



## Mrs. Gaynell Casey

March 31, 1935 - November 16, 2014

Gaynell Casey, affectionately known as “Mama”, went home to be with the Lord, November 16, 2014, peacefully surrounded by her children. She was born March 31, 1935, the daughter of Cleasie and Sarah Johnson Gardner in Okolona, MS. Gaynell relocated with her family to Kalamazoo, MI as an infant and remained a life-long resident. She attended Kalamazoo Public Schools, and graduated from Kalamazoo Central High School.

She was employed by Zellerbach Corporation, working there until her retirement in 1994. She accepted Christ at an early age at Mt. Zion Baptist Church in Kalamazoo.

She remained a member there until 1958, after the founding of Galilee Baptist Church. She remained an active member at Galilee, serving in various ministries, which included the Hospitality Ministry, until her passing.

Gaynell enjoyed meeting with her many friends for weekly bible study held at the Ecumenical Senior Center and taught by Bro. Larry Harris. She also enjoyed traveling, playing cards, and was an avid bowler. Family was very important to her, and she enjoyed most of all being in the company of her five children, who were also her best friends. She was a soft-spoken, kind and very giving woman who would help anyone. She was very simple—and was not a pretentious person. But, when she was given a loving surprise by her

son with a phone call from Billie Dee Williams, who gave her encouraging words and a birthday song from Chaka Khan during her illness, it brought a happiness and joy to her spirit.

She was preceded in death by her husband, James L. Casey; her parents; and son-in-law, Clyde Smith.

Gaynell leaves to cherish her memories, her 5 children who have been dedicated, loving and caring: Wendell C. Gardner, Dawn M. Smith, Janet L. Gardner all of Kalamazoo; Jeffrey S. Gardner of South Bend, Indiana and Bradley (Kelita) Gardner of Ladera Ranch, California; 6 grandchildren: Erik L. Gardner (Rhonda) of Clinton Township, MI; Shawn L. Gardner of Columbus, Ohio ; Cameron Gardner, Kory Gardner, Evan Gardner and Megan Lynn Gardner all of Kalamazoo; 6 great grandchildren and 1 great-great grandson; her sister- in-law, Shirley Casey Wheeler of Indianapolis; brother/cousin Michael Williams; goddaughter, Kimberly O'Bannon; special cousins, Ernestine Varnum, Esther Buchanan, Lois Owens and Olivia Neeley; special friend, Gwendolyn Johnson and a host of cousins, nieces, nephews, family and friends.

The family extends a special thanks to: Dr. Marcia Leipman and staff, Dorothy Westbrook, Pat Ford, Julianne Holdridge, Lerner Davis, Ruthie Walker, Pastor Lenzy Bell, Tiffany Gardner-Watkins, JoAnne Smith-Gardner, Bonnie Snow, Bob Carol and Connie Kyes-Myland; Galilee Hospitality and Mission Ministries, The Ecumenical Senior Center and the entire Galilee Baptist Church Family - your help and compassion during our mothers illness is greatly appreciated. You'll never know how much that meant to her and all of us.

# Cemetery Details

## Riverside Cemetery

1015 Gull Road  
Kalamazoo, MI 49048

# Previous Events

## Visitation

NOV 20. 5:00 PM - 7:00 PM (ET)

Harper Funeral Home - Chapel  
521 Douglas Avenue  
Kalamazoo, MI

## A Homegoing Celebration

NOV 21. 1:00 AM (ET)

The Galilee Baptist Church  
1216 North Westnedge Avenue  
Kalamazoo, MI 49007

## Family Hour

NOV 21. 12:00 PM - 1:00 PM (ET)

The Galilee Baptist Church  
1216 N. Westnedge Avenue  
Kalamazoo, MI



# Tribute Wall



“ *Mrs. Gaynell Casey*

October 23, 2023 at 06:06 AM



“ *Mrs. Gaynell Casey*

October 06, 2023 at 10:42 AM



“ *Ursula Williams & Family lit a candle in memory of Mrs. Gaynell Casey*



**Ursula Williams & Family** - September 12, 2015 at 09:44 PM



“ *Cordell & Brenda Gardner lit a candle in memory of Mrs. Gaynell Casey*



**Cordell & Brenda Gardner** - November 29, 2014 at 06:20 PM



“ *Family, Please accept our deepest sympathy in the death of your mother. Although words are of little comfort at a time like this, please know that the Dooley family are thinking of you daily. Gaynell will be Miss.*

**Phillip Dooley** - November 27, 2014 at 04:29 PM

HC

“ Sylvester & Herberta Carver



---

**Herberta Carver** - November 23, 2014 at 05:23 PM

CB

“ Crystal Bell lit a candle in memory of Mrs. Gaynell Casey



---

**crystal bell** - November 22, 2014 at 06:36 PM

AM

“ I will miss Mrs. Gaynell, her and Mrs. Olivia Nealey would call me to take them to Indiana for family funerals, celebrations going on in Indiana and etc. I made myself available and they would always ask me if, I was ready to go home. I said I have nothing at home to do, I am ready when you guys are ready to go home. I didn't want to rush them and I never did rush them, and it was a joy to be in the company of these 2 ladies. My heart was heavy when I found out she was getting sicker. My Prayers go out to the entire family and may God continue to help you thru this loss, she was a great person one I will never forget. God Bless You, Audrey McGrew-Rancifer

---

**Audrey McGrew-Rancifer** - November 21, 2014 at 08:00 PM

MG

“ *MR. & Mrs. Bradley Gardner lit a candle in memory of Mrs. Gaynell Casey*



---

**MR. & Mrs. Bradley Gardner** - November 21, 2014 at 05:30 PM

TF

“ *The Bradford Family lit a candle in memory of Mrs. Gaynell Casey*



---

**The Bradford Family** - November 21, 2014 at 01:50 PM

JS

“ *Gaynell, Our friendship and my memories of you were wonderful. We had some great times when we were young. I will truly miss you dearly.*



*My sincere condolences to your family.*

*James (Smitty) Smith , Kalamazoo, Mi*

---

**James Smith** - November 21, 2014 at 12:43 PM

LB

“ *Linda Brashers lit a candle in memory of Mrs. Gaynell Casey*



Linda Brashers - November 21, 2014 at 08:45 AM

EB

“ *Eddie Reid And Bernadette Ballard-Reid lit a candle in memory of Mrs. Gaynell Casey*



Eddie Reid and Bernadette Ballard-Reid - November 21, 2014 at 08:29 AM

DB

“ *DaNetta R Blake lit a candle in memory of Mrs. Gaynell Casey*



DaNetta R Blake - November 21, 2014 at 07:33 AM

W(

“ *Walter And Reva (Bell)Woodard lit a candle in memory of Mrs. Gaynell Casey*



Walter and Reva (Bell)Woodard - November 20, 2014 at 10:37 PM

JG

“ 1 file added to the tribute wall



**Jay Gardner** - November 20, 2014 at 08:57 PM



“ My fondest memory of Gaynell Casey and family is how they accepted me as part of their family. I attended WMU and met Janet while working at Jewel Foods. We became BFF (sisters from another mother). She introduced me to Momma Gaynell. Momma took me under her wings and accepted me as if she took care of me all my life. Wendell, Dawn, Bradley, and Jeff had no other choice but to adopt me too. Thank you and thank GOD for allowing me to become a member of this GOD blessed family. Trust and Believe even though I am not there physically, I am with my family spiritually. Love you all always and Momma Gaynell RIH and see you when I get there. Sharon Randle 11/20/2014

**Sharon Randle** - November 20, 2014 at 07:09 PM

CE

“ Sending prayers to Family Mrs. Gaynell family. You will be greatly miss. RIH Mrs. Gaynell. From the Green & Jones Family



**Cea** - November 20, 2014 at 06:48 PM

DB

“ Donald & Ruby (Walker) Barbee lit a candle in memory of Mrs. Gaynell Casey



Donald & Ruby (Walker) Barbee - November 20, 2014 at 06:40 PM

CM

“ May God give you peace that surpasses all understanding!



Charise McPherson - November 20, 2014 at 05:28 PM

LB

“ Thanks Gaynell for your love and support of our family, and the encouragement you gave me in the Ministry. Your honesty, kindness and tough love was valuable in helping me keep it real.

*Pastor Lenzy & Lori Ann Bell and Family*

Lenzy E. Bell - November 20, 2014 at 05:24 PM

DS

“ David And Garrie Smith lit a candle in memory of Mrs. Gaynell Casey



David and Garrie Smith - November 20, 2014 at 03:55 PM

MA

“ *Marisa lit a candle in memory of Mrs. Gaynell Casey*



---

**Marisa** - November 20, 2014 at 02:44 PM

SB

“ *Sandra K. Baker lit a candle in memory of Mrs. Gaynell Casey*



---

**Sandra K. Baker** - November 20, 2014 at 02:36 PM

CF

“ *Calvin & Juanita Daniel And Family lit a candle in memory of Mrs. Gaynell Casey*



---

**Calvin & Juanita Daniel and Family** - November 20, 2014 at 02:27 PM

JD

“ *Juanita Daniel lit a candle in memory of Mrs. Gaynell Casey*



---

**Juanita Daniel** - November 20, 2014 at 02:25 PM

PA

“ We sent a basket of flowers, said a prayer and reflected on photos with precious memories of joyous times spent with Gaynell and family over the many years. Know that her gentle smile, twinkling eyes and softly spoken words of encouragement will never be forgotten. May God continue to bless and comfort you. Much love always, Aunt Thelma and family.

Patricia A.Gardner - November 20, 2014 at 01:30 PM



“ Secret Garden Basket was purchased for the family of Mrs. Gaynell Casey.



November 20, 2014 at 01:11 PM

AG

“ Alicia Gardner-White lit a candle in memory of Mrs. Gaynell Casey



Alicia Gardner-White - November 20, 2014 at 11:42 AM

FH

“ Our thoughts and prayers are with Bradley Gardner and family as you celebrate the home going of your mother. Flora and Willie (Flip) Harrell



Flora and Willie Harrell - November 20, 2014 at 11:17 AM

JJ

“ *JoAnne And Renaford Owens Jr lit a candle in memory of Mrs. Gaynell Casey*



JoAnne and Renaford Owens Jr - November 20, 2014 at 09:53 AM

GS

“ *George And Gwendolyn Smith lit a candle in memory of Mrs. Gaynell Casey*



George and Gwendolyn Smith - November 20, 2014 at 09:18 AM



“ *Beautiful in Blue was purchased for the family of Mrs. Gaynell Casey.*



November 20, 2014 at 08:50 AM

JH

“ *Jakiya Horton lit a candle in memory of Mrs. Gaynell Casey*



jakiya horton - November 20, 2014 at 06:11 AM



“ *Pink Tribute Spray was purchased for the family of Mrs. Gaynell Casey.*



---

November 20, 2014 at 01:45 AM



“ *Malinda Ligon-Whitley lit a candle in memory of Mrs. Gaynell Casey*



---

**Malinda Ligon-Whitley** - November 20, 2014 at 12:06 AM



“ *Lucile Johnson lit a candle in memory of Mrs. Gaynell Casey*



---

**Lucile Johnson** - November 19, 2014 at 10:31 PM



“ *J.L. & Terry Buchanan lit a candle in memory of Mrs. Gaynell Casey*



---

**J.L. & Terry Buchanan** - November 19, 2014 at 09:27 PM

TJ

“ *Our thoughts and prayers are with you all. Ms. Casey was a kind, sweet lady who always had a smile. She will always remain in our hearts and thoughts. God bless each of you during this difficult time. Tammi, David and Jaren*



---

**Tammara Johnson** - November 19, 2014 at 09:11 PM

JG

“ *Jeffrey Gardner lit a candle in memory of Mrs. Gaynell Casey*



---

**Jeffrey Gardner** - November 19, 2014 at 09:03 PM

JG

“ *I truly truly want to thank you for giving me life and praying to save my life. Through everything you stayed loving and never lost faith that I would find my way. I can't put into words how lucky my sibling and I are to have you as our mother. You are loved more then words can express and will be missed. Not only did I get to have you as my mother but also my best friend.....  
Until we see each other again  
Jeffrey*

---

**Jeffrey Gardner** - November 19, 2014 at 09:01 PM

EW

“ Sending our condolence to your family,  
Praying that God will comfort you, and supply  
you with every thing you need. Sincerely, The  
Henry family. George, Evelyn, Duffy, Lenora,  
Wanda, Donna.



Evelyn Henry Warr - November 19, 2014 at 06:40 PM

JE

“ JoAnn Embrey lit a candle in memory of Mrs.  
Gaynell Casey



JoAnn Embrey - November 19, 2014 at 06:19 PM

TF

“ Timothy Fennessee light a candle for Ms  
Casey



timothy fennessee - November 19, 2014 at 05:52 PM

MF

“ Mattie Fields And Family sent a virtual gift in  
memory of Mrs. Gaynell Casey



Mattie Fields and Family - November 19, 2014 at 05:25 PM

EF

“ *Earline Fields And Family sent a virtual gift in memory of Mrs. Gaynell Casey*



---

**Earline Fields and Family** - November 19, 2014 at 05:20 PM

SR

“ *Sheela Jackson and Dwayne Roberts purchased the Peaceful White Lilies Basket for the family of Mrs. Gaynell Casey.*



---

**Sheela Jackson and Dwayne Roberts** - November 19, 2014 at 05:05 PM

DG

“ *Deveta Gardner lit a candle in memory of Mrs. Gaynell Casey*



---

**Deveta Gardner** - November 19, 2014 at 04:35 PM

KM

“ *Gay was a sweet, kind, caring lady. I am grateful that I was able to work with her at Zellerbach. My condolences to her family.*

*Kathy (Murphy) Miller*

---

**Kathy Miller** - November 19, 2014 at 03:54 PM



“ *Karest Willis-Brown lit a candle in memory of Mrs. Gaynell Casey*



---

**Karest Willis-Brown** - November 19, 2014 at 03:08 PM

JS

“ *JoAnne Smith-Gardner lit a candle in memory of Mrs. Gaynell Casey*



---

**JoAnne Smith-Gardner** - November 19, 2014 at 02:41 PM

TG

“ *Tracy And Girls lit a candle in memory of Mrs. Gaynell Casey*



---

**Tracy and Girls** - November 19, 2014 at 02:38 PM

MG

“ *Megan & Gisselle Gardner lit a candle in memory of Mrs. Gaynell Casey*



---

**Megan & Gisselle Gardner** - November 19, 2014 at 02:36 PM

DJ

“ Deacon William & Laverne Jones lit a candle  
in memory of Mrs. Gaynell Casey



---

**Deacon William & Laverne Jones** - November 19, 2014 at 01:49 PM

TF

“ The Steele Family lit a candle in memory of  
Mrs. Gaynell Casey



---

**The Steele Family** - November 19, 2014 at 01:32 PM

MR

“ Mrs, Katherine Ross lit a candle in memory of  
Mrs. Gaynell Casey



---

**Mrs, Katherine Ross** - November 19, 2014 at 01:03 PM

RB

“ Rev. John A.Buchanan And Creola Buchanan  
lit a candle in memory of Mrs. Gaynell Casey



---

**Rev. John A.Buchanan and Creola Buchanan** - November 19, 2014 at 01:01 PM

HB

“ Hal & Janet Buchanan lit a candle in memory of Mrs. Gaynell Casey



Hal & Janet Buchanan - November 19, 2014 at 12:24 PM

JA

“ Janet lit a candle in memory of Mrs. Gaynell Casey



Janet - November 19, 2014 at 12:22 PM

AF

“ Avery And Palm Family lit a candle in memory of Mrs. Gaynell Casey



Avery and Palm Family - November 19, 2014 at 12:19 PM

OF

“ Odie & Michelle Dancer, Family lit a candle in memory of Mrs. Gaynell Casey



Odie & Michelle Dancer, Family - November 19, 2014 at 12:01 PM

PF

“ *PATTERSON FAMILY lit a candle in memory of Mrs. Gaynell Casey*



---

**PATTERSON FAMILY** - November 19, 2014 at 11:31 AM

DJ

“ *The most loving cousin who was so special that we affectionally called her aunt gaynell. She meant the world to me and my siblings and she will be truly missed. her beautiful smile and kind words will be missed also.....R.I.H. ...missing u so much !*



---

**Dianna ((deedee) Jackson** - November 19, 2014 at 11:23 AM

EB

“ *Precious in the Lord Sight - Esther Buchanan and Family.*

---

**Esther Buchanan** - November 19, 2014 at 11:15 AM

CF

“ *Charlene Harkness& Family lit a candle in memory of Mrs. Gaynell Casey*



---

**Charlene Harkness& family** - November 19, 2014 at 10:01 AM

BH

“ To Mrs Gaynell Casey Family from Miss Brenda Hill and Family, I love Mrs Gaynell she will truly be missed, because one thing about Mrs Gaynell she is warm, kind, sweet. the Hill family  
<http://storage.lifetributes.com/Candles/new/candle-10.png>



**Brenda Hill** - November 19, 2014 at 07:46 AM

AB

“ Greetings to family and friends I remember Ms. Gaynell, she was one of my mother's very good friends my mother's name is Mae Alice Johnson/Bates -Phillips (Dec). Hearing this news really sadden me. Rest, Ms. Gaynell Rest. FAMILY STAY STRONG, STAY IN PRAYER UP LIFT HIS HOLY NAME. From Mae's daughter: Arlene Bates- Barbee.



**Arlene Barbee** - November 19, 2014 at 07:39 AM

BF

“ Betty Ford lit a candle in memory of Mrs. Gaynell Casey



**Betty Ford** - November 18, 2014 at 08:50 PM

AJ

“ *Aubrey Avery, Jr. lit a candle in memory of Mrs. Gaynell Casey*



---

**Aubrey Avery, Jr.** - November 18, 2014 at 08:37 PM

AJ

*To the family, what a great gift offered to each of you and each of us that knew Gaynell. She was and will always be remembered as a most wonderful and beautiful spirit.  
To the family, God offered a most excellent Gift and a most wonderful Mom. From Aubrey Avery, Mary Lee Bailey and Brian Edwards.*

---

**Aubrey Avery, Jr.** - November 20, 2014 at 10:52 PM

DB

“ *Donna Brayboy lit a candle in memory of Mrs. Gaynell Casey*



---

**Donna Brayboy** - November 18, 2014 at 07:14 PM

KH

“ *What a great lady god has received I was so blessed to had gotten to spend so many great times with her and her family love and prayer's to you all,from Darrell and Kelly Hill*

---

**kelly and darrell hill** - November 18, 2014 at 06:54 PM

KH

“ Kelly And Darrell Hill lit a candle in memory of Mrs. Gaynell Casey



kelly and darrell hill - November 18, 2014 at 06:50 PM

GW

“ GEORGIA WILLIAMS AND FAMILY



GEORGIA WILLIAMS - November 18, 2014 at 06:19 PM

KF

“ Karla Jackson And Family lit a candle in memory of Mrs. Gaynell Casey



Karla Jackson and family - November 18, 2014 at 04:04 PM

TA

“ The Andersons sent a virtual gift in memory of Mrs. Gaynell Casey



The Andersons - November 18, 2014 at 03:47 PM

BC

“ *I thank the Lord for allowing me to share a phone call with this beautiful woman. Prayers up to the family and friends. God bless and love.*

Byron Culp - November 18, 2014 at 03:41 PM

PG

“ *Pauline Gardner lit a candle in memory of Mrs. Gaynell Casey*



Pauline Gardner - November 18, 2014 at 03:40 PM



“ *I thank God for the wonderful legacy of Gaynell Casey. In addition to being a kind and loving mother, she raised her children in the fear and admintion of the Lord. Praise God for Gaynell!*

Kelita Gardner - November 18, 2014 at 02:22 PM

MR

*May it help to know that friends for many years are praying for your family at this time. Remember God said "Cast your cares on Him for he cares for you" Love your family God Bless you..*

Modean Reeves - November 19, 2014 at 06:02 PM

JD

*Dawn & the Family:*

*My sincere condolences to you all as you go through this most difficult time relative to your mother, Gaynell.*

*My memories of her go back many years and include meeting her while playing football for the Kalamazoo All-Stars and bowling in the TNBA. In recent years, I have seen her at the Ecumenical Senior Center continually being herself. She was a pleasant woman who always had a kind word for others. May God bless her and may you find peace in the life that she lived which reflected a strong relationship with the Lord.*

*John Davis*

---

**John Davis** - November 21, 2014 at 11:33 AM