

Ernestine T. Carreathers March 8, 1925 - December 1, 2015



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Ernestine Loretta Thurston was born to Artie Mae Watson and Ernest Thurston. A major influence as she grew up in Denison, Texas was her stepfather, Prince Benjamin Hilliard. Ernestine attended Denison's Anderson School and Terrell School, where she worked to excel in the classroom and in extracurricular activities such as the band (majorette) and Glee Club.

Enrolling at Wiley College in Marshall, Texas, Ernestine learned much—not only in the classroom and through school activities, but as she worked for the Dean of Women and for the Business Office. She became a charter member of Alpha Kappa Mu Honor Society and was initiated into Phi Chapter of Alpha Kappa Alpha Sorority, Inc. in 1945. Ernestine graduated Wiley College Cum Laude with an English major, French minor Bachelor of Arts degree in 1945.

Marriage to her sweetheart Raymond Eugene Carreathers, whom she met during high school, was next. They committed to a life time of service and education—each supporting the other's goals. Ernestine's academic goals took her to Southeastern State College of Oklahoma (M. Ed.), Kansas State Teachers College, North Texas State University (Administrator's Certificate), Prairie View A&M University, University of Houston, and St. Thomas University.

Ernestine began her teaching career in Denison at her alma mater Terrell School, where she was Elementary Principal for six years. One achievement during the 20 years she taught in Denison was participating with her co-workers in a lawsuit for equal pay for African-American teachers...which they won. During this time she was active in teacher organizations, taught Sunday school, ushered at Hopewell Baptist Church, volunteered at the Boys Club, sponsored Camp Fire Girls, and was a member of Denison Public Library's Friends of the Library.

In 1967, Raymond and Ernestine moved their family to Prairie View, Texas. During 20 years at Royal Elementary (Brookshire), she taught reading and coordinated the Reading Lab. Ernestine received the Human Relations Award and was appointed to the Hearing Committee for Texas State Teachers Association (TSTA). She also served for a period as Waller County Teachers Association President.

During retirement she worked for 10 years at Prairie View A&M University as a Supervisor in the Alternative Teacher Certification Program and also taught Remedial Reading.

Active in the Prairie View community, Ernestine held offices including Basileus in the Zeta Gamma Omega Chapter of Alpha Kappa Alpha Sorority, Inc., and was a Golden Soror. As a member of St. Francis Episcopal Church, she served on the Vestry, as Senior Warden, Lector, and Eucharistic Minister. She was a member of Jack & Jill, and served as treasurer of the organization.

Her political endeavors include having served as treasurer of Waller County Democratic Club. In state and federal elections, she was Voter Registration Precinct Clerk and worked as Precinct Judge. Along with Raymond, she became an entrepreneur when they opened Amistad II Bookplace.

Ernestine Thurston Carreathers was widowed in 2003 after 46 years of marriage, and she was preceded in death by her sister Bernice 'Bonnie' Baker and brother Clifford V. Grissom, Jr. She is survived by her daughter Denise Carreathers Armstrong of Prairie View, Texas, son Kevin Ray Carreathers (Marilyn) of Prairie View, Texas, grandson Lemuel Eugene Armstrong of Spring, Texas and great-granddaughter Shelbi Armstrong of Chicago, Illinois, as well as a host of relatives, extended family and friends.

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