

IN LOVING

Memory



Karita June
PAYNE-THOMAS

November 12, 1942 - October 16, 2025

CELEBRATING THE LIFE & LEGACY OF *Karita June Payne-Thomas*

Born the only daughter and middle child among eight brothers, Karita June Payne-Thomas was a rare flower who bloomed on November 12, 1942, in Chicago, IL, to Lee Andrew Payne and Alma LaMaude Keys-Payne. Her father affectionately called her “Sugg,” short for sugar — a name that perfectly captured the sweetness and spark she carried throughout her life.

Karita began her education at Gillespie Elementary School and John Marshall Harlan High School, where she proudly graduated with the first graduating class of 1960. She was extremely intelligent — so much so that she graduated a year ahead of her class. A true math whiz, numbers came easily to her.

Karita was every bit of a good time. As a young woman, she loved to dance, and in 1962, she met her husband, Eugene Thomas, doing just that — dancing. They were dance partners who fell in love, married in 1964, and together raised two sons, Kevin and Keith.





Forever
IN OUR HEARTS



THE LIFE & LEGACY

cont...

Karita absolutely loved fashion — and she loved to shop, both in stores and online. Comedy was her favorite genre; a good laugh was all she needed. You could often find her watching her favorite TV show, The Andy Griffith Show. She was even a bit of a comedian herself! Her feisty personality and sweet, nurturing nature made her easy to love and a favorite to everyone who knew her.

A hardworking and devoted professional, Karita spent her career with companies including Montgomery Ward, Superior Match Co., and Williams Electronics, where she later retired. Numbers just came naturally to her. Her mind worked like a calculator — quick, sharp, and precise. She had an uncanny ability to remember birthdays, phone numbers, even license plates without ever writing them down. Math wasn't just a job for her — it was a joy.

That love of numbers carried over into her service as a trustee at Langley Avenue Church of God, where she was a lifelong member. Karita, affectionately known as “ReRe” by her church community, served with pride and true dedication. She loved her church family dearly.

Karita poured her whole heart into being the best mother, grandmother, and aunt she could be. Family wasn't just important to her — it was everything. She built unbreakable bonds with her nieces and nephews. Her grandchildren and great-grands were the absolute joy of her life — the light in her eyes and the reason behind her smile.





Forever 
IN OUR HEARTS



ORDER OF *Service*



PROCESSIONAL

Clergy & Family

OPENING REMARKS & WELCOME

Pastor Cynthia Thomas

WORSHIP LEADER

Pastor Mario Jenkins

OPENING PRAYER

Deacon Marlon Jenkins

SCRIPTURE READING

Psalm 34:1-8 KJV – Iranell Spann

Isaiah 40: 28-31 KJV – Linda Mitchell

John 14: 1-6 KJV – Vanessa Weatherly

MUSICAL SELECTION

READING OF OBITUARY

Eva James Yeo

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

Deacon Toni Hillman

LANGLEY COG TRIBUTE

Dr. Deborah Barnes

FAMILY REMARKS

FAMILY MUSICAL SELECTION

EULOGY

Pastor Cynthia Thomas

FINAL VIEWING



Karita Legacy Lives On



Even in her final days, the sound of her great-grandsons' voices and laughter could brighten her spirit and bring that beautiful smile back to her face. She wore the title of "Great-Grandma" with so much pride, never missing a chance to brag about "her boys."

On Thursday, October 16, 2025, God whispered to Karita, "Well done, good and faithful servant... enter thou into the joy of thy Lord." She left behind a legacy of faith, family, and unconditional love. She taught us what it means to serve, to give, and to love without limits.

She was preceded in death by her parents and six brothers: LeAndrew, Kenneth, Bernard, Timothy, Reginald, and Aaron; her husband, Eugene; and her son, Keith.

Karita's memory will forever be cherished by her son Kevin (Tanya) Thomas; brothers Nathaniel (Frankie) Payne and Meredith (Gwendolyn) Payne; grandchildren Chynna, Kamille, Khadijah, and Israel (Izzy); great-grandchildren Naeem, Nasiah, and Nekhi; goddaughter Leslie Renee Williams; godsons Anthony Silas and Michael Payne; and a host of nieces, nephews, cousins, and devoted caregivers, including Francine Nesbary and her granddaughter Khadijah Thomas. She also leaves to cherish her cousin Beth Griffin and sister Marvis Ivy, who stood by her side loyally and with great love, and her lifelong sister and friend Wanda Johnson.

Karita's legacy of love, faith, and kindness will continue to live on in the hearts of all who knew her. Though her earthly journey has ended, her light will forever shine through the lives she touched.

Tributes



YOUR SON, KEVIN

I'm lost for words because you left too soon. I can wish a lot but the reality of it is that I have so much to say and don't know how to say it. I will do whatever it takes to describe what I'm feeling. I love you dearly and I'm gonna miss you forever more. Rest your soul momma .



KHADIJAH

My beautiful grandmother!

Granny you were a woman of your word and I admired that in you. You taught me the importance of service & showing up for others. Being there. You taught me how to be resilient as a woman and how to trust in the Lord. I'll miss running your errands, laughing with you, & hearing you say "what we gonna eat little girl?" You were a real foodie and we had that in common. Nothing was too good for your girls. You would tell us "Yall are the cats MEOW" and we never forgot that! Lol. Granny, you knew you could depend on me & as heavy as that weight may have been, I would choose to carry it over and over again, just to honor you. You made everyday so bright. You were such a devoted Grandmother. Thank you Granny for everything. I am so proud to be your grand baby & grateful to have known you. As you'd say "I love you more!!" your baby, Dij

My Granny, My Girl, my World.

It feels unreal speaking of you in past tense . My entire life you were always there. Simply a call away. When I needed to vent you listened, and always had the best advice. You always told us that you had our backs and you did. Your love was unending. I would choose you again in every life. Thank you for everything you've done for me & the boys. I'll never forget you telling me to keep my head held high when I had not a ounce of confidence. Thank you for doing so I took that advice and ran with it. I miss you girl with all of me, my granny MY BESTIE.

**Love,
Your Kamille**





YOUR
Light
LIVES ON



Tributes



My Granny

Where do I start? You took me on my first vacation to Disney World and gave me my first job working with you at WMS Gaming. You raised me in church and always made sure me and my sisters never went without. You made my favorite meal chicken and rice – and even came to my graduation in Arizona, despite the heat you couldn't stand! Every call started with, "What's the weather like out in Phoenix?" You always had a story to tell, a laugh to share, and a heart big enough for everyone. I'm going to miss the memories, the calls, and your hugs most of all. I loved you deeply, Granny, and I'll forever cherish every moment we shared. I know you're dancing in Heaven now with Poppy. You were truly special, and you'll be missed by everyone who loved you. Love you always and forever **Chynna**.



Hey Granny, I love you so much. I wonder how heaven is. You would always tell me how smart I am. I think it's really cool that we share the same birthday, that makes our bond unbreakable. You always made me smile & always had my back and I know you still do. Anytime I had trouble in school you would always tell me what to do & support me like the amazing granny you are. You would call and I'd try my best to answer to hear your voice. We share so many memories that I will cherish forever. I just wanted to say I love you so much and I'm going to miss you granny.

Love, Naeem



Hey Granny, I know you're in heaven now but I just want to say a few things. I love when you would tell me to act like an old man. You made me feel like the funniest person in the world. You would send me birthday cards every year and will save them forever. I'll miss your sweet voice. I hope you're having fun with Poppi. I love you always,

Nasi



I love you granny so much. You will always be special to me. I'm going to miss your phone calls and you buying me Chicago popcorn from "Let's Get Poppin" for my birthday. I wish I had more time with you, I wish I can hug you again. You will always be in my heart.

Love, Nekhi

Aunt Karita was more than an aunt; she was a second mother and a source of love, faith, and quiet strength. Even in her final days, her faith never wavered, reminding me that this world was only a stop on her way home to Heaven. Though deeply missed, I find peace knowing she is reunited with Uncle Eugene in God's eternal rest. **-Michael**



Auntie Tete you mean EVERYTHING to me and now it's so hard to speak of you in past tense. You LOVED Me & this Little Girl LOVED You Too. You were "ABSOLUTELY!!" (as she would say in her tone) the best aunt a person could have in my eyes. I know you're in heaven with all our loved ones that preceded you, telling them about how proud you are of ALL of us, including my son & dad. I must say you have some stories to tell them all. I will truly miss you Auntie Tete and I Love You So Much! **Love Garrie AKA Little Karita**

REMEMBERING

Karita June

Though you've left us, you're not gone,
Your smile and spirit still live on,
In every hug, in every laugh,
You've left your mark on everyone's path.

The joy we've shared, the love we knew,
will stay within us, this is true.
Though our hearts may feel pain and sorrow,
We will remember you in every tomorrow.

You'll be singing in the sunshine, wild and free,
And in every rainbow, there you'll be.
Forever young, forever bright,
a guiding star in heaven's light.

So fly high, sweet soul,
Into the light that makes you whole,
At peace for all eternity,
For in our hearts, you'll always be.

*"Let not your heart be troubled; you believe in God, believe also in Me.
In My Father's house are many mansions; if it were not so, I would
have told you. I go to prepare a place for you. And if I go and prepare
a place for you, I will come again and receive you to Myself; that
where I am, there you may be also."*

JOHN 14:1-3



Pallbearers

Kevin Thomas Israel Thomas Michael Payne
Anthony Silas Meredith Payne Jr. Marlon Payne



Acknowledgement

A most heartfelt thank you and appreciation for your expression of love and support during our time of bereavement. Your comforting words, kind gestures, and presence have been a great source of strength for us.

With heartfelt appreciation & love,
The Payne-Thomas Family

Arrangements

Keith McGee Funeral Home
300 East 115th Street ~ Chicago, IL 60628

Langley Ave. Church of God,
6159 S. Langley Ave., Chicago, IL 60637

Wake: 10:00 AM – 11:00 AM
Homegoing Service: 11:00 AM – 1:00 PM.

Repast: Immediately Following Service
All Nations Temple of Deliverance 2448 E. 87th St.

Programs: Willie & Debbie Parks ~ Printmart of Oak Lawn