



LEOLA DENISE SMITH

January 25, 1956 - October 1, 2020

<https://livestream.com/accounts/7325565/leolasmith>

For you created my inmost being; you knit me together in my mother's womb. I praise you because I am fearfully and wonderfully made; your works are wonderful, I know that full well". Psalm 139: 13 - 14

Leola Denise Smith was born as the youngest of five children on January 25, 1956 in Memphis, Tennessee to Gladys Watts. She received her education in Memphis, Tennessee, and was a proud member of her high school Speech team.

At an early age, Leola accepted Jesus Christ as her Lord and Savior, and was baptized in His name. After moving to Austin, Texas in 1979, she united with the New Light Ebenezer Baptist church. She moved her membership to Mt. Sinai Missionary Baptist Church in 1985 and faithfully served there for a little over 30 years. In 2016, she united with the One-Way Baptist Church, Round Rock, Texas.

Leola used her strong communication, coordination, creative, organizational, and problem- solving skills in the workplace for many years. After retiring from the state of Texas in 2016 , she combined those skills with passion and love as the Director of Dancin Jazzi Dance studio/FLAVA Dance company, Austin, Texas; which was founded by her daughter Melanie and started in the garage of their home. You could almost always find her working at and fixing up the studio; preparing for recitals, productions, and competitions; and loving on the

many families at Dancing Jazzi/FLAVA or cheering her grandsons on at their sporting events.

Leola loved her grandchildren and took great joy in sharing her life with them. The people who knew her best must have listened to endless stories about those grandchildren or gave her tips and ideas on new shirts and things she could make for them on her Cri-Cut. Her granddaughter Olivia said it best as she remembered that “Gigi encouraged and fostered all of our creative sides.” Her grandsons Nate and Chris always returned home from Gigi’s house with a new shirt, craft, or something they made while with her. Too many times, she, and grandson Daquon had life discussions as they emptied or put up her 55-gallon fish tank.

Leola was also known as “Queen Bee” and she enjoyed all things air conditioned, girly, and princess like. However, she most recently enjoyed the great outdoors where she played baseball and even fished with her grandsons who could get her to do anything! Leola would give her opinion without flinching or apologizing, but she never dismissed you for your choices and always welcomed you home when or if it did not work out. Most important, she made sure she told you she loved you and made sure you felt her love.

God saw fit to give Leola eternal peace and rest at 5:25 P.M. on Tuesday, September 29, 2020 at Resolute Hospital, New Branufels, Texas. She was preceded in death by her mother, Gladys Watts, and sister, Rosemary Davis. She is survived by two brothers, Artie (Maria) Smith , Chicago, Illinois, and Raymond (Phyllis) Smith, Memphis, Tennessee; and one sister, Gloria (John) Logins, Austin, Texas; one son Marcus (Rhonda), Copperas Cove, Texas; two daughters, Rashunda (Chauncey) Reid, San Antonio, Texas and Melanie Smith, Austin, Texas; 4 granddaughters, Olivia Reid, and Brittani, Brianni, and Whittani Washington; 3 grandsons, Daquon Bratcher, and Nathan and Christian Reid; 1 great-granddaughter, Dionne Bratcher; a host of nieces, nephews, cousins, and friends; and her many Dancin’ Jazzi/FLAVA daughters, sons, and grandchildren who will all cherish her loving memory.

Leola was indeed fearfully and wonderfully made! She was a devoted mother,

sister, grandmother, aunt, and friend who never met a stranger. To know her was to love her. She coined the phrase, "Often Imitated but Never duplicated," and that she was! She lived as an angel on earth and is now an angel in heaven as one of her many friends stated. Her children were blessed to be raised by her and now they have her in their hearts forever. May the giving, loving, and talented Leola Smith rest in peace until we meet her again.

Cemetery Details

100F CEMETERY

701 SMITH CREEK ROAD
GEORGETOWN, TX 78653

Previous Events

PUBLIC VIEWING FOLLOWING CDC GUIDELINES

OCT 7. 10:00 AM - 11:00 AM (CT)

One Way Baptist Church
2107 Hairy Man Road
Round Rock, TX 78681

Celebration Service

OCT 7. 11:00 AM (CT)

One Way Baptist Church
2107 Hairy Man Road
Round Rock, TX 78681

Tribute Wall



“ *LEOLA DENISE SMITH*

October 06, 2023 at 07:08 AM



“ *I logged into Facebook today after taking some time off, and learned of my sweet Sis. Leola's passing. I broke down immediately. I'm so sorry I didn't know sooner. I don't know how to tell my daughter. I'm so sorry. She was such a giving and nurturing woman. She was like a mother to me, and she loved my daughter like one of her own. I just saw her and Ms. Trouble in September in the parking lot at Walmart and even then she was giving me wisdom and comfort during my bereavement, which really meant a lot to me. Now, I see that that meeting was divine. I thank God I was able to see Sis. Leola that day. Thank y'all (Marcus, Rashunda and Trouble) for sharing your mom with the rest of us. She is watching over you and her legacy will live on forever in all of you. With love, Canetra Winn and Family Dailia's mom*

canetra winn - November 22, 2020 at 12:34 PM



“ *I was so shock when I heard the news. We had some great times together and go way way back. RIP 🙏 we love you. Kellye Johnson*

Kellye Johnson - October 09, 2020 at 09:56 PM

DE

“ My Lord..My friend and friend indeed was Ms Leola to me and to the many souls she touched. Her two beautiful daughters are my babies and the two reflect their mothers light with their smiles. This is tough to find out but I know without a shadow of a doubt that this Mighty Woman of God is smiling down on us saying “I ARRIVED AND ITS WONDERFUL”. Ms Leola thank you for showing us how LOVE really looks. Eternity Love my dear friend. Minister D. Ephriam



Darlene Ephriam - October 08, 2020 at 07:52 AM



“ Miss Leola will be missed deeply! I was a preteen when I wanted to be on a dance team and she helped make sure ms trouble became my dance teacher! I wasn't a professional dancer but miss Leola was always around with her special encouragement. She really helped ease your anxieties about any event we were having! I will cherish those memories forever. I'm so thankful Ms trouble shared her with us 💕

Destinee Mays - October 07, 2020 at 02:41 PM

JT

“ Thank you Ms. Leola. Your presence and your hugs will be missed so deeply. Thank you for all of the love and encouragement. Thank you for being such a solid voice in one of the most difficult seasons of my adult life. There are not enough words or enough thank you's to truly express what I know we are all feeling. Thank you for sharing your heart and compassion. Thank you and Melanie for giving me space to create again. Thank you for your hearts. Please know that you have mine always. You all may never have need of me but if ever you do, please know that I am here!
~ Janelle



Janelle Townsel - October 07, 2020 at 02:27 PM

CP

“ Oh what a sweet woman... I will cherish the moments I was in the presence of Trouble's mama, Sis Leola. I am praying for your family and you will truly be missed. An angel here on earth is correct and was not afraid to be honest as well. Her smile beautiful, and all around great person. God bless her soul.



Chantel Pridgon - October 07, 2020 at 01:16 PM



“ 4 files added to the album Memories Album



Small text document snippet.

Small text document snippet.



A Life Celebration by Franklin - October 07, 2020 at 11:57 AM



“ We send our heart felt condolences to the Smith family. Leola became a part of our extended Georgia family when Rashunda and Chaun wed. She was such a beautiful person inside and out. My fondest memory which I shared with Rashunda was at Olivia's high school graduation. She was the most animated cheer leader in the group and the early dinner the restaurant that followed was the best. What fun we had at the senior citizens end of the table. So much so that all the kids were jealous. She will be truly missed as the solid rock of her family. We will miss her dearly. She is now at rest and we continue to pray for the family. Aunt Vic and Uncle Ray ...Atlanta GA

Victoria Pearson - October 07, 2020 at 10:59 AM

TD

“ I remember when I first met Ms. Leola. I was 11 years old trying to join the dance ministry at my church (Mt. Sinai). I was nervous, had no idea what I was doing and very emotional. I cried at the first rehearsal because I was intimidated by the other members and I felt I wasn't good enough. But Ms. Leola as well as Melanie taught me that it wasn't about being like everyone else. It was about being myself and who God wanted me to be. It was about allowing God to take over and thanking Him for who He is. At that moment, I knew God had placed some wonderful people in my life who would always have my best interest. It didn't take long for Ms. Leola to become Mama Leola. I grew up a shy girl, very off to the side. I didn't speak much unless I was spoken to. It was very hard to come out of that shell, but being in the dance ministry helped me, molded me and created the person I am today. Ms. Leola always made sure that I put my best foot forward, never quit no matter how hard it may be and always keep God first in my life. She really knew how to get on me if I was slacking, running my mouth too much, not giving any effort or trying to walk away from something. Her friendship with my mother always made me smile. I always wanted that bond they had. True sisters!! They could make me laugh on any day but would turn right around and discipline me if I needed it. She knew what to say just when I needed it. She knew when I just needed a hug. Or even those winks she would give me as I walked by. I am now 31 years old teaching my own group of kids just what Mama Leola and Melanie taught me along the way. I thank God for her and the memories we created throughout the years. Her love, her lectures, her conversations, her hugs, her prayers and her smile will definitely be missed.

Tiffany Daniels

Tiffany Daniels - October 07, 2020 at 02:05 AM

PP

“ As we prepare to lay you to rest tomorrow I am at a loss for words....I'm going to miss you my beautiful aunt. You and I shared a special relationship and you are the reason I moved to Austin. I know that you are with God running/organizing things and that gives me comfort. You loved everyone you encountered and always embraced all of us with open arms and open heart. We just spoke a couple of weeks ago and who knew it would be our last. I told you then and I say it now...we are family and family is always there for each other. Rest well beautiful until we are together again!! I love you forever and a day!

Patsy Peterson - October 07, 2020 at 12:45 AM

KB

“ I grew up dancing with Leola's daughters in Body Talk Dance company. Those years of my life were so special and significant because of parents like Leola. To be part of the company meant years of commitment. We all became family. The parents of the studio were there through every victory and defeat. They sacrificed all of their time and energy for us to be able to discover a life of passion and find what it meant to work hard and how to navigate the wins and losses together as a family. She became a special friend to my mother and that lasted to the very end. Leola was a woman who put her family and friends first. She was kind and full of positivity. Her smile was infectious and joyful. She was strong and respectful and chose to see the good. She was an incredible woman and will be missed. I'm thankful to have known her and thankful that her children and grandkids can continue to spread her joy.



Kimi Bateman - October 06, 2020 at 11:46 PM



“ *Red Poinsettia (Silk Cemetery Flowers) was purchased for the family of LEOLA DENISE SMITH.*



October 06, 2020 at 10:33 PM



“ *Emerald Garden Basket was purchased for the family of LEOLA DENISE SMITH.*



October 06, 2020 at 09:33 PM

KO

“ *Leola was my administrative assistant. The first time I met her is when I interviewed her for that position. She was late for the interview, so I figured that I would complete the interview, but she did not have a chance since she was late. However, she won me over and continued to win me over during our working life. My daughter was a dancer and she and her daughter, Melanie, owned a dance studio, so we had plenty of discussions about dance and theatre. We also had plenty of discussions about family, growing up black, and our shared spiritual life. Needless to say the boundaries of the boss/employee relationship were broken. She became a dear friend.*

We both retired (though I went back to work in a different position), and I last recall seeing Leola when she came to a high school graduation party that we were holding for my daughter. We often called, emailed or texted each other when we had news to report, and she last reached out to me to let me know about an illness of one of her children. My family and I were heartbroken to hear the news, but she, characteristically, was putting the matter in God's hand. We agreed at that time that we would meet for lunch when the pandemic was over. I am sorry that lunch will not take place, but I look forward to seeing her one day at that heavenly banquet.

Dance on in, Leola. You were not late this time.

Ken Owens, Lena Brown-Owens and Lena Olevia Owens

Ken Owens - October 06, 2020 at 05:26 PM

TH

“ Tracey Baker, Johnnie Hunt and Lorie Hunt purchased the *Simply Elegant Spathiphyllum* for the family of **LEOLA DENISE SMITH**.



Tracey Baker, Johnnie Hunt and Lorie Hunt - October 06, 2020 at 04:26 PM

CS

“ *Charlisa & Saimaya lit a candle in memory of LEOLA DENISE SMITH*



Charlisa & Saimaya - October 06, 2020 at 03:33 PM

CS

You're going to be missed so much by so many. I first met you when my baby started dance classes at the age of 4 yrs old & all the black history shows & Flava. I will never forget how you took my baby under your wings after she loss her grandmother and you told her she could call you "GiGi"
You always took time to check in on us whether it was asking about us or a message on Facebook. It has been such a blessing to know you & the love, time you shared. Heaven has gained another Angel! RIH

Charlisa & Saimaya - October 06, 2020 at 03:56 PM



“ *Full Of Love Bouquet* was purchased for the family of **LEOLA DENISE SMITH**.



October 06, 2020 at 01:57 PM

KO

“ Ken Owens, Lena Brown-Owens and Olevia Owens purchased the Full Of Love Bouquet for the family of LEOLA DENISE SMITH.



Ken Owens, Lena Brown-Owens and Olevia Owens - October 06, 2020 at 12:47 PM



“ Arrive in Style was purchased for the family of LEOLA DENISE SMITH.



October 06, 2020 at 12:02 PM



“ Tender Tribute was purchased for the family of LEOLA DENISE SMITH.



October 06, 2020 at 11:55 AM

DE

“ Demetria lit a candle in memory of LEOLA DENISE SMITH



Demetria - October 06, 2020 at 10:09 AM

DE

This is Peaches, Leola you will truly be missed.. All I can hear right now is her saying at the pecan street festival " Austin's own Bodytalk".. this is not goodbye but I'll see you later.

Demetria - October 06, 2020 at 10:11 AM



“ Strength & Solace Spray was purchased for the family of LEOLA DENISE SMITH.



October 06, 2020 at 10:00 AM

MF

“ Michael Powell Family purchased the Blessed He art for the family of LEOLA DENISE SMITH.



Michael Powell Family - October 06, 2020 at 09:09 AM



“ Raynell Hardeman lit a candle in memory of LEOLA DENISE SMITH



Raynell Hardeman - October 06, 2020 at 03:17 AM

JH

“ Jackie Harris-Crayton lit a candle in memory of LEOLA DENISE SMITH



Jackie Harris-Crayton - October 06, 2020 at 12:42 AM

MM

“ It is with great sadness that I write this tribute, but with joy that I celebrate the woman we know as Ms. Leola. Thank you so much for the seeds you have sown into our lives. We moved from Virginia in 2012 and my daughter, as a 1st grader joined Dancin' Jazz. You and Miss Melanie have been a source of inspiration to her. This 9th grader loves you so much and so do I. For years, we have heard stories of small children in the garage of your home. It was an honor to work with you as a dance mom. You constantly asked when Mariya would join the team. You would always say, "I think it's time" Now, I wish that we had more chances to laugh, for me to walk in the studio and see you behind the desk, to hear you fuss with Miss Melanie for doing the most. But I guess God called you and said, "I think it's time." Even though my heart is saddened and it still is so hard to believe that you are gone, I know that you are still commanding that shows go on! You were a loving mom and grandma and loved by so many. Thank you for being an amazing woman, who didn't put up with no mess. There will only be one Ms. Leola and we are blessed to have known you.

Melanie & Mariya - October 05, 2020 at 09:12 PM



“ *Simply Elegant Spathiphyllum was purchased for the family of LEOLA DENISE SMITH.*



October 05, 2020 at 08:49 PM



“ *Sammie Eppright lit a candle in memory of LEOLA DENISE SMITH*



Sammie Eppright - October 05, 2020 at 08:31 PM



“ *Full Of Love Bouquet was purchased for the family of LEOLA DENISE SMITH.*



October 05, 2020 at 07:53 PM

SG

“ I do not have one particular memory but rather a memory of what it meant to have Leola in my life. She was so kind and loving. You could be in a horrible mood and then be around Leola and her joyfulness would be irresistible. You would forget your troubles and be thankful and joyful. She always had a smile and a glow of joyfulness. Miss Leola your presence on this earth touched so many lives. You raised 3 amazing human beings. I love you and I will see you on the other side!

Sue Galow - October 05, 2020 at 05:16 PM

SG

“ Sue Galow lit a candle in memory of LEOLA DENISE SMITH



Sue Galow - October 05, 2020 at 05:05 PM



“ Sweet Tranquility Basket was purchased for the family of LEOLA DENISE SMITH.



October 05, 2020 at 02:25 PM



“ *Serene Retreat was purchased for the family of
LEOLA DENISE SMITH.*



October 05, 2020 at 11:00 AM



“ *Full Heart was purchased for the family of LEOLA
DENISE SMITH.*



October 05, 2020 at 10:16 AM



“ *Chandler & Regina Bettis purchased the Sweet S
incerity for the family of LEOLA DENISE SMITH.*



Chandler & Regina Bettis - October 05, 2020 at 03:05 AM



“ *R Bettis lit a candle in memory of LEOLA
DENISE SMITH*



R Bettis - October 05, 2020 at 02:39 AM



“ *Serene Retreat was purchased for the family of
LEOLA DENISE SMITH.*



October 04, 2020 at 03:19 PM



“ *Kimberly Walker lit a candle in memory of
LEOLA DENISE SMITH*



Kimberly Walker - October 03, 2020 at 04:19 PM