



Cynthia Oden

May 20, 1922 - December 10, 2015

Strong spirited, decisive, and prideful are a few adjectives to describe Cynthia Ophelia Wrenn Oden. She had to be; just to survive being born in the delta of Mississippi during the Great Depression years; she learned that delicate balance of strength and perseverance. Having the example before her of a Mother who spoke her mind and a Father who was a loving provider for his family; she had six brothers and sisters who she would retell the story of their growing up with fondness. In the South, the 'Chitterling Circuit' brought the Big Bands and singers of the day at which Cynthia was in the audience. She heard Lionel Hampton and others. Dancing the lindy hop during the jazz and swing era, she spoke of the fun she and her friends had going out and enjoying the great music and musicians that are now legendary. Cynthia graduated from Myrtle Hall IV Elementary. However, she dropped out of high school, but returned to finish and earned her high school degree from Coahoma Agricultural High School also known as ' Aggie' . Moving to Chicago at 24 years of age, Cynthia lived there until she was 76 years old, returning to Oarksdale Mississippi to take care of her older brother, Otilia. During those early years; one by one, each brother and sister followed their sister Marie 'True Love' to the big city. They all lived in the same building in the 40's, until each sibling found their way and built their own lives with the support financially and spiritually of each other. Education in the South for black females was structured specifically to teach them domestic skills, so Cynthia learned her lessons well and became a professional seamstress and cook.

She took pride in her work. When she was working in the clothing factories, it was called 'piece work: Because she was young and a quick study, she caught on fast and worked quickly to produce volume. At that time, she could pick and choose which company she wanted to employ her, because she was skilled. Being a seamstress was simply earning a living, but cooking; that was her passion. For a paycheck, she worked in the dining rooms of the large office buildings in the Loop. They provided hot lunches for the employees and she often spoke about her fellow employees and the people they served. With the comradery that day to day work gave, she liked people commenting on how they enjoyed their lunch and what were their favorites of the day. She learned how to make different dishes and made them at home for her family and friends. She loved feeding people. If you told her you didn't like what she cooked, she would change it to your liking, until you gave your approval. When the recipient of Cynthia's Kitchen liked what she baked or cooked, she was satisfied. Her pleasure was quiet and understated in knowing her food was enjoyed. She ran a diner on the south side of Chicago for a short period of time.

She gave birth to a daughter and a son, Marietta and Antoni. Antoni was raised by Cynthia's Uncle A.J. and Aunt Johnnie in St. Louis. Cynthia and Marietta, A.K.A. Penny, visited St. Louis and Aunt Johnnie and Antoni, A.K.A. Tony came to Chicago every year. During her 93 years, Cynthia was a member of several Baptist churches. Her Mother, Cornelia, was a member of Chapel Hill Baptist Church, so when she returned to Clarksdale, MS., she became a faithful member there. Her worship life in Chicago was at Liberty Baptist Church in her early arrival and at Christian Hope M.B. Church in her later years. She enjoyed attending Sunday school especially, so Cynthia routinely purchased the large

'Standard Lesson' for the year and studied it attentively. She liked preparing herself for the discussion that followed after the teacher gave the lesson, because she loved to talk. This devoted study allowed her to gain knowledge and express her thoughts with understanding. During her final years, Cynthia

returned to Chicago and was cared for by her family. She succumbed to end stage Alzheimer. A life. Well lived, well spent. Filled with events, warmth, struggle, joy, and finally-peace. Cynthia was preceded in death by her Father and Mother Willie and Cornelia Wrenn; Sisters Marie Hall, Iris Banks, and Beulah Peebles; Brothers Otha and William Wrenn; and husband George Oden. Mourning her passing is her daughter Marietta J. Ode?, son Antoni Gregory(Debra); Brother Jerry Z. Wrenn; Grandchildren Casey Logan, Shameka Gregory Carter, Tonishia Love, Yana Butler, Ant ony Gregory, Domonick Gregory, □eleah Coleman, Dawn Cleman, Kelvin Anthony Gregory, Easia Gregory. Great grandchildren Shyrie Reed, Maurice Reed, Joseph Philips, Isaiah Taylor, Nikiya Philips, Takiya Miles, and Tatum Butler, Tanner Butler, _KmgS- ton Butler, Travon Love, Kristian Butler, Travis Love. Great great grandchild; Maurice Reed.

Cemetery Details

Mt. Hope Cemetery

11500 S Fairfield
Chicago, IL

Previous Events

Visitation

DEC 19. 10:00 AM - 12:00 PM (CT)

Greater Zion Temple MBC
1130 E 95th St
Chicago, IL 60619

Service

DEC 19. 12:00 PM - 1:00 PM (CT)

Greater Zion Temple MBC
1130 E 95th St
Chicago, IL 60619

Tribute Wall

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“ Click on the file below to view the full obituary. Be blessed

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Marietta Oden - February 27, 2016 at 02:08 PM