



# **Rev. Bettie Ruth Kennedy**

MAY 19, 1931 - JUL 25, 2015



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**COLONIAL  
MORTUARY**

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## **Rev. Bettie Ruth Kennedy**

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**S**ervices for Bettie Kennedy, 84, of Lufkin will be held Saturday, August 1, 2015 at 1:30 p.m. in the Harmony Hill Baptist Church, 2708 S. Chestnut St., Lufkin, TX. Burial will follow in the Cedar Grove Cemetery. Visitation is Friday from 4:00 p.m. to 8:00 p.m. at the First United Methodist Church, 805 E. Denman Ave., Lufkin, TX. The Repass Celebration will be at the St. Cyprian's School Gym, 1115 S. John Redditt Dr., Lufkin, Tx. immediately following the interment.

In Lieu of flowers, you are invited to send donations to the Bettie Kennedy Scholarship Fund.

c/o of The Taylor Kennedy Foundation, Inc. at any Regions Bank made payable to the Bettie Kennedy Fund at Regions Bank.

Bettie Kennedy was born May 19, 1931 to Willie Mae Engram, a single parent, in Broaddus, Texas.

She was legally adopted by her great Uncle and Aunt, Will and Evie Bell Engram of Lufkin in 1934.

She Attended Lufkin Public Schools, graduating from Dunbar High School in 1949. Following high

school, she attended college at Prairie View A & M University where she was an extremely active student. She was elected ROTC Queen and selected finalist in the Queen's Court at Praire View A & M University. In 1953 she earned a bachelor's degree in education. She also attended post graduate courses at Stephen F. Austin and Texas Southern University. She completed her Post Graduate certification in Special Education. Bettie received special training and cerification from the Texas Deaf Blind and Orphan School in Austin, Texas.

Bettie taught at the Deaf, Blind & Orphan School in Austin for a number of years. She subsequently taught in Lufkin Public for over twenty-five years. After teaching, she became an ordained minister and was pastor of Collins Chapel Christian



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Methodist Church (C. M. E. ) for over twenty years. She continued as a affiliate pastor of Long Chapel CME Church until her death.

In recent years, Bettie has received numerous awards and honors including the Yellow Rose of Texas, Texas Community Service Award, Angelina Award Award Lifetime Achievement Community Service Award, Cultural Diversity Award, Paul Harris Fellow Rotary

International Award Award and Fellow, Citizen Chamber Pinnacle Award, Civil Rights Award, Diboll History Center Award, U.S. Forestry Award, Outstanding Citizen Award, Black History Award, Jewel Award, Preservation Award, Concerned Citizen Award, Tpo Ladies of Distinction, Delta Theta Sorority, American Cancer Society Presidents Award, Dunbar Hall of Fame Honor inductee, Salvation Army Award, AmeriCorps of Texas Award and the Angelina Award.

Bettie lived her life as a servant of the Lord and to serve His people. Her ministry to others began

when she was a small child. During the throes of the Great Depression, she saw her mother, Evie Bell, feeding, clothing and taking care of those in the community. Bettie would ride her bicycle far beyond her home on N. Chestnut, Laden with food and clothes to give to people in need. She continued this love for God's people throughout her life. She started a Thanksgiving Community Food Drive over twenty- five years ago. Over time and with the support of churches, friends, family and others, particularly Bruce Love of DP Solutions, this Food Drive has grown to feed more than 1600 families in the Lufkin and surrounding communities.

Bettie was a amazing storyteller and historian. She was always sought out for her portrayals of great African American women - Harriet Tubman, Sojourner Truth, Rosa Parks and Coretta King. Bettie has worked with Stephen F. Austin to research and preserve African American history in East Texas, having a collection and exhibit named for her in 2014.

Bettie was preceded in death by her former husband Oscar Kennedy, parents: Will and Evie Bell Engram and Willie Mae Engram. She is survived by her children, Son:



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Oscar D. (Myrt), Kermit A., Keith C. (Lisa) Kennedy. Daughters: Oscar Vernell Jordon, Miriam (Howard) Coleman, Bettie (Rex) Benham, Willette (Roy) Dubose, Valencia Kennedy, Bettie "Boo" (Anthony) Watts, Angela

Moreland. Also left to cherish her memory are her special cousins, Gladys Square, Willie Ingram and Lee George Ingram, her best friend, Myrtle Davis and her husband Paul Davis (who Bettie referred to as her little brother). Bettie had numerous close friends that she considered family, including friends, Harold Hicks, Lacy Chimney and his wife, Dorothy, Shirley Fears Davis, and her husband, Rev. Milbrew Davis.

Bettie's personal circle of influence included the common men and women you meet in every day life, from the highly elected and successful people, to the ordinary man on the street. Bettie touched countless lives and lived her life to lead and inspire others.



# Tribute Wall

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**Tommy Davis** lit a candle in honor of Bettie.



January 30 at 5:59 AM



**Tommy Davis** January 30 at 6:03 AM  
Had kind words for all



**Michelle Hackney** lit a candle in honor of Bettie.



November 22 at 3:53 PM



**Jesselyn Reese** posted:

Aunt Bettie could do the Electric Slide!

July 31 at 6:35 PM



**Keena Proutt-Davis** lit a candle in honor of Bettie.



July 31 at 5:24 PM



**Keena Proutt-Davis** July 31 at 5:26 PM  
This is so hard for me...I will see you after a while Mother Kennedy...



**Keena Proutt-Davis** posted:

FOREVER I will cherish the time I shared with Mother Kennedy. An awesome lady, determined to keep me writing my poetry. She will always have a place in my heart. "Earth has no sorrow, that Heaven cannot heal."

July 31 at 5:10 PM



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FH

**Friends And Coworkers At Texas Orthopedic Hospital** sent a Divine Peace Bouquet to the Kennedy family.

July 31 at 10:08 AM



PM

**Patricia M.** sent an Emerald Garden Basket to the Kennedy family.

July 31 at 7:55 AM



GP

**Greater E Texas Community Action Program** sent a Pink Tribute Spray to the Kennedy family.

July 31 at 7:45 AM



TS

**The Girls At Kwik Kopy (Gina & Shelia)** posted:

Our dearest Ms. Bettie departs from this earth and never truly leaves, for she is still alive in our hearts and minds, through us, she lives on. Please accept our condolences, Ms. Bettie will not be forgotten. Hope there is a copy machine in Heaven.

July 31 at 6:32 AM

JR

**Jesselyn Reese** July 31 at 6:32 PM

Aunt Bettie was a model of Christian womanhood. She was God's love made visible. Study her life deeply...those who loved her are better, because she existed.

SW

**Sena Whitaker** lit a candle in honor of Bettie.

July 30 at 11:12 AM





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SW

**Sena Whitaker** posted:

To the Family of Reverend Bettie Ruth Kennedy, We are heartbroken by Reverend Kennedy's passing, and we share your deep sadness and grief. Reverend Kennedy was a beautiful woman of God with powerful faith and giftedness, who was loved and adored for all who knew her. Death does not take her away from us, it only makes her light of faith shine brighter, her voice louder, and her unequivocal truth still teaching us love and hope. She will live in our hearts forever. With love, prayer, and sympathy, Pastor Earl Whitaker & Evangelist Dr. Sena Whitaker

July 30 at 11:07 AM

SP

**Samantha Payne** lit a candle in honor of Bettie.



July 30 at 9:57 AM



**Anonymous** sent a Dreams From the Heart Bouquet to the Kennedy family.



July 30 at 5:45 AM

ML

**Manuel Lemelle** sent a Rainbow Of Remembrance Spray to the Kennedy family.



July 28 at 12:41 PM

PD

**Phillips 66 Legal Department** sent a Sweetest Sunrise Bouquet to the Kennedy family.



July 28 at 8:36 AM



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**Karen Swenson** posted:

Rev Bettie made significant contributions to east Texas through her work on the board of Greater East Texas Community Action Program. Her recommendations and decisions continue to impact low income families throughout east Texas. Her work will be felt for generations to come.

July 28 at 6:16 AM



**Maegan Prejean** lit a candle in honor of Bettie.



July 28 at 4:46 AM



**Melissa Provose** lit a candle in honor of Bettie.



July 27 at 2:48 PM

**TG Tee H Giles** July 28 at 2:09 PM

We thought of Bettie as being part of the Giles family. We all loved her and will miss her dearly. T H Giles, Texas City

**MP Melissa Provose** July 27 at 2:49 PM

She will be truly missed



**Kathy Wade** posted:

am saddened to hear this, i loved her so much. kathy wade

July 26 at 3:07 PM



**Michelle Deaton** lit a candle in honor of Bettie.

Praying for the family.



July 26 at 10:16 AM



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**Charles Evans** lit a candle in honor of Bettie.



July 26 at 10:09 AM



**Charles Evans** posted:

My thoughts and prayers are with you and your loved ones . Bettie will be greatly missed but fondly remembered. May God bless her and grant eternal rest in His kingdom.

July 26 at 10:07 AM



# **Memories only last if you share them**

Join us in honoring Bettie by contributing to a collection of shared memories.



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