



## Mrs. Bertha Jean Stewart-Harris

November 26, 1948 - September 16, 2024

\*\*\*A VISITATION & FUNERAL SERVICE IN LOVING MEMORY FOR MRS. BERTHA JEAN STEWART-HARRIS WILL BE HELD MONDAY, SEPTEMBER 30, 2024, AT VALLEY FAMILY CHURCH IN KALAMAZOO.

\*\*\*\*PLEASE SEE THE PUBLIC VISITATION AND SERVICE TIMES AND LOCATION WHICH ARE LISTED BELOW\*\*\*\*

\*\*\*\*\*PLEASE NOTE: MASKS AVAILABLE ON REQUEST. THE CHURCH WILL PROVIDE HAND SANITIZER WHEN ENTERING THE BUILDING.

If you have any questions, please contact us at: (269) 342-1000

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### OBITUARY

November 26, 1948, a bouncing baby girl entered the earth with a mission. By age 8, she would know what her mission was and from that time on, with hills and valleys, she marched forward with her mission in heart. Inspired by Florence Nightingale, Dr. Bertha Jean Stewart-Harris achieved her nursing degree in 1968 and went on to achieve her Registered Nurse licensure, bachelor's degree in nursing-board certified, master's degree in organizational management and a PhD in Leadership with a published dissertation in the National Library of Congress. Academically, she soared to heights beyond her imagination.

Professionally, she would inspire hundreds if not thousands of people. She broke through countless ceilings to become the first Black female evening administrator at a major hospital and then on to several professional roles that focused on quality, excellence, and safe healthcare services. From creating the first Parish Nurse program in a major hospital in Kalamazoo to serving as a public servant commissioner, to leading the first Gerontology in Nursing certification program to personally serving hundreds of Kalamazoo residents as their health advocate, Dr. Stewart-Harris led an active life. In her most recent role as a Quality Nurse Specialist with Battle Creek VA Medical Center, she ensured that veterans received consistently high-quality healthcare services with dignity and respect. Even when on vacation with her family, if she witnessed a car accident or a person in distress, she would be the first on the scene to assist with stabilizing and saving people. Up to her transition, she inspired and ignited the “can do with Christ” attitude in anyone who was willing to know her story.

Aside from all of her academic and professional accomplishments, Dr. Stewart-Harris’ highest achievements was with mothering not two, not four, but six daughters! she also gained two more for a grand total of eight daughters! All these daughters have subsequently led to nine grandchildren, and one great grandson. Until the day of her transition, Dr. Stewart-Harris faithfully joined her daughters for 6:00 a.m. prayer. In the evenings, she and her husband virtually attended family Bible study and prayer with their daughters. An ardent bible scholar, Sunday School teacher, and Parish Nurse, she committed to living out the lessons she taught.

Dr. Stewart-Harris loved God, she loved her family, and she loved people. She didn’t believe in retirement and would often say that the word “retirement” wasn’t in the Bible. Every moment she could, she would teach, demonstrate, and give her best to anyone. As a volunteer with her home church, Valley

Family Church, she along with her husband, Mark, welcomed attendees and members on Sunday mornings with flavor and style.

Out of all her roles and titles, Dr. Stewart-Harris wanted others to know that she was first and foremost a child of God. She gave her life to Christ at an early age and kept her relationship with Him at the forefront throughout her life. To her, nothing mattered if she didn't have a personal relationship with Christ as her Lord and Savior.

On September 16, 2024, Dr. Bertha Jean Stewart-Harris answered the call to complete her final promotion and return to her heavenly home-base.

Dr. Bertha was preceded in death by her mother and father, Robert D. and Lucinda Stewart, Booker T. Newsome (brother), Rosie L. Montgomery (sister), Florida Moore (aunt), and Buckner T. Green (uncle).

She leaves to treasure her memories: her loving husband, Mark Richard Harris, her daughters Sharon (Leslie) White, Priscillia (Rosby) James-Lee, Cythnia (Sonny) James-Martinez, Trauna James, Mona Lisa (Anthony) Watson, Jasmine (Phil) Gist; daughters by marriage, Alanna Harris and Lekisha (Nicholas) Vassel; her grandchildren Alexander (Makenzie), Michaela, Mackenzie, Kerrigan, Makari, Reina, Mia, Ana, Nicholas Jr. and great-grandson Edwin (aka Tre); her brother Jerry L. Stewart, brother-in-love Rev. Dan Montgomery, Bonus brother, Maurice Harley, bonus sisters, Dorothy Whitten and Minister Bertha Morgan; bonus son Rev. Kevin E. Wright, bonus daughter Yasma Daniels, and a host of nieces, great-nieces, nephews, great-nephews, cousins, friends, and colleagues.

During her last message at a family gathering, she repeated the same message as she had through the years; "Get to know GOD and have a

personal relationship with Jesus Christ.” Dr. Stewart-Harris will be missed by many. Her entire life is too momentous to cover in this text; but if we could, it would take an eternity and more pages than we have trees. Although her departure from us was immediate, she lived a lifetime of being an example for us to follow. In the words of one of her favorite biblical letters from Paul to Timothy, “I have fought the good fight, I have finished the race, I have kept the faith.” (2 Timothy 4:7).

Well-done Dr. Stewart-Harris. Well-done Jean. Well-done Grandma. Well-done Me-Ma. Well-done daughter of the Most High. Mission accomplished, you have been promoted!

# Cemetery Details

## **Ft. Custer National Cemetery**

Augusta, MI

# Previous Events

## **Public Viewing For Family and Friends**

SEP **30**. 10:30 AM - 11:00 AM (ET)

Valley Family Church  
2500 Vincent Avenue  
Portage, MI

## **A Celebration of Life**

SEP **30**. 11:00 AM - 12:30 PM (ET)

Valley Family Church  
2500 Vincent Avenue  
Portage, MI

# Tribute Wall



“ Harper Funeral Home created a Tribute Video in memory of Mrs. Bertha Jean Stewart-Harris



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**Harper Funeral Home** - September 28, 2024 at 11:09 PM

JV

*Mona Lisa:  
My sincere sympathies. Your Mom was a very special lady. I learned a lot by being on committees with her at Bronson. Cherish the memories!*

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**Julie VanderNoot** - October 04, 2024 at 04:32 PM

MW

“ Mary Williams lit a candle in memory of Mrs. Bertha Jean Stewart-Harris



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**Mary Williams** - October 15, 2024 at 06:27 PM

PK

“ I was a new nurse at Borgess when I met Bertha back in 78. She was a 3-11 supervisor and always looked out for us when issues arose or we needed a lunch break. Over the years we met up again at the Battle Creek VA and same ole Bertha as any job they gave her, she did with 110%. Sad to see another inspirational nurse pass away as learned so much from her

Peg Dudek Kwasniewski - October 04, 2024 at 02:59 PM

AB

“ Condolences to the family. Ms. Bertha was a wonderful person and coworker while I was at the VA. She will truly be missed

Annie Ruth Bruton-Gamble - October 01, 2024 at 12:24 PM

CB

“ My condolences to Bertha's family I knew her from Borgess Hospital, I also worked with her sister Rosie, I had no idea that Rosie had passed away, until I read Bertha's obituary. May they both R.I.P.

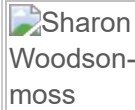
Carrol T. Blair - September 30, 2024 at 12:25 PM

TH

“ Thara lit a candle in memory of Mrs. Bertha Jean Stewart-Harris



Thara - September 30, 2024 at 11:27 AM



“ I worked with Bertha in at the VA. She loved Nursing and had high standards of care. When I retired, we lost contact. I wish she had retired also. However, she is with the Lord. I know she believed in Jesus Christ as her savior. Love and will miss you, my sister in Jesus. Rest and keep the light on for me.

Sharon Woodson-moss - September 29, 2024 at 08:55 PM

MF

“ To Mona and Mia and your entire family our thoughts and prayers are with you during this difficult time



Merry and Dale Battles and Family - September 29, 2024 at 08:49 PM

CG

“ 1 file added to the tribute wall



Cheryl Gist - September 27, 2024 at 10:56 PM

PM

“ Papa & Nana G, Brittney, William & Madi purchased the Emerald Garden Basket for the family of Mrs. Bertha Jean Stewart-Harris.



Papa & Nana G, Brittney, William & Madi - September 27, 2024 at 10:43 PM

CG

“ 1 file added to the tribute wall



Cheryl Gist - September 27, 2024 at 10:33 PM

CB

“ Carrol T. Blair lit a candle in memory of Mrs. Bertha Jean Stewart-Harris



Carrol T. Blair - September 27, 2024 at 07:43 PM

KM

“ Karen Mitchell lit a candle in memory of Mrs. Bertha Jean Stewart-Harris



Karen Mitchell - September 27, 2024 at 04:37 PM

VA

“ Victor& Margo Anderson lit a candle in memory of Mrs. Bertha Jean Stewart-Harris



Victor& Margo Anderson - September 27, 2024 at 01:29 PM

KR

“ To all the beautiful daughters of Bertha Jean - we send our love and condolences. We said goodbye to Dad in January, so I feel your loss. It is funny the memories that come - the small and insignificant, but ones that remind you of love and caring. I remember visiting your house (2nd grade?) and the electric organ/keyboard and Gospel songs. I remember birthday parties with Cynthia. Your house was full of life and laughter and I'm sure you mom was the force behind the love. I hope that memories give you peace and I am thankful that you have the confidence of knowing she's gone home to be with her Savior and we'll all see her again. May you find strength in each other and keep her love alive.

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**Kristi** - September 27, 2024 at 11:24 AM

KM

“ Kristi (Marlatt) Urich, Charlene Marlatt purchased the Small Garden Dish for the family of Mrs. Bertha Jean Stewart-Harris.



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**Kristi (Marlatt) Urich, Charlene Marlatt** - September 27, 2024 at 11:15 AM

GM

“ Bertha,

*Praise God for you & your entire family,*

*Thank you Bertha for being loyal to God & the  
Nursing Profession.*

*As in 2 Timothy 4:7.*

*King James Version*

*7 You have fought a good fight, you have finished your course, you  
have kept the faith.*

*Will keep Stewart- Harris families in prayer!*

*A formal Co-Worker, Neighbor & Sis.- In-Christ!*

*Gwendolyn Moore, RN*



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**Gwendolyn Moore** - September 27, 2024 at 09:30 AM

PT

“ Praying for the family.



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**Patricia Thomas** - September 26, 2024 at 03:00 PM

WB

“ Wanda Brown lit a candle in memory of Bertha Stewart-Harris



Wanda Brown - September 25, 2024 at 07:08 PM

LS

“ Love your Pink Praises Sisters purchased the Peaceful White Lilies Basket for the family of Mrs. Bertha Jean Stewart-Harris.



Love your Pink Praises Sisters - September 25, 2024 at 05:20 PM

LS

“ Love your Pink Praises Sisters planted a [Memorial Tree](/store/Product.aspx?ProductId=4518) in honor of Mrs. Bertha Jean Stewart-Harris.

Love your Pink Praises Sisters - September 25, 2024 at 05:20 PM

CG

“ 1 file added to the album Photos & Videos



CHERYL GIST - September 25, 2024 at 12:49 PM

YD

“ Jean Thank you for raising my daughter to be the woman she is today..



Yasma Daniels - September 25, 2024 at 09:53 AM

RB

“ Rosemary Brown lit a candle in memory of Mrs. Bertha Jean Stewart-Harris



Rosemary Brown - September 24, 2024 at 10:15 PM

KA

“ My sincere condolences and prayers to the family. I had the pleasure of working with Ms Bertha at the VA. She was always a wonderful lady. She had my number on speed dial and every time those “crazy” video sessions would go down, she would hit me up. I enjoyed every minute with her and missed her dearly. I wish I could sit and talk one more time. She will truly be missed.



Kellie Anderson - September 24, 2024 at 06:03 PM

FP

“ We are Jerry Steward friends here in Wichita Falls Texas. Patsy and I am so sorry for your unexpected loss of your beloved family member. The Lord is always there for the family!  
Patsy and Fred Prejean

fred and Patsy Prejean - September 24, 2024 at 05:33 PM

JM

“ Joyce McDowell lit a candle in memory of Mrs. Bertha Jean Stewart-Harris



Joyce McDowell - September 23, 2024 at 09:22 PM

DZ

“ Darlene Zackery sent a virtual gift in memory of Mrs. Bertha Jean Stewart-Harris



Darlene Zackery - September 22, 2024 at 08:10 PM

JR

“ Dr Bertha James, you will truly be missed. Love you ❤️  
Dr Jerri Robinson and family



Jerri Robinson - September 20, 2024 at 12:22 PM

WF

“ Sharon may God give you and your family His peace and comfort as you mourn the death of your beloved mother.



Wendy Fields - September 20, 2024 at 06:05 AM

AR

“ ArleneBuchanan sent a virtual gift in memory of Bertha Stewart-Harris



ArleneBuchanan - September 20, 2024 at 01:56 AM

CM

“ To my Aunt Jean and her family. My condolences to you and your family. You will be truly missed. Love you Cephia



Cephia McIntosh - September 19, 2024 at 11:18 PM

TR

“ Sending love and light to the family!



Tami Rey - September 19, 2024 at 08:59 PM