



## Mrs. Loistine "Lois" Jackson

December 13, 1943 - December 7, 2016

Loistine "Lois" (Lucas) Jackson was born December 13, 1943, in Forrest City, Arkansas, to the late Verlee Lucas Sr. and Ernestine (Gowder) Lucas. When Lois was just six years old her mother died of a stroke. The family was devastated by her mother's unexpected death, and Lois's father suddenly became a single parent of seven children. Thankfully, her father's family immediately stepped in to assist. Lois and several of her other siblings moved in with their beloved paternal grandparents, the late Luther Lucas and Kanizey (Hooks) Lucas.

In addition to Lois and her siblings, her grandparents were still raising four of their own thirteen children. Needless to say, the house was abundant with love. Although Lois wasn't the oldest child, she took responsibility for preparing food for her siblings to eat; she made sure they got to school, and she made sure their homework was completed on time (by choice or by force). Lois always had a subtle way of being bossy.

Against tremendous odds, Lois's paternal grandparents were successful, African-American entrepreneurs in Arkansas in the 1940s. They owned 500 acres of land, which they farmed, and they had a store where they sold their crops and other goods to the local community. Everyone in the family had a specific role in the family business, thanks to the ingenuity of Lois's grandmother. Consequently, all of the children worked hard and learned from their grandparents' example of the virtues of integrity, a strong work ethic, hard work and dedication. These were traits that Lois cultivated and used for the rest of her life.

Shortly after graduating from Lincoln South High School in Forrest City, Lois' life changed forever when her father moved her away from Arkansas to live with an aunt in Muskegon Heights, Michigan. It was in Muskegon Heights that Lois met her soul mate in life, James Gordon Jackson, III. They married on June 21, 1964, and recently celebrated 52 years of Holy Matrimony. The couple later moved to Kalamazoo, Michigan, and raised three children.

Lois received Christ at an early age and was a faithful member of St. Augustine Catholic

Church in Kalamazoo. Lois was devoted to living a God-centered life, and she was renowned for her angelic spirit and compassionate wisdom. Lois daily shared the ministry of unconditional love, forgiveness, and serving others. Through her own example, she always demonstrated the value and importance of these attributes.

Throughout her life, Lois joyfully wore many hats—wife, mother, caretaker, organizer, and planner. Her passion for her own family was soon expanded to embrace the Kalamazoo community. Lois became a community advocate for equal educational opportunities; she promoted inclusion, and was dedicated to making a difference. Lois volunteered countless hours to either forging partnerships or establishing organizations to fill a community void.

Lois was the co-founder, along with her treasured friends James Palmore and the late Gail Sydnor, of the Kalamazoo's first Black Arts Festival in 1986. After that successful event, the three met with other people to establish the Black Arts and Cultural Committee. The organization flourished with art classes, exhibitions and cultural events, movies and poetry. The organization was renamed the Black Arts & Cultural Center in 1990, and relocated to its current space in the Epic Center in 2001.

Lois also had a gift for arts and crafts. She mastered the skill of batik art and loved teaching others the craft. In her youthful days, Lois enjoyed recreational sports, such as softball. However, her most treasured moments were spent with her family and traveling.

Lois was instrumental in joining forces to bring youth initiative programs to Kalamazoo, including the NAACP's ACT-SO program and the Youth Development Center. She also was one of the founding members of the Concerned Black Women's Roundtable. In 2008, Lois received the YWCA's Women of Achievement Award for exemplifying volunteerism. She valued philanthropic activities that advanced the community. Lois's public service and tremendous community contributions also were recognized by other organizations, including the Arts Council of Greater Kalamazoo; the Kalamazoo Ladies' Library; Big Brother Big Sisters, and the Kalamazoo Pushkin Partnership.

Lois also was an advocate of conserving the natural beauty of the area and she served on the board of the Southwest Michigan Land Conservancy. In addition, Lois supported the work of the League of Women Voters. She volunteered at college nights to register young voters; delivered voters' guides door-to-door, and helped organize high school mock elections.

One of Lois's most treasured activities was reading and discussing worthwhile literature. She was a long-time member of the Saturday Eves' Book Club, which recently celebrated 48 years of fellowship. The Saturday Eves' is not an ordinary book club—members don't

just read and discuss books, they engage in community action. The book club's activities became a central part of Lois's life. She often reminisced about the various community activities spurred by a presentation during the book club's meeting.

Lois worked for more than 27 years for Kalamazoo's municipal government. During her tenure at the city's Parks & Recreation Department, Lois created the legacy program "Friends of Recreation" to provide access to life-enriching, recreation programs to the community at large. The Friends of Recreation Board has annual fundraisers to offer scholarships to families in need. Lois's visionary leadership also spearheaded the Kalamazoo Municipal Recreation Endowment Fund at the Kalamazoo Community Foundation, with the goal of someday fully endowing the Parks & Recreation Department.

In 2002, Lois retired from the City of Kalamazoo as the Superintendent of Parks & Recreation. But retirement didn't set well for Lois; she was used to always being on the go, either consulting or collaborating with community groups or organizations. In 2003, Lois joined the staff of the Kalamazoo Community Foundation to oversee the organization's "The Better Together" Initiative.

A few years later, a health challenge required that Lois retire from Kalamazoo Community Foundation. She was diagnosed with a rare form of cancer that was estimated to occur in only six out of one-million women. Lois's courageous and valiant battle included her own, self-prescribed antidote. She frequently reminded her grandchildren that "a hug a day takes the cancer away."

Lois's spiritual journey intensified during cancer treatment. She remained committed to early morning devotions with God by meditating on the Holy Word; prayer, and expressions of gratitude. Lois cherished memorable and colorful days of chasing sunsets and admiring the change of seasons. Frequently, her husband took her on back road car trips to beat the cabin fever. The cancer was in remission for more than seven years before it resurfaced. Lois departed this life, surrounded by her loving and devoted family, to be with the Lord on December 7, 2016.

Lois leaves to treasure and honor her memory, her beloved and cherished husband, James Gordon Jackson III; her beloved and cherished son, James Anthony "Tony" Jackson of Muskegon Heights, Michigan; her beloved and cherished daughter, Angela J. (Nathaniel) Warren of St. Antonio, Texas, and her beloved and cherished youngest daughter, Tiffany E. Jackson of Kalamazoo, MI. Lois was also the beloved and cherished grandmother of Nia Jackson, Aijah Jackson, Nial Jackson, Elijah Jackson, and the loving step-grandmother of Alliyah Warren, Asha Warren and Anissa Warren. Lois's memory will

also be cherished by her loving sisters Toni(Alonzo) Perrin of East St. Louis, Illinois; Vera (James) Greer of St. Louis, Missouri, and her brother Verlee (Dorothy) Lucas Jr. of Forrest City, Arkansas; and her cherished brothers in-law, Robert Anderson and Wayne King. Lois also will be fondly remembered by her adored aunts Bernestine Bell, Madge Witherspoon and Agnes Hancock. In addition, Lois memory will be forever alive in the hearts of other special family members; The Saturday Eves' Book Club members, her other treasured friends and former co-workers.

Lois was preceded in death by her parents, Verlee Sr. and Ernestine Lucas; siblings: Noel Lucas, Lugenia Anderson, LaVerne King, and Luther Curtis "L.C." Lucas; and her sister in-law, Carolyn Lucas.

# Cemetery Details

## Mona View Cemetery

3335 Mona View Drive  
Muskegon, MI 49444

# Previous Events

## Visitation

DEC 15. 6:00 PM - 8:00 PM (ET)

Harper Funeral Home - Chapel  
521 Douglas Avenue  
Kalamazoo, MI

## Memorial Mass

DEC 16. 10:00 AM (ET)

St. Augustine Catholic Church  
542 W. Michigan Avenue  
Kalamazoo, MI

# Tribute Wall



“ Harper Funeral Home created a Tribute Video in memory of Mrs. Loistine "Lois" Jackson



Harper Funeral Home - December 14, 2016 at 09:32 PM

AJ

“ Missing my sweet grandma. Wish I could just hug and kiss you. I know you are in a great place with the lord. Love and miss you granny ❤️ You will never be forgotten and you will love on thru me ❤️🙏



Aijah Jackson - May 25, 2017 at 02:47 PM



“ Karest Willis-Brown lit a candle in memory of Mrs. Loistine "Lois" Jackson



Karest Willis-Brown - December 20, 2016 at 04:27 PM

PB

“ Pat Britt lit a candle in memory of Mrs. Loistine "Lois" Jackson



pat britt - December 17, 2016 at 12:53 PM

WC

“ *William D. Cooper lit a candle in memory of Mrs. Loistine "Lois" Jackson*



**William D. Cooper** - December 17, 2016 at 01:32 AM

WC

*I send love & light in you all direction. I'm the great-grandson of the late Cora (Gowder)Hall. I live in Nashville Tennessee*

**William D. Cooper** - December 17, 2016 at 01:38 AM



“ *Simply Elegant Spathiphyllum was purchased for the family of Mrs. Loistine "Lois" Jackson.*



December 16, 2016 at 03:02 PM

AM

“ *I was so sorry to read Lois' obituary. My condolences to her family. I always respected her work in our arts community and enjoyed working with her while I was at the Arts Council.*  
*Anne Mehring*

**Anne Mehring** - December 16, 2016 at 02:54 PM

SH

“ *I am very sorry and myself grief stricken to hear such sad news. Lois was a wonderful and well-respected person who will be missed by all of the people who knew her.*

**Sam Haywood** - December 16, 2016 at 02:48 PM

SH

“ *With great sadness, we heard of Lois' passing. Our kind thoughts go to Jim and the entire family. Lois was a treasure to the family, as well as the community.*

*Sue and Chuck Hefner*

**Sue Hefner** - December 16, 2016 at 07:37 AM

CK

“ I'm so sorry to hear of your loss. I worked for Lois at the Coover Center for over two years, and I felt that she became a great friend. She was a great boss and I enjoyed working with her. We had many good times together. I am Carole Kite. Blessings and prayers to all her family. I will be sending a donation to Friends of Recreation.



Carole Kite - December 16, 2016 at 07:05 AM

DS

“ Denise Scurry lit a candle in memory of Mrs. Loistine "Lois" Jackson



Denise Scurry - December 15, 2016 at 07:41 AM

LJ

“ Laverne Jones lit a candle in memory of Mrs. Loistine "Lois" Jackson



Laverne Jones - December 14, 2016 at 04:19 PM

VM

“ Mama Lois you will truly be missed. Thanks for the wonderful life lessons you showed me over the years and especially while we worked together at the Kalamazoo Community Foundation. RIH - Valerie Mitchell



Valerie Mitchell - December 14, 2016 at 01:33 PM

BM

“ We lived back to back with the Jacksons in the late 60s and early 70s.. Lois and I had babies in the same years and our children were always together-either at their house or ours. We have fond memories of those years and are sorry to hear of her passing. Blessings to you all. The Mergens

Brenda Mergen - December 14, 2016 at 08:14 AM

DB

“ *My sincerest condolences to Mr. Jackson, and my friends Tony, Angie, and Tiffany. You are in my thoughts and prayers. God bless.*

David Barron - December 14, 2016 at 05:24 AM



“ *I had the blessing of getting acquainted with Lois while working a United Way Campaign. Always an encourager, she introduced me to Better Together Kalamazoo. An amazing lady who touched many lives.*

*Jane Lockwood, Kalamazoo*

Jane Lockwood - December 13, 2016 at 08:16 PM

LL

“ *The Kalamazoo community has lost a wonderful woman who brought many recreational programs and services to all ages from all walks of life as the Director of Parks and Recreation for the city. I enjoyed working with and learning from her as well as traveling to a few National Recreation Conferences together.*

*James and family, I am very sorry for your loss. Lois will be missed but not forgotten.*

*My thoughts are with you.*

*Dr. Linda Law  
WMU (Recreation Faculty) Emerita*

Linda Law - December 13, 2016 at 07:33 PM

LL

“ *I was so surprised to read in the Gazette that Lois has left us. I really respected her, her attitude and all she's done with the community. Jim, my heart goes out to you.*

*Leslie Lance*

Leslie Lance - December 13, 2016 at 04:13 PM

RW

“ RJ And Anita Wilkerson lit a candle in memory of Mrs. Loistine "Lois" Jackson



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**RJ and Anita Wilkerson** - December 13, 2016 at 01:58 PM

OO

“ Thank you Lois for all you did for kids. You were the trailblazer for all of us that work in recreation here in Kazoo. You will truly be missed.

God Bless

O'Neal & Terri Ollie

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**O'Neal Ollie** - December 13, 2016 at 01:44 PM

BT

“ Sport, sorry to hear about the loss of your wife, My prayers for you and the family. I know this must be a difficult time for you however God doesn't make mistakes. Trust in the Lord with all your heart and lean not on your own understanding, in all thy ways acknowledge Him and he will direct thy path. My family and my church will be praying for your family.

I'm sorry I can't be with you on friday but I will talk with you later.

Blessings

B.C. (Bobbie) Thompson and Family

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**B.C. (Bobbie) Thompson** - December 13, 2016 at 01:00 PM

BB

“ *Loistine was the daughter of my moms sister Ernestine. Lois and her siblings also stayed in St. Louis with Aunt Madge and my mom Aunt Lois after the death of Aunt Ernestine. Lois and I had so many great times together. I remember we drove to Michigan for her wedding.*

*She shared with me her struggles especially after I was diagnosed with Cancer. We prayed together and every morning I would text her the morning scripture and prayer. The last time I saw Loistine was in 2013 and she looked amazing.*

*Rest in Peace my dear cousin, no more pain. You are in heaven with your family. I love you so much.*

*Barbara Witherspoon-Babbitt - Yuba City California*



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**Barbara Babbitt** - December 13, 2016 at 11:50 AM

BE

“ *I will forever remember her beautiful smile and warm heart.*

*Love always,  
Bernice*

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**Bernice** - December 13, 2016 at 09:54 AM

ST

“ *To our Family, Lucas, Jackson, Loistine "Lois" had such a SWEET SPIRIT that you will never forget. Loistine Legacy will be TREASURED in each of our HEARTS. I am praying for PEACE to bring COMFORT, COURAGE to FACE the DAYS AHEAD and LOVING MEMORIES to HOLD DEAR in YOUR HEARTS. The Thorn's Robert Jr. , Shirley, Shirhonda and Erica Thorn of Colt, Arkansas*



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**Shirley Williams Thorn** - December 13, 2016 at 12:30 AM