



## Ms. Lillie Miller Finklea

February 13, 1939 - December 27, 2022

LILLIE MILLER FINKLEA was born on February 13, 1939, to the late Ealie Miller and Bernice Bittle Miller. She was called home on December 27, 2022. She married Earl Finklea (deceased) in 1963. She was known to some of her close friends as “Ms. Fink”.

Lillie received her education in the Alexandria Public Schools; she attended Lyles Crouch Elementary, and she graduated from Parker Gray High School. After graduation from high school, she attended business school, passed the civil service exam, and became a clerk typist in the Federal Government. Her career path led her to become a computer programmer and allowed her to grow into a computer analyst. She became very proficient and loved her job as a programmer, and she quickly moved up the ladder. After 30 years of service, she took an early retirement, and started the next chapter in her life. After retirement, she accepted the job of being nanny to Mary Ferrill. Her parents were thrilled to have her as part of the family for many years. She developed a deep and meaningful relationship with Mary and the Ferrills and stayed on to work for them well into Mary’s teen years.

Even though Lillie had no children of her own, she loved children. She provided assistance to many parents and children through challenging times. After the passing of her cousin, Jeanette, her son Shelby Rose lived with Lillie for a number of years. She provided a home with love, support, and

contributed to his education. She had special relationships with her nieces and nephews. In her church, she mentored families and provided encouragement, and emotional support. She did this especially for the Clark family and their four children. She also sponsored several children in the “adopt-a-child charities”.

Lillie was civically active in the city of Alexandria. She volunteered at Alexandria archology. She also served as the president of the Freedmen’s cemetery and was instrumental to the preservation and creation of the Contraband and Freedmen Memorial on South Washington Street in the City of Alexandria.

Lillie loved reading romance novels, traveling and collecting all things piggy (pictures, figurines, potholders, magnets, etc). If it was something piggy, she had it somewhere in her house. Remembering the birthdays of family and friends was particularly important to her.

Lillie was a member of “The First Church of Our Lord Jesus Christ”, Paster Gino Jennings, in Fredericksburg, Virginia. She initially joined the church because her father was a member and she wanted to be close to her father. Thus, she became very involved in the church and she truly enjoyed worshiping and fellowshiping with the members in her home temple.

The family became aware of Lillie’s diagnosis of dementia in 2012. Lillie was so grateful to have the care, love and support of her sister, Bernice Golden. Bernice made sure she was able to stay in her home with around-the-clock care. She cooked her meals and managed her finances. Lillie received special care at Emilia’s Assisted Living Home in Alexandria, VA for the last 8 months of her life.

Many thanks to the Ferrill family for the gifts of love and support given for Lillie’s care. Also, thanks to the CNAs that attended to her care in her home

on Franklin Street and at Emilia's Assisted Living home.

She leaves to mourn her sister, Bernice Miller Golden (Alexandria, VA); two nieces, Kim Casey (Alexandria, VA) and Karen Wilson (Petersburg, VA); three nephews, Louis Golden (Alexandria, VA), James Miller (South Boston, VA), and Daryl Miller (Statesville, NC); sister-in-law, Connie Miller (South Boston, VA); two great nieces, six great nephews and a host of other relatives and friends. Her brothers James Howard and Henry Arthur (Joe) Miller preceded her in death.

# Previous Events

## Viewing

JAN 9. 9:00 AM - 11:00 AM (ET)

Russell Temple CME Church  
507 N. Alfred Street  
Alexandria, VA 22314

## Funeral

JAN 9. 11:00 AM (ET)

Russell Temple CME Church  
507 N. Alfred Street  
Alexandria, VA 22314

## Live Streaming Service Link:

<https://client.tribucast.com/tcid/2381618480>

JAN 9. 11:00 AM (ET)

Russell Temple CME Church  
507 N. Alfred Street  
Alexandria, VA 22314

## Interment

JAN 9 (ET)

Bethel Cemetery  
Wilkes Street  
Alexandria, VA 22314

# Tribute Wall



“ *Phillip Bell Sr. and Winona Morrissette-Johnson Funeral Service, P.A. created a Webcast in memory of Ms. Lillie Miller Finklea*



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**Phillip Bell Sr. and Winona Morrissette-** - January 02, 2023 at 11:54 AM

PC

“ *I first met Lillie when she came to the Alexandria Archaeology Museum with great concern for the preservation of the Black cemetery thought to be under a Mobil gas station. She had recently retired and read a newspaper stating that the new Woodrow Wilson Bridge project might avoid saving graves. She launched into a transcription project providing freedmen's names and then led a multi year project for the recognition, preservation and ultimately, memorialization of Contrabands & Freedmens Cemetery. Lillie said later that she never anticipated the grand results. A visionary and persuasive speaker, Lillie was in the forefront of a long and valiant effort supported by hundreds. I feel as if Lillie was guided by her faith and goodness to strive for what was just and right. Lillie inspired the best, and I admired and cared for her. I send my deep regrets for her loss to family.*

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**pam cressey** - January 11, 2023 at 05:17 PM

FB

“ I am so sorry that family health issues prevented me from attending Lillie’s funeral in person. My sincerest condolences go out to the family for their loss. As one of the city archaeologists, I got to know Lillie through my work on the Freedmen’s Cemetery site. I always admired her for her strength of character and her determination. The role that Lillie played in the creation of the Contrabands and Freedmen Cemetery Memorial cannot be overestimated. Lillie first read about “the burial ground known as the Freedmen’s or Contraband Cemetery” at the corner of Church and South Washington Streets in a Washington Post article published in January 1997. I remember Lillie’s anger that a gas station and office building had been built on the site of an African American cemetery dating back to the Civil War where at least 1700 individuals were buried and her amazement that she lived nearby yet had no idea of its existence. Lillie sprang into action. She worked with Louise Massoud to set up the Friends of Freeman’s Cemetery with the purpose of preserving, commemorating, and researching the property. The organization was instrumental in raising public awareness about the nearly forgotten burial ground and the history it represented. A candle-lighting ceremony on Veterans Day in 1999 honored the USCT who had originally been buried on the property. Successful lobbying with the state resulted in the placement of a Virginia highway marker on the site. In 2000, Alexandria City Council adopted a resolution that the week of May 25-31 would be a Week of Remembrance, “in memory of the African American [enslaved] who sought haven in our city and their descendants and those who seek freedom from injustice throughout the world.” At the time, there were plans for a small memorial on the site, but Lillie’s vision was much greater. She dreamed of the creation of a memorial that would encompass the entire cemetery property, where all the still extant graves would be protected, where the history of the site would be interpreted, and where the lives of Alexandria’s freedpeople would be honored. Expanded lobbying efforts of the Friends of Freedmen’s Cemetery ultimately culminated in the city’s purchase of the gas station and office building lots in 2007 and the realization of Lillie’s vision. The City of Alexandria, in

*partnership with the state and federal governments, created the memorial on the full area of the site and ensured the future protection and preservation of the entire cemetery. Lillie never lost sight of her desire to make sure that this site would always be remembered and honored as a sacred place in perpetuity. The determination, perseverance and vision of Lillie Finklea serves as a reminder for me that one person can make a difference and help to change the world.*

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**Francine Bromberg** - January 09, 2023 at 12:35 PM

JB

“ *My deepest condolences to Lillie's family and friends. I work at Alexandria Archaeology and had frequent contact with her while she was on the City of Alexandria's Archaeological Commission and volunteered with us. She was always a joy and I have missed working with her. - Jennifer Barker*

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**Jennifer Barker** - January 04, 2023 at 11:45 AM

 Shirley  
Napper

“ *To my friend, Bernice, I am saddened to hear of Lillie Mae's passing, I have some fond memories of the "Southside" and the Miller family. You and your family are in my prayers. Love , Shirley Napper*

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**Shirley Napper** - January 03, 2023 at 12:24 PM