



Bertha Lavinia James

July 23, 1942 - May 6, 2025

Bertha Lavinia James (Hunter) transitioned peacefully in her sleep on May 6, 2025, at the age of 83, in Celina, TX.

Born to her parents John David Hunter and Allean Hunter (McLean), on July 23, 1941, in Baltimore, MD, Bertha (Bert) was the youngest of 8 children.

Bert attended Baltimore public schools, graduated with Honors from Paul Laurence Dunbar High School in 1959, received a scholarship from Alpha Kappa Alpha Sorority, Incorporated, and graduated from Morgan State (College) University with a Bachelor of Science degree in 1963.

In the summer of 1959 in Atlantic City, NJ, Bert met the love of her life, Kenneth Burnett James, Jr. They were both students pursuing summer employment. They were married on June 17, 1962 and eventually settled in Norristown, PA. From this union were born Kenneth Burnett James, III. (Burnie) and Khadija Tuere James-Keating (James). Together, they built a beautiful family and shared many precious memories. Bert created a home filled with love, friendship, and community often by hosting events, being a welcoming face to many, and even providing safe haven to those in need.

Bert was a dedicated health and physical education teacher. She retired from the Philadelphia School District in 1995, leaving behind a legacy of

commitment and care for her students. Even post-retirement, Bert remained a lifelong teacher, sharing her knowledge, wisdom, and cooking experiences with her children and grandchildren. She was a woman of substance, grace, humility, deep spirituality, and resilience.

Bert was deeply respected for her wisdom, insight, and the gentle guidance she offered in life's moments. She had a rare gift for listening, understanding the heart of a situation, and offering meaningful counsel. As an avid reader and learner, Bert was well versed in a myriad of topics, such as societal, cultural, political, socio-economic, the arts, and music. She enjoyed using her sharp and witty intellect in healthy debates and thoughtful discussions. She loved to share her joy of reading, often surprising family and friends with gifted books, intentionally chosen, bringing comfort and connection.

She cherished her best friend, Edith Eileen Jones (Leenie) aka Khadija Edith Brandt, whom she met in the 3rd grade and remained closely connected until her last moments.

Bert was preceded in death by her husband, Kenneth, her parents, John, originally of Florida, and Allean, originally from Sanford, NC, as well as her seven siblings: George Hunter, Alice Neal Eubanks (Hunter), Edna Elaine Jackson (Hunter), William C. Hunter, Elizabeth Irene Baker (Hunter), Vivian Lacille Benn-Brown (Hunter), and Mittie Odessa Hunter. She leaves behind a host of family and friends.

Bert is survived by her two children, Burnie (married to Shannon King James), and Khadija Tuere (married to Dr. Francis Fitzgerald Keating), who will forever hold her in their hearts. She was a proud grandmother to Khadija Nicole James, Khayla Amira James, Tyra Lavinia Jenkins, Esq., Harold Augustus Jenkins, IV, Kierra Ayanna James, Milan Elise Keating, and Nyla Simone Keating. Also survived by her are two Godchildren, Dorene Vernita Benn

Hudson and Jubael Akin Ra-Akbar. Her family brought immense joy to her life, often with everyone bursting into song at gatherings, and she treasured every moment spent with them.

She was so loved, she earned the titles Bert, Mom, Mommy, Sister, Aunt Bert, Nana, Ma Bert, Mother, and Queen. Her legacy of love, strength, and gentility will continue to inspire all who knew her.

May God grant her a high status in paradise.