

Ms. Virginia Wilson, a devoted advocate for individuals with special needs, community leader, and trailblazing professional, passed away on November 14, 2024, in Americus, Georgia. She was 85.

Born January 12, 1939, in Webster County, Georgia, Virginia grew up on the Carter Boyhood Farm, where she worked alongside her mother, siblings, and extended family. Her early years on the farm instilled in her a strong work ethic, deep faith, and profound sense of community that would define her life's work.

Virginia excelled academically, becoming the first in her family to graduate from college and earn an advanced degree, setting the bar for future generations. She earned a Bachelor of Arts degree from City College of New York and a Master of Arts degree from Columbia University. Her achievements were a source of inspiration for her family and community, exemplifying the transformative power of education and faith.

Her love for God guided every aspect of her life, including her professional journey. As a healthcare professional, she served at New York Presbyterian Hospital and later, as a Facility Director for the New York State Department of Mental Health and Hygiene. In these roles, she treated every individual with compassion and dignity, believing her work was an extension of her faith.

A tireless advocate for individuals with special needs, Virginia was driven by her unwavering belief in the divine worth of every person. She championed their rights, ensuring they had access to essential resources and opportunities. Her dedication extended to her church and community, where she founded the food pantry at Bright Temple A.M.E. Church. She saw this as a direct expression of her faith and her calling to serve others.

Virginia's spiritual convictions also shaped her personal passions. She was widely recognized for her contributions to genealogical research, particularly her extensive documentation of the Kitchens' family history. Her work was grounded in her belief that understanding one's roots honors God's providence and connects generations.

She approached all her relationships with the love and kindness that her faith inspired, touching countless lives along the way.

Virginia was preceded in death by her mother, Ola B. Wilson; father, Lawrence Wilson; brothers: Nathaniel Wilson, Albert Wilson, and Willie James Wilson; grandson, Lavar Wilson Woods; nephews, Rev. Ferrell Wilson and Jerome Wilson; nieces, Christene Murphy and Tracey Laney; great-niece, Shasha Murphy.

Virginia's legacy of faith, service, and advocacy extends beyond her professional accomplishments. She was a beloved matriarch and family pillar.

She leaves to carry on her legacy, her six children: Willie B. Dunton and companion, Hunter Manderson, Leroy Wilson, Harold Martin (Evelyn) Wilson, Beatrice E. Goldsmith, Ellen B. (James)

Wilson Leary, and Lawrence Wilson; nine siblings: Mae Frances Merritt, Gene Wilson, Wade Wilson, Ann Wilson, John Henry (Juanita) Wilson, Lena Mae Laney, Laura Gaines, Ola Mae Wilson and Marvin (Annie B.) Wilson; 15 grandchildren: Nathaniel Dunton III, Christopher (Charlene) Middleton, Tina Fernandez, Athena Gintena Mahogany Wilson, Shantyra (Richard) Dunn, Chervon (Daniel) Smith, LaShora Goodwin, Deidra(Charles Moody) Goodwin, Harold Martin Wilson, Jr., Philip (Deseraï) Goldsmith, Alisa Goodwin, Furtasia Goodwin, Iziah James Harrell, and Matthew Wilson; 21 great-grandchildren, eight great-great-grandchildren; a host of cherished nieces, and beloved nephews, along with an enormous group of other loving relatives and friends.