

OBITUARY

On Thursday, June 23, 1921, Will and Ethel Ross welcomed their third child, Nancy Mae, into the world. Nancy was cherished by her parents and sisters, Wilma and Doris. The family lived in Malvern, a quaint city in central Arkansas known as the Brick Capital of the World.

It wasn't long before Nancy was old enough to help her parents, both at the family store and as a big sister to her younger siblings. She attended Malvern's Rosenwald school, which, at the time, was the only school available to the city's Black children.

After completing the ninth grade, 14 year old Nancy Mae moved to Reading, Pennsylvania to complete her high school education. She returned to her hometown every summer and somewhere along the way, she took a fancy to fellow Malvernite, James Green.

Once Nancy graduated from high school, she returned to Arkansas to attend Philander Smith College in Little Rock. She also reunited with James. They married on August 11, 1942. Theirs was an epic love story. It took Nan and Jim from Arkansas to South Carolina to Pennsylvania where they welcomed their only child, Lawrence Schaffner.

James' military service took them across the Atlantic to France where he served as a chaplain, and she taught elementary school. After the War, they returned to the States and in 1946, they moved to Atlanta so she could attend Clark College and he Morehouse.

Nancy juggled being a student, wife and mother with ease and grace. She was active in campus life and pledged Alpha Kappa Alpha Sorority. In 1948, she graduated with a B.A. in Social Science and a minor in Education. Her desire to nurture the minds of young people inspired her to return to teaching at the elementary level. She taught at Atlanta's W. H. Crogman Elementary and A. F. Herndon Elementary schools. Many of her students have fond memories of Mrs. Green. Some say she inspired them to become leaders in Atlanta and beyond. In 1975, Nancy retired from Atlanta Public Schools, but she wasn't done just yet!

When Nan and Jim married, Nancy knew she was in for a life of love and service. Though he held a variety of jobs, James Green was a minister first and foremost and Nan was right by his side. She was First Lady at Sardis Baptist Church in Dawson,

Georgia, then at Jackson Memorial Baptist Church, formerly Elm Street Baptist Church, in Atlanta.

In 1970, Rev. and Mrs. Green and a small group of faithful servants organized and founded the Greater New Light Missionary Baptist Church. The church grew quickly and soon moved from the Green family's basement to its present location on Campbellton Road.

Mother Green loved New Light. As First Lady, she founded the Courtesy Guild and chaired more Women's Days, Calendar Teas, fashion shows and fundraisers than she could count. Her testimony, her faith and love for God and her church family were immeasurable. She served as First Lady until Rev. Green's retirement in 1991 and was affectionately called "Our Forever First Lady" for years after.

Nan loved Atlanta. She was an active member of the community and became known for her hospitality and knack for organizing wonderful events and gatherings. She co-founded the JUTs or Just Us Teachers Bridge Club which met every month for over 20 years. She loved her neighbors and was active in neighborhood associations, first on Baker Ridge Road and later, Chaucer Drive.

Nan loved Alpha Kappa Alpha Sorority, Incorporated. She was an active member for many years and proudly pinned her daughter-in-law, Mabel, and granddaughter, Precious, when they joined her illustrious sorority. Soror Nan, as she was known, was recognized as a Diamond Soror, with over 75 years of service and sisterhood. She was an innovator, becoming one of the sorority's first authorized vendors. Her company Nan & Jim Enterprises, Inc., designed and sold Greek letter paraphernalia around the country. Soror Nan was a regular presence at sorority meetings, conferences and boules. Her sorors always knew that they could find their next favorite sweatshirt or pin at Soror Nan's booth.

Nancy loved to travel. She never met a Delta flight or Carnival cruise that she didn't enjoy. Whether across the United States or around the world, Nancy was always ready to go! She had many travel buddies and a passport filled with stamps from countries on four continents — Africa (Liberia in particular), Asia, Europe and South America — and the Caribbean.

Nancy loved people. She was a regular at the H. G. Darnell and later H. J. C. Bowden Senior Centers. Several times a week, she would "go to the center" to meet her buddies for lunch, a swimming or ceramics class, or a travel club meeting. Though she was often the oldest participant, she easily kept up with her friends.

Like most of us, Fancy Nancy spent most of the last 3 years at home, but she did not slow down. She learned to Zoom, Facetime, telework, teleconference, telehealth, and tackle everything virtual. She got so good at it that she became the face and voice for Greater New Light's virtual birthday greetings.

Fancy Nancy loved her family. She was a wonderful daughter, sister, wife, mother, grandmother, great-grandmother, great-great-grandmother and matriarch who loved fiercely and unconditionally. She was the heart and soul of her family. When family needed her, she answered the call and opened her home. In 1981, she and James welcomed their eldest granddaughter, Precious, into their home to raise her as their own. In 1990, they welcomed their youngest grandchildren, James and Neiger, their son Schaff and his wife Mabel to their home on the hill when they fled civil unrest in Liberia.

Nan was incredibly close to her siblings, nieces, nephews and extended family. She organized family reunions and trips and visited them around the country as often as possible. And she played a mean game of In-between.

Nan, Mom, Grandma, Gram, Gigi, Sister, Auntie, Cousin.... She answered every call.

Nancy loved to celebrate. In 2020, she celebrated her 99th birthday by hosting her first Zoom birthday party. She dressed to the nines and basked in all the virtual love. In 2021, she turned 100 and celebrated with a three-day Fancy Nancy Festival surrounded by friends and family from around the world. In 2022, she celebrated her 101st birthday and was awarded the Georgia Outstanding Citizen Award by the Secretary of State, on behalf of the citizens of the state of Georgia. On Friday, June 23, 2023, Nancy celebrated her 102nd birthday with her family and caregivers. She made sure to have a piece of birthday cake.

Mother Green lived a full and incredible life. On Wednesday, July 5th, she transitioned peacefully from this realm to her heavenly home.

She was preceded in death by her parents, Will and Ethel Ross; her stepmother, Mary Ross; her siblings, Wilma, Leon, William, Doris and Yvonne; the love of her life, James; and, many cherished friends, running buddies and family members.

Nancy's effervescence and infectious energy will be missed by all those she touched from Arkansas to Georgia and beyond, but especially by her survivors: her beloved son, Lawrence; her wonderful daughter-in-law, Mabel; her devoted godson, Clovis; four

grandchildren: Larry, Precious, James and Neiger (Jhaamal); seven great-grandchildren: Destiny, Lawrence, Xavier, LaDrea, Annabel, William and Neo; three great, great, granddaughters: Braylon, Brielle and Dream; and four siblings: Eva, Benjamin, Leo (Beverly) and Lynn. She also leaves a host of nieces, nephews, cousins, relatives, loving friends, sorority sisters and church family to honor her memory and celebrate her legacy.

Fancy Nancy... What a gal!