



- Pallbearers -
Family and Friends

- Flower Bearers -
Family and Friends

- Interment -
Evergreen Cemetery
1409 Monroe Avenue
Opelika, Alabama 36801

- Acknowledgment -

The family of the late Mrs. Contessa Audrey "Tessie" Stinson Payne acknowledges with grateful appreciation all acts of kindness, prayers, cards, telephone calls, flowers, and words of comfort extended to us during our time of bereavement. May God bless each one of you.

IN MEMORIAM

May we take this opportunity to express sincere and deep appreciation for allowing us to serve you during this most difficult period. It is our constant aim to afford to the people of this community a service completed in all details and faultlessly executed with sympathy and understanding.



Final Arrangements Entrusted to:
Harris Funeral Home
Sympathetic, Courteous & Professional Service
515 South Sixth Street
Opelika, Alabama 36801
(334) 749-6583 Fax (334) 759-7018
www.harrisfuneralhomeinc.com

IN LOVING MEMORY OF "TESSIE"
Contessa Audrey
STINSON PAYNE

FRIDAY, MARCH 7, 2025 • 11:00 A.M.

HARRIS FUNERAL HOME CHAPEL
515 South 6th Street Opelika, Alabama 36801

RICHARD LAGRAN, CHAIRMAN



- The Obituary -

Contessa Audrey Stinson Payne, lover of pearls and the color red; renowned baker of cakes, super-fan of The Opelika Bulldogs, adored grandmother, devoted mother and friend passed away on February 25, 2025. "Tessie", as she was known to her family and friends, was the eldest of John and Mattie Stinson's 19 grandchildren.

There was no television in the house where she was born, so on Saturday evenings the family all sat around and watched Tessie. She was loved, and she knew it. Tessie graduated from Opelika High School in 1979 and started a family that became her pride and joy.

By far, she ran the most organized household in Lee County. Her children's outfits were always chosen, washed, ironed and color coordinated for the entire week every Sunday night. Not surprisingly, it's a sweet tradition that her girls continue for their families to this day. If that does not impress you enough, let the awe of a completely handwritten menu, hung in their home announcing the full week's culinary schedule: Monday through Sunday, speak to the care and concern that she lavished on her family.

Southern hospitality defines the spirit of many generous folks, but what was so beautiful about Tessie and the way she loved her people, was that no matter how much or little she had, you could always slide your feet under her table. Whether you needed a red velvet cake when you lost a loved one in death, or you asked Tessie to help you prepare your own weekly menu, (complete with the grocery list and the cost of food), or you wanted to support the Dawgs with a Bulldog wreath or bow, Tessie made it easy for you to feel comfortable calling on her for help.

With the gift of gab and her jovial disposition, she excelled in many roles. Especially close to her heart were the years she spent working as a teacher's aide for the Opelika City School system. It was in this role that she flourished; she mentored and encouraged even the most challenging students to excel, and for that gift, she became a "community mother" to so many.

On Friday nights in Opelika during football season, you could only find her in one place. Whether the Dawgs were playing

at home or away, she was there, cheering them on with her beloved "Red Club" (a group of close friends who loved football and their hometown).

When her own children were in high school, her son Brandon played football for her Alma Mater and her daughters played with the "Spirit of the South" marching band. Ever the den mother, Tessie always made sure her children, and their friends had enough snacks to feed a small army on the bus ride to away games. "Acts of service" was her love language, and of this you can be sure, it always felt and tasted so very, very good!

Tessie was preceded in death by her mother, Evelyn S. Jordan; her father, Albert L. Jordan, Sr.; her brothers, Albert L. Jordan, Jr. and John Eddie Harper; one sister, Bernetta Stinson.

She is survived by her husband, Carl H. Payne; her children, Carnessa Rochelle, Nidra (Brian) Block, Brandon Stinson and Carl L. Payne; six grandchildren, Brantaja Stinson, Keyshawn Bulger, Chloe Rochelle, Contwez Bulger, Tristen Rae Rochelle and Ka'Maree Payne; eight sisters, Rachel Sistrunk, Ashley Calloway, Eddie Jean (Carl) Webb, Emma Jean Traylor, Lorene (Carlton) Jones, Barbara Williams, Melisha Jordan and Constance Stinson; four brothers, John Alfred Harper, William (Annette) Harper, Ronald L. Jordan and Larry Thomas; a host of aunts, uncles, nieces, nephews, other relatives and friends.

- When My Savior Brings Me Home -

As my days on earth have ended,
And my time has finally come.
Don't think I've left you, just rejoice
That my battle's finally won.
It was in those quiet hours,
When I seemed so far away.
That my Savior sat beside me,
To prepare me for this day.
He settled all my doubts and fears,
And took away the pain.
Please know there was no suffering,
When at last my Savior came.
To you it may have seemed too hard,
And lasted much too long.
But for me it was a peaceful wait,
For God to bring me home.
I know that you did all you could,
And yes, He heard your cries.
For God himself reached out His hand,
And gently closed my eyes.

- The Order of Service -

Processional.....Clergy and Family

Opening Prayer

Obituary ReadingRichard LaGrand

Memorial Discourse.....Donald Stenson

Closing SongSong 151
"He Will Call"

Closing Prayer