

Life Sketch

LaVerne Andrea Barnett was born on July 15, 1962, to James and Selma Watkins in Camden, NJ. She was the youngest girl among the Watkins children, and she grew up in Camden and Albion, NJ with her siblings. She was loved dearly by her family and had many fun times with her brothers and sisters, who were her constant companions. She attended public school in Winslow Township, and she had the unique privilege of having her mother work for the same school as an assistant in the lunch program.

LaVerne thrived in school and was the first in her family to attain both graduate and professional degrees. She excelled academically, graduating at the top of her class at Overbrook Senior High School in Pine Hill, NJ, and she was also recognized in the local newspaper for her accomplishments. She soared through her Bachelor of Science degree in Business Management at Trenton State College (now The College of New Jersey), and then completed a Master of Arts degree in Human Resource Management/Organizational Development from The New School for Social Research (NY). She did not stop there, and later went on to attend law school and earned her Juris Doctorate from Temple University James E. Beasley School of Law in Philadelphia. She has worked in many different capacities, including in human resource management, family law, providing legal counsel and litigation expertise, compliance and risk management, and business and labor law.

LaVerne was a lot of fun and had many friends. In her younger years she was a lover of rollercoasters and was never afraid of trying out a daring amusement park ride. She was socially conscious, loved Black culture, was well-read in Black History, and often spent time enjoying cultural events and concerts. She was a lover of fashion and matching accessories and was always the best at finding a good deal. It was not long before she found the perfect balance between her professional and personal life when she met the love of her life, Vernon Barnett. LaVerne and Vernon were joined in holy matrimony on July 16, 1995, and enjoyed marital happiness for twenty-eight beautiful years. They were a perfect match in every way, and LaVerne was blessed to give birth to a beautiful daughter, Zemira, in addition to having the privilege to love and cherish her husband’s children, Nevin and Petrina. Her mothering skills would later be put to good use again as a loving grandmother to her beautiful grandchildren, to whom she was known as Z-Mom.

LaVerne genuinely loved her immediate and extended family, and she could always be found present at everyone’s important life events. She often joked around with her brothers and sisters, frequently checking in on them, and she was always there for her family whenever they needed a helping hand. She even gave the ultimate gift of life to her sister Elaine when she donated one of her kidneys (which Elaine named “Kidneyda”).

LaVerne inherited the talent of cooking and baking from her mother Selma, and her family and friends enjoyed her delicious baked goods and healthy meals. After becoming dedicated to a plant-based diet, she was able to alter her mother’s recipes to be vegan, without sacrificing any of the amazing taste. She truly enjoyed fellowship with friends and family with a satisfying meal. LaVerne was a woman of many talents and interests, including becoming skilled in quilting, soap-making, gardening, and water aerobics, and she was a master organizer.

All of Laverne’s educational and career accomplishments, hobbies, and other interests were no match for her love and devotion to God. LaVerne dedicated her life to teaching others about God through Bible studies, prayer ministry, and Sabbath School classes. She was an amazing Sabbath School teacher, and she found so much joy in spreading the gospel to others. Even when she was not feeling her best, she could still be found at the front of a Sabbath School class, imparting the Word of God with passion and fervor. In addition to her gift for teaching, she also served her church as a treasurer, using her business and organizational skills for the benefit of her church.

LaVerne was a special blessing to all who knew her, and she was truly and deeply loved. She will be sorely missed, but we look forward to that great reunion when Jesus comes again.

LaVerne leaves to mourn: her husband Vernon Barnett, her children Zemira Barnett, Nevin Barnett (Karene), and Petrina Naylor (Steven), and her grandchildren Peyton, Paige, Paxton, Ethan, Zuri, Sela, and Zakai; Siblings Joyce Bagwell (Ernie), Kenneth Watkins (Lorene), and Lionel Watkins (Marcia); and a host of nieces, nephews, cousins, and dear friends. She was predeceased by her siblings Elaine Watkins, Vondelere Watkins, and Avery Watkins Sr., and her granddaughter Ziah Starr Ruffin.

“For the Lord himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God: and the dead in Christ shall rise first: Then we which are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air: and so shall we ever be with the Lord. Wherefore comfort one another with these words”
1Thess 4:16-18

Order of Service

Prelude Music and Slideshow

Processional

Musical Selection Cassandra Henry

Scripture Readings Pastor Jordan Fowler, Dr. Johnathan Henderson

Old Testament Joshua 1:9

New Testament Acts 20:24

Prayer Pastor Clifford Baylock

Musical Selection The Pride Family

Remarks*Limit to Three Minutes, Each*

Matrie Johnson (Friend)

Ozella Head (Friend)

Pastor Clifford Baylock (Stateline SDA Church)

Avery Watkins, Jr. (Nephew)

Lionel Watkins (Brother)

Reading of Life Sketch Dr. Zsakeba Henderson

Eulogy Pastor Frank E. Legette

Musical Selection Cassandra Freeman

Recessional