

From the Cradle to the Grave

Our Legacy of Love and Hope

Volume 26

A Collection of African American Funeral Programs

1958-2005

Albertine Walker

Aug. 27, 1926 – Oct. 3, 1988

Rena Cooper can't describe her mom Albertine Walker in just one word. She has to use two. She was a great wonderful person, Cooper said.

Walker touched everyone she knew during her 62 years on this earth.

Walker, who was born on Aug. 27, 1926, grew up in Haywood County, Tenn. She was born in Stanton and later moved to Brownsville.

"You can call anybody in Brownsville and they'll tell you about Albertine Walker," Cooper said.

Walker worked as sharecropper, raising corn, okra and squash in Stanton. When she got older, she moved to Brownsville to do housework for Peggy Hooper.

"She did a little of everything, my mamma did," Cooper said.

Walker washed, ironed, cooked and babysat for Hooper, but her most memorable endeavor was raising her 23 children. She had 15 children with her husband Jessie Walker and cared for his eight kids from a previous marriage. When she wasn't working, she was with her family.

"She was in the house and in the field, but we were all taken care of," Cooper said.

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Around town people called her Big Momma.

“She treated everybody in the neighborhood as her kids and they weren’t even kin to her,” Carolyn Cooper, Rena’s daughter and Walker’s granddaughter, said.

To this day Carolyn can’t recite all her aunt and uncles’ names. She just remembers a house full of people. Carolyn stayed with her grandmother after school along with several other children.

“Most of the time she fed them all,” Cooper, Carolyn’s mother, said.

Walker thought everybody needed to learn a trade so she taught Carolyn how to cook when she was just 7 years old. Some of her specialties were homemade butter rolls, cakes and soups.

“She did it all,” Cooper said.

And one of those things meant going to church. Walker would ride to church in a wagon pulled by horses while she lived in Stanton.

“She was a church going lady, she made sure you went to church,” Cooper said.

Walker made Cooper and her siblings walk two to three miles just to attend church. When Walker heard that a person was talking about someone she would tell them not to worry because the Lord would fix it.

Grace Shaw, another of Walker’s daughter, said her mom Albertine was the greatest because she was a strong woman.

“She taught me about life and to always be loving, kind, giving and to love the Lord,” Shaw said. “With that many children, she had to.”

When Walker was in her mid fifties she got sick.

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“She was a diabetic, had high blood and heart trouble,” Cooper said.

On Oct. 3, 1988 Albertine Walker had a heart attack and passed away. Cooper remembers talking with her mom in the hospital before she died.

“She was doing great,” Cooper said. “She was asking had anyone paid the phone bill and light bill.”