

A black and white portrait of a woman with short, dark, curly hair, smiling. She is wearing a dark, off-the-shoulder top, a pearl necklace, and a pearl earring. The background is a plain, light color.

Homegoing Service for

Lola Mae Hendricks

Friday, May 24, 2013
12:00 Noon

New Pilgrim Baptist Church
708 Goldwire Place SW
Birmingham, Alabama
Rev. Dr. James H. Brooks
Senior Pastor

Obituary

"I never had any fear."

—Mrs. Lola H. Hendricks; Birmingham Civil Rights Institute Oral History Project, January 19, 1995—

If the world was stilled, LOLA MAE HAYNES HENDRICKS would be on the move. A native daughter of Birmingham, Lola was a freedom laborer with a penchant for change if change was progressive, fair, and the right thing to do. It was a time of deep segregation in the United States when life began for Lola on December 19, 1932, the first of three daughters (Earnestine and the late sister Addie Mae) born to Buford and Addie Haynes (both deceased), and change was indeed on the horizon.

A 1951 A. H. Parker High School graduate, Lola completed her educational pursuits at Booker T. Washington Business College and began employment in the insurance industry at Alexander & Company. At the beginning of integration, she was among the first Blacks to be employed in 1963 by the Social Security Administration in Birmingham. The racial unrest that permeated the South, including her workplace, was unsettling for Lola; she had an anxious and daring posture about the injustices against Blacks that she witnessed and experienced firsthand. Smart and industrious, she excelled under the oppressive circumstances, eventually joining the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission in 1967 and retiring her position as Specialist in 1983. She returned to the Social Security Administration in 1988 until her retirement.

Lola's spiritual growth was also pivotal in her development into a woman of extraordinary courage and faith. Early in life, she became a member of Bethel Baptist Church. Her mission to be of service, however, took root at New Pilgrim Baptist Church, where she made an indelible mark as a devoted Sunday school teacher, Coordinator, Youth Department, Announcement Clerk, New Pilgrim Project Board Member, founding member of the New Pilgrim Homes Board and the New Pilgrim Federal Credit Union.

Lola and Joe Hendricks married in 1952 and the couple settled in Titusville, a middle-class African-American neighborhood in a city severely rooted in segregation. They were blessed with two lovely daughters, Audrey Faye (deceased) and Jan Denise. Audrey Faye was a 9-year-old child of the Movement who was arrested and jailed during the Children's March of 1963.

Lola had a long outstanding history of human rights that started with the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP) members until the organization was outlawed by the state of Alabama in 1956, Lola and Joe were fiercely opposed to the "law of the land" in Birmingham. Disgruntled about segregated public venues, the duo filed lawsuits to force integration of the Birmingham city parks and the Birmingham Public Library, coinciding with lawsuits filed for the desegregation of buses. The Civil Rights Movement was brewing and Lola and Joe were fast becoming driving forces in the struggle for equality and human rights.

Lola's call to legendary action surfaced after she attended the second Alabama Christian Movement for Human Rights meeting at her beloved New Pilgrim Baptist Church. The organization, led by Rev. Fred Shuttlesworth, challenged the laws of segregation and spearheaded boycotts and demonstrations. Lola's critical role as Corresponding Secretary from 1956 to 1963 helped the powerhouse organization stay on course with planning, organizing logistics, scheduling conferences, coordinating meetings, and managing correspondence for Rev. Shuttlesworth, among other essential duties. She was also deeply involved in assisting Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King's staff in preparation for his 1963 visit to Birmingham.

The Southern Christian Leadership Conference organizer Wyatt T. Walker, who worked directly with Lola, so heavily depended on her insight, knowledge, and/or expertise concerning the inner workings of the churches, ministers, and the Birmingham climate that he insisted, much to her chagrin, that she not participate in active demonstrations and risk being jailed.

As a Field Director for the Southern Conference Educational Fund, Lola told the story of the racially-divided South, traveling to the New England states in 1962, raising awareness, and advocating for support and donations, including toys and clothes for the children of the Movement. Lola remained riveted by the Civil Rights Movement, a family and freedom affair that forever changed lives and circumstances. Her deep desire to help ensure an accurately-recorded and comprehensive history of those turbulent years led Lola to the Birmingham Civil Rights Institute, Oral History Department, where she was a tireless volunteer until a time of rest was evident.

In looking over her life, Lola, a pioneer of change, was not far removed from childhood at the onset of her tangible resistance to *Jim Crow*. Conceivably, her youth was the essence of her perceived invincibility, intense loyalty, passion, fearlessness, authoritativeness, courage, and drive. These qualities, along with her enduring faith, served Lola well in the colorful lifetime of a woman who inarguably made a lasting impact not only in the city of Birmingham, but around the world. As gallantly as she stood for fundamental freedoms, human rights, and privileges for all, Lola likewise bowed and kissed the seashore of eternity on May 17, 2013. At last, she was free. Thank God Almighty!

Left to cherish Lola's memories and champion her legacy are: a loving daughter, Jan Denise (Randy) Fuller; an adoring grandson, Joel Addison Fuller; her beloved sister, Earnestine (Elijah) Davis; a devoted, lifelong friend, Willo Dean Davis; and a host of caring nieces, nephews, cousins, A. H. Parker High School classmates, and friends.



Order of Service

Prelude

Samuel Robinson

Processional

Selection

Jasmine McGaha

Scriptures

Old Testament

Rev. Robert Bearden, Pastor
Mt Zion Baptist Church of Zion City

New Testament

Rev. John Cantelow, Pastor
Sixth Avenue Baptist Church

Prayer

Elder Anita Hendricks
New Birth Baptist Church
Atlanta, GA

Resolution

City of Birmingham

Special Tribute to a Sister

Selection

Anthony Paisley

The Eulogy

Rev. Melvin Bishop, Pastor
New Light Missionary Baptist Church
Bessemer, AL

Recessional

Pallbearers

Levon Campbell — Vincent Melton
Billy Fox — Elias Hendricks, Jr.
Kenneth Hendricks — Evan Melton

Flower Bearers

Nieces and Cousins

Interment

Elmwood Cemetery

Acknowledgment

The Family of the Lola H. Hendricks wishes to express our sincerest gratitude to each of you for your expressions of sympathy. A special thanks to the 1 north staff and 2 north staff of Fairhaven Retirement Center and Affinity Hospice. The kindness expressed to my family during our hour of need will never be forgotten. God has placed you in our lives and we have truly been blessed by each and every one of you.

Final Arrangements Entrusted to



Davenport & Harris
1530 Martin Luther King, Jr. Dr. SW
Birmingham, AL 35211