



## Mary Alice (Brown) Thornton

December 4, 1949 - June 29, 2015

On December 4, 1949, baby girl Mary Alice was born to George Washington and Rosa Etta Brown in what is now University Hospital in Newark, New Jersey. She was the second child following her big brother George born the year before, and proceeding soon to come younger siblings Loretta and Ernestine. Given the name "Sista", Mary fiercely loved her mother and father, George, Loretta, and Ernestine. She transitioned on to be with the Lord Jesus on Monday, June 29th, 2015. The family lived in Newark and East Orange New Jersey where Mary was best friends with Cookie Marshall, was in a girl gang, played the violin, and learned French. When she became an adolescent, the family left Jersey and moved to Farmville Virginia where they had family on both her father and mother's side. These new city kids were very popular in Farmville and the surrounding counties and they adjusted to the slower pace of the rural area. In Virginia, Mary and her siblings were able to spend a great deal of time with their grandfather John Henry Foster on the "Old Home Place" where their grandparents had lots of land and tenants sharecropping. Mary, her brother, and sisters loved the family farm. They helped with the tobacco crop, rode horses, did chores, and enjoyed the land. In Farmville, Mary attended Robert R. Moton High, which closed down for a few years due to segregation. The landmark Supreme Court case of Davis v. County School Board of Prince Edward County (directly following Brown v. the Board of Topeka Kansas) ordered the end to the segregation for the Farmville school system. As a youth Mary had the opportunity to work with Civil Rights

leaders in the town of Farmville, and was very proud in her later years to see the first African American President come to office. She cried because the arthritis in her knees didn't allow her to go vote, but was proud just the same. After high school she went to St. Paul College in Lawrenceville Virginia for one year towards her nursing degree. Years later, she would attend Keysville Community College to get her Associated of Arts. She worked at Carol Manor nursing home, and after having all four of her children, she became a homemaker. While a youth, Mary Alice would visit High Rock Baptist church where her grandmother Mary Willie Foster taught from the Holy Bible and oversaw the music ministry, writing songs and music to honor the Lord. Mary became a member of Race Street Missionary Baptist church while the family lived in Farmville, and later attended New Beginnings Christian Center in Suitland Maryland with her sister Ernestine and daughter Ramona after moving to the DC Metropolitan area. In recent years, she settled in at East of Bethel Christian Center in Accokeek Maryland while living with her eldest daughter and granddaughter. Mary developed a love for the Holy Scriptures while spending time with her late uncle Dr. Reverend Milton Foster who taught at seminary, and had his own radio program teaching the Word in the 1980s. She read through the Holy Bible over three times during her life—something most people never do once. She loved singing spirituals and worship songs, and liked to dance. Sometimes she would sit and listen to old records of musical artists like James Brown, Curtis Mayfield, Tina Turner, and Sly and the Family Stone, but her favorite was to listen to Gospel music on Praise 104.1FM, an inspirational radio station in the DC metro area. Mary also liked to listen to CD teachings of the Word of GOD. While living with her eldest daughter and granddaughter, she began to learn to study and meditate on the Scriptures. She kept journals on her day to day life to record events and reflect. She liked to write poetry. Mary loved people, had a very sharp mind, remembering everything a person would say. She made the family laugh with all the quotes she mentally collected over the years and would throw out a quote at the drop of a hat—just to keep us on our toes. She is survived by her

four children: Desiree Mosby, Ramona Mosby, Danita Thornton and Marcellena Thornton; three grandchildren: Kevin Thornton, Catalyst Mosby, and Jamez Thornton; her brother: George E. Brown (Matilda ?Mattie?); her sister Loretta Brown Topp (David); predeceased by sister Ernestine Brown Owens; her nieces and nephews: Sharon Brown, LaWanda Allen, Karen Brown, Simona Dominick (Duane), Angela Jordan (Tony), George J. Brown, Julia Myers (Brad) , Johnathan Brown, and Tiffany Topp, and a host of great nieces, nephews, cousins, church family and friends.