



## Norma J D (Dillard) Oliver

September 9, 1932 - January 14, 2015

Normajean Josephine Dillard Oliver was born September 9, 1932, in Clinton, South Carolina. She was the youngest child?her childhood nickname was "Bay", short for "Baby"?of Laura Dillard Young and the last survivor among her siblings (Loveas, William, Lucile, lola and Aurelia). Josephine studied at Bell Street School in Clinton. From first through twelfth grades, she never missed one day of school. She graduated with the historic first twelfth grade class in the State of South Carolina. In 1949, Josephine enrolled at Benedict College in Columbia, South Carolina. This was a great time in her life. At Benedict, Josephine met Mickey, her roommate, and life-long friend who was more like a sister from 1950 until Phine's passing. Their relationship remained intact, never experiencing the slightest distance. While at Benedict, in 1949, she pledged Kappa Beta Chapter of Zeta Phi Beta Sorority; Inc. She joined Zeta because she was impressed with a student teacher who worked at her high school. Josephine wasn't sure what Zeta Phi Beta was about, but she liked the way the student teacher "carried herself? and wanted to get whatever made the student teacher so polished. After four years at Benedict, Josephine earned a bachelor's degree in education. From 1953-1955, she taught 1st grade in Summerton, South Carolina. For three years, she taught elementary school in Dalton, Georgia. While living with a family (as was the custom for single women of that era) she met Lois Garner who became a lifelong friend. While teaching in Summerton, Josephine met Joseph Oliver, a student at South Carolina Area Trade School. She and Joseph married in December

1955. Although they divorced in the late 1960s, they remained great friends. In keeping with a long-standing southern tradition, until he re-married, Joseph always was the first man to cross Phine's threshold EVERY New Year's Day. Josephine often talked about growing up poor and having to do without many material things. She was very proud of the time when she was able to build a house for her mother. Because Josephine's oldest nephew could not say her name, she became "Phine". Since change is a constant part of life, somewhere between South Carolina and Washington, DC, a major change occurred: she went from "Josephine" and "Bay" to "Norma". Norma worked in the District of Columbia (DC) government. Her duties included teaching at the Public Welfare Training Center and the District of Columbia Receiving Home. She served as a social worker at the Anacostia Service Center and as a Social Services Representative. Norma enjoyed working. She planned to work as long as her health permitted her to do so. When she learned she would have to use a computer, she retired. Norma enjoyed retirement. She had more time to dedicate to her favorite loves: Peoples Church, Benedict College and Zeta Phi Beta. She was a charter member of Omicron Phi Zeta and a strong supporter of the Zeta Amicae and a member of the Washington Inter-Alumni Council of the United Negro College Fund. Because of her self-imposed technological impairment, she prided herself in being the member who used the telephone to notify other organizational not-interested-in-technology members of the latest happenings. She also enjoyed being able to go wherever with whomever offered her a ride. If the outing involved shopping, eating, or partying, Norma was ready to roll. In retirement, Norma faced several health challenges. Fortunately, none of them stopped her from going where she wanted to go. She signed up to work U. S. Presidential Inauguration events, served as the Resident Agent for Zeta Phi Beta Sorority's headquarters and volunteered at the same headquarters. Initially, with her cane and, later, with her walker, Norma still showed up everywhere. Since she didn't drive, she discovered a new form of transportation: Metro Access. On Sunday, December 14, 2014, Metro Access took Norma to church for the last

time. In 1964, Norma—we guess she was "Norma" then—joined Peoples Congregational United Church of Christ, Washington, DC. The late Rev. Grady F. Poulard was the pastor. A member of The Progressive Circle, she remained a faithful member of Peoples. After retiring, she spent many Mondays volunteering by answering the phones at her church. In fact, her last public outing was her trip to the December 14, 2014 worship service and the Progressive Circle meeting afterwards. After the meeting, Lois Sylver drove her home, and, because Norma wasn't feeling well, made sure Norma got to her condo and stayed with her for a while. On Monday, December 15, 2014, Norma Josephine was admitted to Washington Adventist Hospital, Takoma Park, Maryland. That evening marked the beginning of the end of her life. Norma learned her cancer from 2009 and 2011 had metastasized and comfort care was the next step. Norma accepted the diagnosis with grace. She said, "I've lived a full life. I'm 82 years old. That's longer than anyone else in my family. ... I am not going through chemo and radiation again!" On Thursday, December 18, 2014, Norma moved into Williams House at Washington Home & Community Hospices in Washington, District of Columbia. With her kindness, cooperation, extremely high tolerance for pain, failure to complain, numerous phone calls, and frequency of large groups of visitors, she made a tremendous impression on the staff. Volunteers, doctors, nurses, techs and support staff learned very quickly the two things that kept Norma happy: first, she needed her personal newspaper first thing in the morning (although she read it after 7pm); secondly, from 9am - 7pm, she watched "all the judge shows". She rounded out her day with "Family Feud". On Saturday night, December 27, 2014, Norma's pastor, Dr. Michael Murphy, called to check on her at hospice. This was their last conversation—he also had called her twice at Washington Adventist Hospital. The next day she was shocked and upset to learn of Rev. Murphy's passing. Norma lived life her way. She loved, partied, studied, worshiped, volunteered, supported and gave of herself to help others. She was stubborn and opinionated, but also supportive and

loving. On Wednesday, January 14, 2015, at 12:38 pm, Norma passed away, transitioned ... died. She left a major void in many lives. We miss her.

Remaining members of Norma's birth family are her only first cousin: Mrs. Mamie Price and her husband, Mr, Henry Price, Jr.; nieces and nephews: Ms. Mattie Pearl Bailey, Mr. Peter Moon, Jr., Mr. Harrison Dillard, Mrs. Brenda Holland Curry and husband, Mr. William Curry, Rev. Sherita Moon Seawright and her husband, Rev. Dr. Harry Seawright, Ms. Lovancie V. Moon and Ms. Laurethia Moon Cleveland; Grand nieces and nephews: Mr. Calvin Bailey and his wife, Mrs. Charlotte Bailey, Mr. Juarez Bailey and his wife, Mrs. Gloria Bailey, Ms. Alvertus Bailey, Ms. Mattie Carazett Jones, Ms. Shari N. Seawright and Mr. Harry Matthew Seawright; Great-Grand nieces and nephews: Mr. Rodrigues Bailey, Mr. Tevin Jones, Mr. Antonio Jones and Master Cameron Seawright; Goddaughters: Mrs. Carla Blake and her husband, Mr. Timothy Blake; Mrs. Stephanie Reed and her husband, Mr. Eugene Reed; and Ms. Jacquelyn Lonon. "Norma" also leaves MANY genuine friends, sorors, Pan-Hellenic Council members, church members, Washington Inter-Alumni Association members and Benedict alumni. "Josephine", "Phine", "Bay" leaves classmates, friends and relatives in South Carolina.