest movement for social change that America has ever known. The following morning, in response to Mrs. Parks' arrest, Rev. Abernathy met and organized local African American ministers, assembled the first mass meetings and gave the first speech calling for the Civil Rights Movement. He then joined his colleague Joanne Robinson, an English professor at Alabama State and head of the Women's Political Council, in calling for the citywide Montgomery Bus Boycott, but it was Mrs. Abernathy who laid the framework for the December 5 boycott. She designed, typed and distributed flyers, alerting community members to stay off the buses. Mrs. Abernathy and her husband hosted private strategy sessions in their home with Dr. King, Rev. Seay, Rev. Dubose and other leaders of the Boycott. What started as a one-day boycott lasted for 381 days, with Mrs. Abernathy's business plan for the Montgomery Bus Boycott later becoming the business model for the Civil Rights Movement.

In the pre-dawn hours of January 10, 1957, the first of five bombs ignited that night destroyed the Abernathy home. Another nearly demolished First Baptist Church.



Mrs. Abernathy was pregnant and home alone with her toddler Juandalynn, as her husband had traveled to Atlanta with Dr. and Mrs. King to convene the first meeting to establish the Southern Christian Leadership Conference. Despite the danger and constant threats to their lives, Mrs. Abernathy opened their home and gave up their beds to house and feed the Freedom Riders. From their dining room, her husband, Martin Luther King Jr. and John Lewis held the press conference about the Freedom Riders and the assault on First Baptist Church. She attended all the mass meetings, marches and political campaigns and took her young children along to participate as well.

As part of the Movement, she taught voter education classes, participated in the March on Washington, helped lead the Selma to Montgomery March for the Right to Vote and organized the largest mass integration of the public school systems of the South in 1965. Later, she continued the fight, lobbying for African Americans to have the right to attend the Metropolitan Opera and purchase season tickets for the Opera Tour in the South. She participated in the Poor People's Campaign—residing in the muddy encampment Resurrection City—for weeks which would later result in more money for Head Start programs and free and reduced lunches for K - 12 school children.

Mrs. Abernathy was a leader who advocated for a guaranteed minimum wage for the 1199B Hospital Workers Union, fought for the creation of the National Food Stamp Program for low-income individuals and the National Free Meal Program for low-income children in public schools. She was also an active campaigner for her husband's dream of creating a national Rev. Dr. Martin L. King, Jr. holiday. As an international freedom fighter, Mrs. Abernathy traveled around the world three times on peace missions journeying to South America, China, Vietnam, Southeast Asia, Africa, India, Germany, Russia, Czechoslovakia, Sweden, Norway, Finland and the Middle East. In 1972, she helped lead a peace march of women in Northern Ireland where she was shot at with rubber bullets.

Amid her civil rights work, Mrs. Abernathy was a successful businesswoman who maintained a twenty-year career as a national sales director of Mary Kay Cosmetics. Always a leader for equality, she used the Mary Kay platform to help women secure business loans, establish financial independence and obtain financial credit in their own names at a time when women were seldom permitted to have credit at banks. For sixteen years, Mrs. Abernathy served on the Board of Directors of the Metropolitan Atlanta Rapid Transit Authority (MARTA). She also served on the Boards of Directors for the Fulton County Development Authority and Introducing Youth to American Infrastructure (IYAI). She was a founding member of the Quaker Friends School of Atlanta and worked tirelessly to serve underprivileged youth with Father Austin Ford at the Emmaus House.

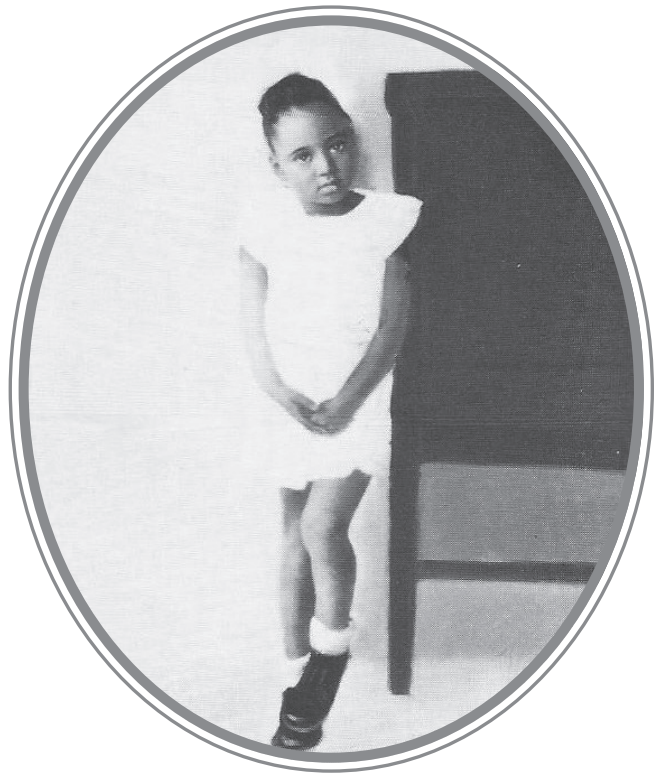


She is the deserving recipient of an honorary doctorate degree from Trinity International University of Ambassadors and the Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Civil and Human Rights Award from the National Education Association which she shared with her late husband. In 2015, she was awarded the Congressional Black Caucus' George Thomas "Mickey" Leland Phoenix Award for her dedicated service to civil rights.

She was preceded in death by her husband, Reverend Dr. Ralph David Abernathy, Sr. and her sons, Ralph David Abernathy, Jr. and Reverend Dr. Ralph David Abernathy III. She leaves to cherish her memory: daughters Juandalynn R. Abernathy and Donzaleigh Abernathy, and son Kwame L. Abernathy; daughter-in-law Annette W. Abernathy; and sons-in-law Sven-Torben Haderup and Dar Dixon Bijarchi. She will also live on in the hearts and memories of her grandchildren: Ralph David Abernathy IV, Christiana Abernathy, Micah Alexander Abernathy and Söeren-Niklas Haderup; and her older sister, Eloise Percival, and a host of devoted family members and friends.







My Home,  
I was born here!!  
JJA

Jarvis Jones Abernathy





The bombed Abernathy home, Montgomery Alabama 1957. Ralph David Abernathy on the porch with his assistant. The home was bombed by segregationists in retaliation to the successful 381 day Montgomery Bus Boycott. The gapping hole to the left is where the bomb was placed.







Home in Montgomery



about the struggles in Albany, and Coretta helped supervise the Albany office with Wyatt T. Walker. The efforts of every-one were needed to ensure success in Albany.

On December 16, 1961, Martin Luther King Jr., Ralph Abernethy, and Dr. William Anderson (left seat) were arrested, along with 265 Negroes, for parading without a permit. They were accompanied to jail by Coretta and James A. Ray. Coretta called on President Kennedy to issue a "second emancipation proclamation" because of the arrest three days earlier of 60 student demonstrators who were praying in front of City Hall for a just verdict in the hearing of the 11 Freedom Riders.







Dinner Party with Jackie Robinson



Birmingham Good Friday March Arrest







March on Washington







Selma to Montgomery March









CELEBRATING THE LIFE OF  
**DR. JUANITA ODESSA JONES ABERNATHY**

Monday, September 23, 2019 at 12:00 PM

*Order Of Service*

Friendship Baptist Church | 80 Walnut Street, Southwest, Atlanta, Georgia 30314

*Co-Officiating*

**The Reverend Dr. Richard W. Wills, Sr., Pastor**  
**The Reverend Dr. Lawrence Edward Carter, Sr., Dean**  
*Martin Luther King, Jr. International Chapel*

**Organ Prelude** "Flee as a Bird to Your Mountain" (Spanish Melody) **Dr. James Abbington**  
*Director of Music Ministries and Church Organist*

**Processional** "Largo" from Symphony No. 9 (Goin' Home) Antonin Dvorak

**Congregational Hymn** "Come Thou Fount of Every Blessing" AAHH #175

**Invocation** **The Reverend Dr. Jeannette Turner-Holt**  
*Pastor, New Life African Methodist Episcopal Zion Church College Park, GA*

**Scripture Readings**  
*The Old Testament* **The Reverend Dr. David Mitchell**  
*Pastor, Mt. Gilead Baptist Church, Durham, NC*

*The New Testament* **The Reverend T. Renee Crutcher**  
*Founder/CEO, Sankofa Ministries & Tellin' Our Story Publications Atlanta, GA*

**Prayer** **The Reverend Alfred C.D. Vaughn**  
*Pastor, The Grace Memorial Baptist Church, Baltimore, MD*

**Anthem** "Lord, Make Me an Instrument of Thy Peace" John Rutter  
**The Morehouse College Glee Club**  
**Dr. David E. Morrow, Director**

**Words of Comfort** **The Reverend Dr. Walter L. Kimbrough**  
*Pastor-In-Residence, Clifondale United Methodist Church College Park, GA*

**Resolutions** **Dr. Earl D. Clowney**  
*Deacon, Friendship Baptist Church*

~ Tributes ~

**The Honorable John R. Lewis** **The Honorable Robb Pitts**  
*U.S. House of Representatives, 5th Congressional District (GA)* *Chairman, Fulton County Board of Commissioners*

**The Honorable Keisha Lance Bottoms** **The Honorable M. Kasim Reed** **The Honorable William C. Campbell**  
*60th Mayor of Atlanta* *59th Mayor of Atlanta* *57th Mayor of Atlanta*

**Spiritual** "Soon-ah Will be Done" (The Morehouse College Glee Club) arr. William Dawson

~ Tributes ~

**Dr. Christine King Farris** **The Reverend Jesse L. Jackson, Sr.** **Mrs. Peggy Wallace Kennedy**  
*Veteran of the Civil Rights Movement* *Founder/President, Rainbow-PUSH Coalition* *Daughter, Alabama Governors George Wallace and Lurleen Wallace*

**Mr. William G. Anderson, D.O.** **The Reverend Dr. Al Sharpton**  
*Albany (GA) Civil Rights Leader, Surgeon & Family Friend* *Founder/President, National Action Network*

~ Celebration in Song ~

**Mrs. Juandalynn R. Abernathy, Soprano** (Daughter)  
 "I Want Jesus to Walk With Me"  
 arr. Edward Boatner

~ Tributes ~

**Dr. Dorothy Cowser Yancy** **Ms. Joan Mooney** **Dr. Beverly Scott**  
*Family Friend & Educator* *CEO, Faith & Politics Institute* *Former General Manager, MARTA*

**Ms. Carole Copeland Thomas** **Mr. Charles N. Pursley**  
*Family Friend & Business Colleague* *Former MARTA Legal Counsel*

~ Celebration in Song ~

**Ms. Santita Jackson**  
*Family Friend, Daughter of Reverend Jesse and Mrs. Jacqueline Jackson*  
 "Wind Beneath My Wings" Silbar & Henley

~ Family Tributes ~

**Mr. William Abernathy, MD** **Mr. Darryl Percival** **Mrs. Donzaleigh Abernathy** **Mr. Kwame L. Abernathy, JD**  
*Nephew* *Nephew* *Daughter* *Son*

~ Instrumental Tribute ~

**M. Mayfield** (Trumpeter)

**Eulogy** **The Reverend Dr. Jesse Wendell Mapson, Jr.**  
*Senior Pastor, Monumental Baptist Church Philadelphia, PA*

**Acknowledgements** **The Honorable Andrea L. Boone**  
*Family Friend & Member, Atlanta City Council, District 10*

**Closing Prayer** **The Reverend Dr. Robert M. Franklin, Jr.**  
*President Emeritus, Morehouse College*

**Recessional** "When We All Get to Heaven" AAHH #594



# Mass School Integration in Dixie



Mrs. Martin Luther King Jr. (left) and Mrs. Ralph Abernathy escort their children (l. to r.), Yolanda and Martin Luther King 3d, and Donzaleigh and Juandalynn Abernathy, home from school.

Atlanta, Aug. 30 (UPI)—The earlier this year from the U.S. until now, enrolled a son, Martin Luther King 3d, in the third

## The Seventeenth Annual "WOMEN'S DAY SERVICES"

**MOUNT CALVARY BAPTIST CHURCH**  
235-251 Seymour Avenue Newark, New Jersey  
**REV. J. WENDELL MAPSON, Min.**

**SUNDAY, OCTOBER 23rd, 1966**  
11:00 A.M. and 3:00 P.M.



Guest Speaker

**MRS. JUANITA ODESSA ABERNATHY**  
wife of the Rev. Ralph Abernathy of Atlanta Georgia,  
Teacher, Speaker and Champion of Civil Rights.

## Abernathy Asks a 'People's Holiday' for Dr. King

WASHINGTON, Jan. 8 (AP)—The Rev. Ralph David Abernathy called today for observance next Thursday of the birthday of the Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King Jr., as a "national people's holiday."

Mr. Abernathy, the successor to the slain civil rights leader as president of the Southern Christian Leadership Conference, signed a proclamation to that effect at a news conference.

He called on "black people, poor people, and people of goodwill" throughout the nation to take time off from work or school Jan. 15 each year, beginning next Thursday, to attend appropriate observances and nonviolent demonstrations honoring Dr. King.

As part of the observance, Mr. Abernathy said that New York City schools would close next Thursday and Washington schools be dismissed for the afternoon.

There will also be a rally in New York's Central Park and an afternoon rally in Washington, he said.

Meanwhile, Representative John Conyers Jr., Democrat

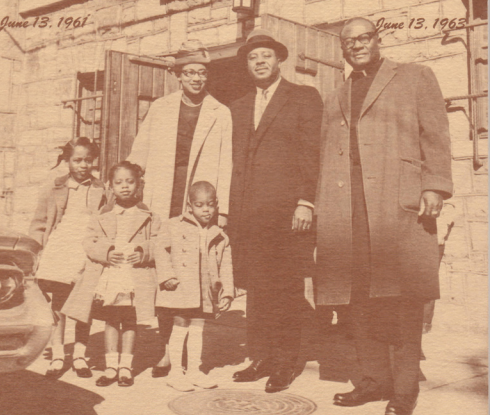


The Rev. Ralph David Abernathy, left, and Representative John Conyers Jr., Michigan Democrat, at news conference.

of 24 House members had lamations and arranged the Mavors of 65 Amer- appropriate commemora



















*We Love You, Mother.*

## Active Pallbearers

- Kwame L. Abernathy
- Charles Jones
- Micah Alexander Abernathy
- Ulysses Jones
- Ralph David Abernathy IV
- Darryl Percival
- Wilmer Hildreth
- Kevin Yarbrough

## Honorary Pallbearers

- Bernis Abernathy
- Larry Abernathy
- William Abernathy
- Marvin Arrington, Jr.
- Samuel Bacote
- Dar Dixon Bijarchi
- Rev. Dr. Herbert Bridgewater
- Tyrone Brooks
- Earl D. Clowney
- Rashid Curtis
- Curley Dossman
- Isaac N. Farris
- Rev. Dr. William Guy
- Sören-Niklas Haderup
- Sven-Torben Haderup
- J.T. Johnson
- Kappa Alpha Psi Fraternity, Inc.
- Michael Langford
- Dwayne Lee
- Kent Matlock
- Richard Morton
- James E. Peterson
- Hans Pfeleiderer
- M. Kasim Reed
- Michael H. Ross
- Judge Christopher Ward
- Deacons and Trustees – Friendship Baptist Church

## Honorary Flower Bearers

- Annette Abernathy
- Bianca Gibbs Abernathy
- Christiana Abernathy
- Cheryl Synamon Baldwin
- Alethea W. Boone
- Andrea L. Boone
- Jolaunda Boone-Campbell
- Celestine Bray-Bottoms
- Eloise Brown
- Geoffrey Baker-Brown
- Justine Boyd
- Rosa Coleman
- Candice Creecy
- Marguerite Creecy
- Doris Crenshaw
- Rev. T. Renee Crutcher
- Corliss Davenport
- Mattie Dozier
- Rebbie Ellisor-Taylor
- Angela Farris
- Susie A. Hildreth
- Jamila Jones
- Dee Dee Kelly
- Rev. Dr. Bernice A. King
- Vanessa Manley
- Peggy Mapp
- Dedra A. Mitchell
- Velma T. Moultrie
- Elizabeth Omilami
- Eva Patterson
- Fran Phillips-Calhoun
- Comarletia H. Pierce
- Brenda Russell
- Effie Strickland
- Elizabeth M. Taylor
- Carol Thompson
- Shirley Wade
- Doris Creecy Waters
- Dorothy Cowser Yancy
- Yvonne Yancy
- Deaconess Ministry – Friendship Baptist Church
- The Juanita Jones Abernathy Missionary Circle – Historic West Hunter Street Baptist Church

### ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

As we reflect on our beloved mother, Dr. Juanita Odessa Jones Abernathy, we give thanks for her extraordinary life of service to humanity, generous spirit and loving example of finer womanhood. As part of her divine assignment to establish a more just society, God sent friends, supporters and extended family who, together, helped to shape a better world for all of us. Today, we are immensely grateful that God dispatched you in like manner to shine light and love on our family. Your calls, visits, prayers, fond remembrances of our mother and father, and many other caring expressions have strengthened our hearts and will serve as sources of comfort in the days to come. We are deeply grateful to you—our extended Atlanta family. May God richly bless each of you.

### SPECIAL THANKS

- Carl M. Williams Funeral Directors
- City of Atlanta Government
- Development Authority of Fulton County
- Friendship Baptist Church
- Fulton County Government
- Martin Luther King Jr. International Chapel – Morehouse College
- Metropolitan Atlanta Rapid Transit Authority
- Morehouse College Glee Club
- Historic West Hunter Street Baptist Church
- Lamonte Carr – Friendship Baptist Church
- Adam Sleek, Short Film Cameraman/Editor

### IN LIEU OF FLOWERS

*Contributions should be made to:*  
The Ralph David and Juanita Jones Abernathy Foundation  
690 Laverne Drive NW  
Atlanta, GA 30318

### PROFESSIONAL SERVICES

**ENTRUSTED TO:**  
Carl M. Williams Funeral Directors, Inc.  
492 Larkin Street, SW  
Atlanta, GA 30313  
404-522-8454

### ENTOMBMENT

Tuesday, September 24, 2019  
12:00 PM  
Lincoln Cemetery  
2275 Joseph E. Boone Boulevard  
Atlanta, GA 30314