



Obituary

Died: Tuesday, October 27, 2020

Clarris Nell Samples was born November 1, 1935, in Cumberland County, Kentucky to the late Florence K. Allen Samples and the late Eddie Preston Samples. She was the baby of the family that included children Anna Maxine Samples (the late Lee Burton), Bernice Samples (the late Clark Gateskill), Marvin Samples (the late Josephine) and Evelyn Samples (the late Owen Cox, Jr.). Clarris parents, siblings and in-laws all preceded her in death. She was also predeceased by nephews, Eligah Burton, Sr. and Bobby Cox.

She spent her early years in Norris Hollow, Kentucky where she attended the local Presbyterian Church and walked miles to the “colored” school due to segregation. She had a fateful trip on a rainy day, with her sister Evelyn, as they were swept off a bridge into the raging water. As non-swimmers, they survived due to the rescue of a passerby that pulled them both from the water. This experience made them both reticent to enjoy any recreational water activities for the remainder of their lives. As her older siblings (Maxine and Marvin) began to migrate to Indiana, her widowed Mother Florence, made plans to transition north with her younger children (Evelyn and Clarris) in the 1940’s. Florence’s daughter Bernice had already married and moved to Lexington, Kentucky. Upon arrival in Indianapolis, Clarris was enrolled in Indianapolis Public Schools for the remainder of her education.

On September 7, 1956, Clarris united in Holy Matrimony with Doris Curtis White at the home of her late sister Evelyn Cox and her husband (the late Owen Cox, Jr.) and their three children (5 year old Norma, 4 year old Kathy and the late Bobby Cox at 2 years old) in Indianapolis, Indiana. The newlyweds were very social and enjoyed many of the establishments on Indiana Avenue for good music, dance and food. Doris aka Curtis worked at Link Belt and Clarris was a homemaker before entering the workforce. In 1960, the proud couple moved into a newly constructed three-bedroom home. It was especially fitting that the home was located on a street with the couple’s last name. While the love was strong, they later grew apart and divorced in November 1967. Doris passed away later. Clarris kept a close bond with her Sister-in-Law, Alice Wills and Connie White (the late Joe), and all her nieces and nephew in the White family for over 60 years. She talked on the phone regularly and visited at family celebrations and attended events.

Clarris was notably employed for many years in the 60’s and early 70’s at Imperial Packing Company in Lawrence, Indiana. The company was known for pressing the covers of vinyl record albums for some of the greatest performers of that day. Clarris would sometimes bring home album covers for her nieces and nephews who enjoyed artists such as Marvin Gaye, the Supremes and many more. While the

Service Summary

Interment following funeral service
Sat Nov 07, 2020

Visitation

10:00 AM to 12:00 PM, Sat Nov 07, 2020

Greater Northwest Baptist Church

3402 West 62nd Street
Indianapolis, Indiana 46268

Celebration of Life

12:00 PM Sat Nov 07, 2020

Greater Northwest Baptist Church

3402 West 62nd Street
Indianapolis, Indiana 46268

actual record was not inside the album, the cover allowed the kids to enjoy the pictures and read the song names. Clarris made many life-long friends at Imperial. Several of her former co-workers continued to socialize at lunches and dinners for several decades after the company closed the local facility. Later in the 70's, Clarris was referred for employment at Indiana University Hospital and Medical Center by her nephew-in-law, the late William Gude, Sr. Clarris worked in the Materials Department until retirement. She received many positive reviews for her performance and built lasting friendships. Special friends included her "God-daughter" Penny Trotter and another friend, Diane Woodson. Penny affectionately called her "Mama Clarris" and accompanied her shopping and to her favorite restaurants.

In Indianapolis, Clarris' church homes included, Trinity CME Church with her Mother and Brother Marvin Samples and then St. John Missionary Baptist Church with her Sister and Brother-in-Law (Maxine and Lee Burton and their children Debra and Steve) and finally New Hope Missionary Baptist Church. A special group of ladies formed a sister bond with Clarris. They included Jessie Cushenberry, Liz Horton, Katherine "Kathy" Williams, Kathy's daughter Cheryl Brown, former First Lady Alma Reid and Doris McCracken. Every Friday they would go to the movies and out to lunch.

Clarris never learned to drive but that didn't stop her travels. She knew her way around the city via bus or as an excellent passenger navigator. She also flew on planes across the country to tourist destinations and to visit family. Her last plane ride was to her great-niece Michelle Massie Otunba's wedding in Maryland in 2017. She enjoyed movies, old westerns, police action shows and court dramas on television.

Clarris was a patron saint to all her nieces and nephews. She was a nanny when needed, a playmate at times, a disciplinarian as required and a friend always. She had sleepovers at her home. Treated the kids to her delicious meals and treats. Accompanied the nieces and nephews on excursions via plane, bus or automobile to exciting destinations such as downtown, the park, picnics and more. She attended school events, remembered birthdays and holidays and always stayed in contact with the accomplishments and milestones in each one's life. She was a constant presence and champion of each one from childhood to adult. A look throughout her home will showcase pictures, cards, invitations and mementos shared over decades with each loved one. Many in the same pristine conditions as when they were originally sent many years ago.

Clarris remained in the same home for six decades until she was called home on Tuesday, October 27, 2020 at 10:39 am. This date was just 5 days shy of her 85th birthday. She always shared birthday celebrations with her niece Brenda Cox as their birthdays were one day apart. This year will be different.

In her later years, Clarris struggled with several health challenges that she didn't always understand. Many of her nieces and nephews supported her on the medical journey but special recognition goes to her nephew Steve Burton and niece Brenda Cox for their daily care. Thank you to nephews that maintained her lawn (Ronnie Cox, Sr. and Jerry Cox) and thank you to nieces (Norma Dartis, Kathy Massie, Phyllis Stark and Debbie Hickman) for their assistance in the home and with administrative needs.

Loved ones left to cherish her precious memory include her Special Cousins Barbara Rowe and Joseph Rowe. Sister-in-Laws Alice Wills and Connie White (the late Joe). Nieces: Norma Cox Dartis (Edwin), Kathy Cox Massie (Jerry), Phyllis Gateskill Starks (James), Barbara Gateskill, Debra Burton Hickman, Lezlie Gateskill Fishback, and Brenda Cox. Nephews: Marvin Earl Gateskill, Jerry Cox, Steve Burton (Deirdre), Don Cox (Stephanie), Ronnie Cox (Joy). White family nieces: Denise Morgan (Gillian), Darlene White, Brenda Ellis, Ruth O'Banion, Sherry Boyd, Carmen "Cookie" Glass (Karl) and nephew Tony Shorts. A host of cousins, great-nieces, great nephews and friends. She will be greatly missed by all.

Humbly Submitted.....The Family