



## Helen Epps

November 22, 1925 - June 4, 2020

Mrs. Helen O. Epps, age 94 received her heavenly wings on June 3, 2020 at the home of her daughter and son-in-law in Atlanta, GA. Helen was born to the late Rev. William E. Oliver and Bertha Oliver Harris on November 22, 1925 in Youngstown, OH. She attended Youngstown Public Schools and graduated from South High School in 1944. Helen received a B.S. in Home Economics at State College Wilberforce (now Wilberforce University), Wilberforce, OH in 1948; She received a Masters of Education Degree in 1982 from Ashland College in Ashland, OH; Helen married Wade Alexander Epps on April 18, 1953 in Columbus, OH where they remained until relocating to Worthington OH in 1964. To this union a daughter and son were born. Helen and Wade were members of Second Baptist Church until moving to Worthington. They both joined Worthington Presbyterian Church and remained members until their deaths. Helen was an outstanding educator in the Columbus Public Schools for 43 years. Her passion for education continued after retirement and she worked several years at Antioch College as a Coordinator of Student Teachers.

Helen was a civil rights activist starting with her NAACP membership in college. She fought for voting rights and social justice through her passion for researching African American history and sharing with others.

Helen was her family's historian tracing family back 4 generations which included slavery. She created the Oliver Family Birthday Calendar that she used to remember all living family members with birthday cards. She was

active with St. John AME Church in Worthington during their annual African American History programs sharing her knowledge of the Underground Railroad conductors in the Worthington and Flint Road areas. When racism at Worthington H.S. prevented her daughter Leslie and other African American girls from participating on the cheer leading squad she joined with parent activist Rev. N. Jeanne Woodward and her daughter Kristy to make a change. As a result, Worthington's first Drill team, The Cardinal Cadets, was founded and performed with the marching band during the first game halftime of the 1969-1970 football season. The first uniforms were designed by Helen Epps. Gentrification began occurring in Helen's neighborhood, Flint Ridge Terrace, developed by an African American entrepreneur. She encouraged the resident association there to preserve the neighborhood's African American history. Helen became chairperson of the Sharon Flint Residents' Association Historical Committee and wrote the book "Linking Past to the Present: An Historical Account of Flintridge Terrace & its Surrounding Areas". Helen enjoyed quilting and made many quilts for family and friends. She rarely charged for her work because they were a labor of love. Helen displayed her quilts at the Ohio State Fair and won recognition. She is also a featured quilter in the book, *A Communion of the Spirits: African-American Quilters, Preservers, and Their Stories* by Roland L. Freeman. Helen combined her teaching and quilting skills to help seniors make quilts at adult day care centers and senior living facilities in Columbus, OH. After relocating to Atlanta Helen made prayer quilts as Christmas gifts for family and friends who helped her relocate to Atlanta. Her last quilt was an artistic quilt from a President Obama caricature printed on fabric. Helen was preceded in death by her father (Rev. William E. Oliver), mother (Bertha Oliver Harris), husband (Wade A. Epps), five brothers and three sisters. She leaves to celebrate her homecoming; two children, Leslie Jeanne Epps-Smith of Decatur, GA and Richard Alexander Epps (RAE) of Worthington, OH; one son-in-law, Cornelius (Smitty) Smith also of Decatur, GA; nieces, nephews, cousins, relatives and dear friends. In lieu of flowers, contributions in memory of Helen O. Epps may

be forwarded to the Alzheimer's Association, 225 N. Michigan Ave., 17th Floor, Chicago, IL 60601 or [www.alz.org](http://www.alz.org)

OR

Helen Jenkins Davis Scholarship Fund Lunch Bunch, PO BOX 360941  
Columbus, OH 43236.

# Cemetery Details

## Northlawn Memory Gardens

State Route 3  
Sunbury, OH  
(614) 882-8392

# Previous Events

## Graveside Services

JUN 11. 10:00 AM (ET)

Northlawn Memory Gardens  
7060 OH - 3  
Westerville, OH 43082

# Tribute Wall



“ *Helen Epps*

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January 28, 2023 at 10:24 AM



“ *Mrs. Epps was a fascinating and a phenomenal woman. I only knew her for a short time in her later days of life. While living at the Mansions in ATL, she would always share her knowledge and profound wisdom with me. She would really make you think about things.*

*Sending my condolences to the family. To her daughter, you took such great care of her and I admired that. I will always remember and can hear Mrs. Epps at heaven's door saying "Howdy, Howdy, Howdy,!!!!"*

*From  
Glenna Collins*

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**Glenna Collins** - June 15, 2020 at 09:21 PM

TS

“ Dear Leslie and Rae, I am deeply saddened to learn of the passing of your dear sweet mother. She was a remarkable woman. My family felt her kindness on many occasions around the dinner table. And me personally, during the passing of my own mother. Be encouraged and hold fast to everything she has taught you. Your lives are and will remain her testimony.



Leslie, she was so incredibly proud of you, and of her baby boy Rae too (I can still see her putting together Rae's birthday coins). Without her knowledge, I would oftentimes stare while she interacted with each of you, her beloved Leslie and Rae because, I knew that's what love looks like.

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**Tammy Smith** - June 10, 2020 at 02:58 PM



“ *Simply Elegant Spathiphyllum* was purchased for the family of Helen Epps.



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June 10, 2020 at 11:57 AM

JB

“ *So sorry.*

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**Jeff Brown** - June 10, 2020 at 10:33 AM



“ *Sweet Tranquility Basket was purchased for the family of Helen Epps.*



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June 10, 2020 at 09:50 AM



“ *Jolie, Letitia and Lisa purchased the Emerald Garden Basket for the family of Helen Epps.*



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**Jolie, Letitia and Lisa** - June 09, 2020 at 05:50 PM



“ *Trent Clark lit a candle in memory of Helen Epps*



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**Trent Clark** - June 08, 2020 at 11:42 AM

TC

*To The Family Of Helen Epps,*

*You Are All In Our Prayers. May God Give You Strength, Comfort, And Peace.*

*I believe I knew Mrs. Epps and the Epps Family during my lifetime. I did go to Weinland Park in the 65-66 school year. I was born and raised going to Second Baptist Church in the 50's 60's and 70's. I believe she would have known my Parents and Grandparents. I know she will be missed but the legacy of her remarkable life will live on.*

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*-Trent Clark*

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**Trent & Cora Clark** - June 08, 2020 at 12:17 PM



“ *Full Of Love Bouquet was purchased for the family of Helen Epps.*



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June 08, 2020 at 08:08 AM

DS

“ Dear Leslie and Ray,  
What a treasure, your Mother! What a pleasure to know her and  
teach with her at  
Weinland Park. Her loving pleasant ways were a great example for  
this teacher.  
We continued to stay connected after we had retired by running into  
each other  
at the Kroger store at Rt 23 and Wilson Bridge Rd.  
I feel very blessed to have known her and your father as well.  
Sincerely,  
David Schmidt

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**David Schmidt** - June 08, 2020 at 08:04 AM

JO

“ Helen was one of our best residents of Sharon Township and I will  
remember her fondly. She cared about her community and the  
history of the community. She volunteered to make her community  
better and was there to help. She was intelligent and always added  
value. We will miss her and wish her and her family well. John  
Oberle, Sharon Township Trustee.

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**John Oberle** - June 08, 2020 at 07:01 AM

RV

“ Dear Ray and other family members and friends of Helen. I am Robert Vertrees, husband of Noel Vertrees. I cried just a while ago when Rev. Tom Rice posted on-line the information about Helen's passing on. Noel passed on in August 2018, and so she is not right here to express her deep-felt sorrow and condolences in Helen's passing. However, I know she would do so. Helen and Noel met in the pew two-thirds-toward-the back on the south side where they sat together for years for Sunday morning services of Worthington Presbyterian Church. I sang in the choir, which sat up front looking out over the congregation, and loved to see them together, once again. And if one of them missed being at church for some Sundays they would call to see if everything was o.k. with their friend. They also talked often on the phone. Furthermore, when Noel got ill the last few years of her life, Helen would sometimes just show up unannounced to our home to check on Noel. Noel and Helen shared several common interests, one being family and another in seeking improved interracial relations in public schools (Noel was a special education teacher). Also, both Noel and I enjoyed, and learned from, Helen talking about her interest in, and first-hand knowledge about, the history of the underground railroad station in the area north of Worthington not too far north of where she lived. I always enjoyed the many times when Helen, Noel, and I would drive up to the Big Boy Restaurant on U.S. 23 and have brunch after church. Ray, as know, your mother was a wonderful, thoughtful, caring, soft-spoken woman, and she also would share stories of your father with us. My heartfelt empathy and condolences go out to you and other members of your family in Helen's passing on. Robert Vertrees, rlvvertrees@yahoo.com

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**Robert Vertrees** - June 05, 2020 at 01:12 PM