



## Rev. Shirley Lee Pulley

March 20, 1931 - June 1, 2017

The Reverend Shirley Lee Winston Pulley dedicated her life to mission outreach and winning souls for Christ. Whether in the church, in the prisons, or on the streets, with the joy and sincerity of her conviction, delivered with that radiant smile and hearty laughter for which she was known, Rev. Pulley was able to draw men, women and even young people from all walks of life to join her on the Christian journey.

Rev. Pulley was born March 20, 1931, in Halifax County, Virginia, the last of 11 children of Lucas and Daisy Johnson Winston. In her ordination paper (1995), Rev. Pulley wrote: “From my earliest memory, I was aware of a very special friend named Jesus, with whom I could share my joys and my pains.” And so, at the age of five, she confessed Jesus as her Lord and Savior and was baptized at the age of seven at Bethel Grove Baptist Church in Halifax County. Rev. Shirley, as she also was affectionately called by many, grew up in Halifax County, where she attended the public school system. She attended the Virginia State College (now University) and the Saint Phillips School of Nursing in Richmond, Virginia, where she met the love of her life, Earl Linwood Pulley, Sr. Earl and Shirley were married by Dr. Gordon B. Hancock, pastor of the Moore Street Baptist Church of Richmond, Virginia. Shortly after their marriage, the Pulleys moved to the Washington, DC area, where they were blessed with two children—a son, Earl, Jr. and daughter, Vera. The move to Washington led the Pulley family to the Shiloh Baptist Church, where the couple worked tirelessly and raised their children. Before being

ordained, Rev. Pulley exhibited the marks of true servanthood, as she worked in several capacities, including Christian Education (Family Life Committee), the Department of Missions (particularly Youth Missions), Loyalty Day co-chairman, the Earl L. Harrison Choir, co-teacher of the Earl L. Harrison Sunday School class and a member of Olivet Circle and International Training in Communication (ITC). In nearly all of these capacities, she co-labored with her husband, who became a member of the Associate Deacon Board at Shiloh. Deacon Pulley died suddenly in 1989 while they were teaching at a D.C. Baptist Convention Youth Retreat.

Rev. Pulley also loved her “part-time job” as a writer for “The Worker” magazine, a missionary and educational quarterly printed through the auspices of the Progressive National Baptist Convention (PNBC). A researcher at heart, she looked forward to receiving her quarterly assignments and eagerly accepted the challenge of writing about the Good News of Jesus Christ. In 2005, she was the recipient of the PNBC Worker Writer’s Award. Of the many services and missions on which Deacon and Rev. Pulley labored as a couple, their greatest joy was realized with the creation of the Pulley Prison Ministry, through the Department of Missions at Shiloh. Although the Ministry started in July 1982, Rev. Pulley was taking Bibles to the inmates at the Halifax County jail at the age of 15! If you wanted to see their faces and spirits light up, you needed only to ask the Pulleys about their Prison Ministry and working with “their boys.” Rev. Pulley especially loved to share her powerful testimony on how the ministry came to fruition. In November of 1972, she was diagnosed with stomach cancer and given a prognosis of less than two years to live. She prayed fervently that God would spare her life for five years to see her children grown. After God favored her with 10 years, she vowed to devote the rest of her life to His service. Soon thereafter, the words of Isaiah 61:1 and Luke 4:18 “began to echo within me,” she would say: The Spirit of the Lord GOD is upon me; because the LORD hath anointed me to preach good tidings unto the meek; he hath sent me to bind up the brokenhearted, to proclaim liberty to the captives, and the opening of the

prison to them that are bound. Isaiah 61:1 KJV

The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he hath anointed me to preach the gospel to the poor; he hath sent me to heal the brokenhearted, to preach deliverance to the captives, and recovering of sight to the blind, to set at liberty them that are bruised... Luke 4:18 KJV

Deacon and Rev. Pulley served in the prison facilities at Lorton (Virginia) and ministered at other facilities throughout the DMV. With the help of ex-prisoners, their ministry included service to Oak Hill Juvenile Detention Center, the Virginia Correctional System, Boys and Girls clubs, as well as area school systems and housing projects. She also provided training and nurture for prison ministries in churches and community organizations around the country. Even after the formal ministry disbanded following 25 years of service, Rev. Pulley continued to provide outreach mission to ex-offenders and their families. She offered spiritual and moral support, performed weddings, officiated for funerals, and vouched for them as references. The anchor of the Pulley Prison Ministry was Bible Study and worship. But the Ministry also included a branch of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP) that had over 100 dues-paying members. Under the Pulley's leadership, the NAACP Lorton Prison Branch Chapter 13 received two Thalheimer Awards, the highest honor awarded by the NAACP. The Pulley Prison Ministry also was featured at the Smithsonian Institution as part of its "Speak to My Heart" exhibition.

Following years of ignoring God's echo, Rev. Pulley accepted the call to preach in April 1989. She consulted with the Reverend Doctor Evans E. Crawford, Jr., former Dean of Howard University's Andrew Rankin Memorial Chapel and the Reverend Henry C. Gregory III, Shiloh's fifth pastor, and thus began her spiritual and educational journey in preparation for the Gospel ministry. She was licensed to preach in October 1990 at Shiloh Baptist Church; in 1991, she earned a Bachelor of Religion from Mary Washington College in Fredericksburg, Virginia; and in 1995, she earned a Master of

Divinity degree, with honors, from Howard University School of Divinity. She was ordained on November 3, 1995 by Shiloh's current and sixth pastor, the Reverend Doctor Wallace Charles Smith, becoming only the third woman in Shiloh's history to be ordained into the Gospel ministry.

After 48 years as a dutiful and faithful member of Shiloh, but in keeping with the Church Covenant, Rev. Pulley made the heart-rending decision to "unite with some other church" closer to her new home in Laurel, Maryland. As health challenges prevailed, she found a church home in Saint Mark's United Methodist, less than a 10-minute drive from her home. True-to-form, Rev. Pulley immediately went to work; she was named an associate minister and was an active participant with the United Methodist Women. She thoroughly enjoyed her time and fellowship at St. Mark's.

Over the span of Rev. Pulley's life as a servant, she received dozens of awards for her work in the church and community ministries, including the "Woman of the Year" at Shiloh, "Volunteer of the Year" by both the D.C. Department of Corrections and the Prince George's County Correctional Center and the "Pillar of Faith"

Award, which she received in 2007 from the James Floyd Jenkins Foundation and Howard University School of Divinity.

Professionally, Rev. Pulley worked for 23 years as a teaching supervisor of histotechnology, a science dealing with the structure of cells and their formation into tissues and organs. She was elected Virginia State president and national regional director of the National Society of Histotechnology. Throughout her life, Rev. Pulley overcame obstacles by giving her all to the Lord. She had a zest and zeal for life like no other; everyone who met her for the first time readily sensed her passion for life, her unconditional love for humankind, and often could not believe she was over 80 years old! An ever-sharp mind, Rev. Pulley not only knew God's Word, but tried to live it every day. She could uplift, inspire and encourage others through her ability to share the Word with conviction, compassion and a sweet comforting spirit. You only had to meet Rev. Pulley once to feel and to know the depth of her commitment

to her Lord and Savior and the unconditional love she had for all.

Her legacy will be forever cherished by her children: son, Earl L. Pulley, Jr., of Washington, D.C., daughter, Vera Pulley Strong of Upper Marlboro, MD; two grandchildren, with whom she enjoyed spending time: Taylor and Dorian Strong; godson, Mack A. Paschal; several nieces and nephews; her church families of Saint Mark's and Shiloh; and hundreds of men and women who called her "Ma' Pulley."

# Cemetery Details

## Mt. Comfort Cemetery

Kings Highway  
Alexandria, VA

# Previous Events

## Viewing

JUN 10. 9:00 AM - 10:30 AM (ET)

Shiloh Baptist Church  
1500 9th Street N.W.  
Washington, DC 20001

## funeral service

JUN 10. 10:30 AM (ET)

Shiloh Baptist Church  
1500 9th Street N.W.  
Washington, DC 20001

## Interment

JUN 10. 3:00 PM (ET)

Mt. Comfort Cemetery  
6600 So. Kings Highway  
Alexandria, VA 22306



# Tribute Wall



“ 71 files added to the album *Life Tributes*



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**Phillip Bell Sr. and Winona Morrissette-** - June 09, 2017 at 09:40 PM