



Delessia LaJuan Rucker

November 24, 1954 - April 30, 2019

Delessia LaJuan Rucker
(November 24, 1954 – April 30, 2019)

Delessia LaJuan was the first child born to the union of Archie and Minnie (Willingham) Utsey in El Dorado, Arkansas. She is referred to as LaJuan by family members and close friends. LaJuan was the first-born grandchild on the Willingham side, where she was the delight of almost all, with the exception of Aunt Della, who did not appreciate that she took her spot as the baby in the family. She moved with her parents to Denver, Colorado when she was two years old. While in Denver, she was soon joined by her sisters Wherda, Wanda Fay (deceased), Cynthia, and brother John. She served as the ultimate role model for her younger sisters and brother. She was educated in Denver Public Schools attending Ebert, Stedman, Smiley, and East. Early on, her beautiful handwriting emerged and she was a wonderful calligrapher. For many years she would address the family Christmas cards. She also enjoyed photography. LaJuan had a gift for drawing as well. She combined her love for reading with a love for adventure. She devoured every book in The Man From U.N.C.L.E. series. Her first career plan was to become a secret agent. She even went as far as to take Latin, because she believed it would come in handy as a spy. LaJuan loved all things related to science fiction. Star Trek, Deep Space Nine, Babylon Five and Star Wars.

At East High School, LaJuan was academically strong. She was a proud member of the class of 1972. She participated in the Pep Club and was on Student Council. She was involved in planning her class reunions. She maintained life-long friendships with many of her school peers. She matriculated to Nebraska Wesleyan University majoring in Art History. She transferred to the University of Colorado, Boulder and changed her major to Elementary Education. While at Boulder she pledged Alpha Kappa Alpha Sorority, Inc. and was a charter member of the Boulder chapter. She earned her Master's degree in Educational Leadership from University of Colorado Denver.

Upon completion of her undergraduate degree, LaJuan began her life-long career with Denver Public Schools where she was employed until she retired. She worked as a classroom teacher, reading specialist, and administrator. She made a big difference in the lives of many of her students. She served as a strong support network for new teachers and helped to develop their teaching skills. She was passionate about her profession.

She married Vernon Rucker and to this union the joy of her life, her daughter, Daisha Renee was born. She adored every minute of motherhood and was Daisha's constant cheerleader in life. Years later, additional joy came when her son-in-law, Limos Hill joined the family. Her unspeakable joy came with the birth of each of her three grandchildren LaNia, Dashawn, and London.

For the last nine years, LaJuan enjoyed the company of her best friend, Terry Spears. Together they enjoyed attending concerts, plays, eating out, and sharing the company of Boomer, her dog.

Delessia was a woman of strong faith. She accepted Christ at an early age and was a life-long member of Campbell Chapel African Methodist Episcopal Church. As a youth at Campbell, she was active in the Young People's

Division of the Missionary Society, Sunday School, Youth Choir, and the Usher Board. At Campbell, she served in many positions including the Trustee Board, Vacation Bible School, Missionary Society, the Steward and Finance Committee, the Steward Board, and she served as the delegate for the Desert Mountain Conference. She loved serving the Lord and truly enjoyed her church.

Delessia delighted in exploring the world. She loved traveling, attending plays, and reading. She was a member of two book clubs. Delessia's entertainment skills were next to none. Often referred to as Martha Black, she loved cooking and decorating her house for guests.

Delessia LaJuan Utsey Rucker leaves behind her beloved daughter, Daisha (Limos) of LaMarque, Texas, her sisters Wherda, and Cynthia of Denver, Colorado, her brothers Percy of Oakland, California and John of Denver, Colorado, her aunts Jeotha Lee Johnson of Robbins, Illinois and Della Scarver of Denver, Colorado, and her grandchildren LaNia, DaShawyn, and London. She also leaves behind her friend Terry Spears, her dog, Boomer and many nephews, nieces, cousins, and a host of other relatives and friends. Delessia will also be missed by her church family. She was preceded in death by her parents Archie and Minnie Utsey and her sister Wanda Fay.

Previous Events

Visitation

MAY 10. 5:00 PM - 7:00 PM (MT)

Ballard Family Mortuary, LLC
6700 Smith Rd
Denver, CO 80207
(303) 963-5779

Viewing

MAY 11. 10:00 AM (MT)

Campbell Chapel AME Church
1500 E. 22nd Ave.
Denver, CO 80205

Service

MAY 11. 11:00 AM (MT)

Campbell Chapel AME Church
1500 E. 22nd Ave.
Denver, CO 80205

Tribute Wall

EM

“ Dear Family of Deleesia LaJuan Rucker,

I was thinking of Deleesia today and decided to try to find her. I am so sad at this outcome. She truly was one of the "good guys."

I had the privilege of working with her at DPS when we were LA Curriculum Consultants. Oh how she would make me laugh! I would give away all of my exam copy textbooks and other books; then I would need to "borrow" hers. I can hear her now," You did not give away more books! Alright, take mine!"

She was a huge influence in making me see another point of view that has been a lesson that I have never forgotten and have used many times. "Look around, do you see any other people of color in this room?" Even though the minority population was really the majority population in the District the voices did not match at the administrative level. I can now never be in room of District administrators where I don't hear Deleesia and repeat her words to the people around me, if only to take them from the unconscious to the conscious.

She had such pride in her daughter, Daisha. I am happy to see that she enjoyed the love of grandchildren.

Delessia influenced my life in many ways: her love of children, her love of reading, her positive demeanor and her sense of life. I am so sorry to know she is not in this world any longer, however, I am sure she is still with us.

Much sympathy,

*Eileen Morelli
meileenmorelli@gmail.com*

Eileen Morelli - September 22, 2019 at 01:44 PM

JJ

“ I am so sorry to hear of Delissia's passing. May God's peace comfort you.

With deepest sympathy,

Janice Jarrett

Janice Jarrett - May 31, 2019 at 09:51 PM

KH

“ To the family,

I wish to express my sincere sympathy to all.

I admired Delisa as she was a facilitator of many DPS seminars in which I participated. Often, she shared interesting stories that showed her love for the profession.

During the first year of my teaching career in theDPS, her brother, John was a student in my class. Mrs. Utsey was a parent that any teacher would be pleased to be supported by. As time went on, I met

her aunts and cousins. I felt as if I knew Daisha, Wherda, and Cynthia because she often spoke of them in a loving way.

May God continue to keep you in His care.

Karen Griffie Henderson

Karen Griffie Henderson - May 10, 2019 at 11:58 AM

WT

“ Whiz Kids Tutoring purchased the Simply Elegant Spathiphyllum for the family of Delessia LaJuan Rucker.



Whiz Kids Tutoring - May 10, 2019 at 09:33 AM



“ Divine Peace Bouquet was purchased for the family of Delessia LaJuan Rucker.



May 09, 2019 at 04:41 PM

KD

“ I am so sad. I have known Delessia since she first joined the Fairmont Elementary School teaching staff many years ago at the beginning of her distinguished career. Her sudden passing is a blow to all of us who knew her, for to know her was to love her--her personality, her many talents, her dedication, her generosity, her kindness. She was a wonderful teacher, mother, daughter, sister, friend. My heartfelt condolences go out to all of her family, especially Daisha and her beloved grandchildren. Delessia, you will forever be missed and loved.

Kay DeLong

Kathryn DeLong - May 08, 2019 at 02:00 PM



“ *Heavenly Grace Spray was purchased for the family of Delessia LaJuan Rucker.*



May 07, 2019 at 07:24 PM



“ *Delessia and I were church family. I worked with Delessia in the church and I must say I truly did enjoy working beside her. She will be truly missed in more ways then one. I know that your spirit will always be at Campbell Chapel AME Church along side your parents. Utsey family Jerry and I will continue to pray for guidance, peace and comfort during your time of grief.*



Your sister and brother in Christ, Jerry and Cindi West

Cindi West - May 06, 2019 at 12:27 PM



Delessia was a wonderful woman of God; she loved her church and worked diligently for the Lord. She also loved her family .She was a social butterfly who never met a stranger. We will miss her and she will never be forgotten.

Carolyn Chatman - May 08, 2019 at 07:17 PM



“ *Country Basket Blooms was purchased for the family of Delessia LaJuan Rucker.*



May 06, 2019 at 11:54 AM

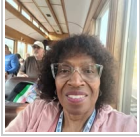
JJ

“ I was fortunate enough to see my friend, Delessia about one month ago at her "other" book club with all her old Fairmont Elementary friends. We talked, ate and laughed a lot as we shared stories about the past. Delessia told the story of the Blizzard of '84 when her Mother and her brother, John went to the Aurora Mall during the blizzard, and then had to be rescued! She proudly showed us pictures of her three beautiful grandchildren, and told us about her trips to Texas to visit them.

Delessia was there as I started my career as a teacher in DPS, she attended my wedding, my showers and finally, my retirement party last June. She supported her friends. I loved her and her friendship. Her death was so sudden, and we are all still processing this loss. I can't help but think what a blessing it was to have known her, and also to have had the opportunity to say good bye. She will be missed always. My condolences to Daisha and her other family members. Rest in Peace, Delessia.

Joanette Andrew Jones

Joanette Jones - May 05, 2019 at 09:56 PM



“ *Delessia was so kind, thoughtful and processed a positive spirit. I remember when our daughters participated in the AKA Fashionetta. We really connected and always shared stories and updates about our girls. She was friendly toward everyone she met. She was well liked. Her soft voice would bring comfort in any situation. When she talked you wanted to listen. She was always so positive about most things. She was honest and provided valuable assistance to many teachers in Denver Public Schools. She was willing to do whatever necessary to help teachers succeed. I loved to talk with her. She was a person that loved her daughter, grandkids, siblings and friends. I will truly miss her.*

Wanda Lenox and Family

Wanda Lenox - May 05, 2019 at 01:07 PM

RW

“ *Delessia had so many gifts I don't know where to start. I met her in the "80s when she was teaching at Whittier Elementary. I observed her classroom and while she had more children's books than any teacher I'd ever seen it was her calm, kind, smart interactions with her students that first caught my attention but it didn't take long to see the best gift she had - she loved those kids - and because she loved them and was an amazing teacher they thrived! When she moved on to teach teachers she brought with her that love of kids and a wealth of practical knowledge about teaching and learning - she was a "teacher's teacher." Her contributions to DPS as a whole and our DPS Literacy/Curriculum "team" in particular mounted as her career evolved. As a number of us retired we stayed connected by forming a book club. Delessia could be counted on to show up, bring food, share stories of visits with her grandchildren and Daisha, listen to all our stories and laugh, laugh, laugh. I will miss that laugh. Wait - if I'm quiet I can hear it still. Thank you Delessia - for all the laughter and all the love.*

Roxanne Wilderman - May 04, 2019 at 05:04 PM

DD

Our book club will never be the same without our delightful Delessia! I appreciate Rox's comment on the laughter that she brought to our group and I am still chuckling at her story of Boomer and the raccoons. She was so, so, so proud of her grandchildren and of course her beloved Daisha!

Debbie Dedrick - May 13, 2019 at 04:54 PM

 Sandy Reavey

“ *I was a classmate of Delessia since I think junior high. I enjoyed seeing her last year and about a month ago. This is all so sudden and so sad. She was a beautiful light and will be shining down on us and with us always! My condolences to the family!*



Sandy Reavey - May 03, 2019 at 09:50 PM