

Active Pallbearers

Doug Braxton • LaMont Bray • Eric Scott Randall
Ronnie Summer • Eric Wenger • Senator George E. Young, Sr.

Honorary Pallbearers

Russell Carter, II • James Green • Ke'Vante Jackson
Steve Lacy • Juan Melendez • Stan Williams

Flower Bearers

Kitty Asberry • Gina Bonner
Joyce Howard • Vickie Wilson

Honorary Flower Bearers

Top Ladies of Distinction
Alpha Kappa Alpha Sorority, Inc.
Phi Delta Kappa Sorority

Interment

Memorial Park
Muskogee, Oklahoma

Services under the direction of:

TEMPLE & SONS FUNERAL DIRECTORS, INC.

2801 North Kelley Avenue
Oklahoma City, Oklahoma 73111
(405) 427-8321

"We Care" — II Timothy 4:8

Acknowledgment

The family of Thelma Reece Parks would like to thank each and everyone of you who came to visit and called mother during her illness. Your prayers, cards, flowers, and other expressions of love have strengthened us during our loss. A special thank you to the Fab Five: Stan, Joyce, Kitty, Vickie, and Gina. She loved each of you. May God's richest blessings continue to abound in your lives.

Celebrating the Life and Legacy of Thelma Reece Parks

SUNRISE
April 4, 1923

SUNSET
September 11, 2019



SERVICES

Wednesday, September 18, 2019 — 11:00 a.m.

FAIRVIEW BAPTIST CHURCH

1700 Northeast 7th Street • Oklahoma City, OK

Rev. Dr. John A. Reed, Jr., Pastor
Eulogist

Dr. John W. Peoples, Pastor
Faith Memorial Baptist Church
3117 N. Kelley Avenue • Oklahoma City, OK
Officiating

Precious Memories



Urban League, Alpha Kappa Alpha Sorority, NAACP, National Sorority of Phi Delta Kappa, Top Ladies of Distinction and the Nu Arts Association. She was a member of the Mayor's Committee on Disability Concerns, YWCA, Capitol Chamber of Commerce, Oklahoma State School Boards Association Board of Directors, League of Women Voters, and the EZ Empowerment Zone. She has served on many other community boards, including Langston University's Alumni Association and The Oklahoma City Housing Authority, where she served as chairman for four years.

Some of her awards include the Oklahoma City NAACP Life Time Achievement Award, Langston University's Distinguished Alumnus Award, Who's Who Among Black Americans, Black College Hall of Fame Inductee, Urban League Volunteer of the Year Award and the Outstanding Public Service Award.

Mrs. Parks faith and devotion to the Lord lead her to become one of the founding members at Faith Memorial Baptist Church, where she served as a Trustee.

Thelma married Leroy Parks in 1953 and together they had one daughter Dia Denise. Mrs. Parks loved her family and enjoyed being the matriarch.

She was the last surviving sibling and was preceded in death by her parents, Thomas and Estelle; siblings: Charlesetta Reece Allen, Thomas Reece, Joseph Edward Reece, Mary Elizabeth Reece Anderson, Hannah Amanda Reece Parks, George Reece, and Avalon Bobbyette Reece.

She is survived by her daughter, Dia Parks Green (James) of Forkland, AL; granddaughter, Diaka Carter Melendez (Juan) of Houston, TX; grandson, Russell Carter, II (Laura) of Oklahoma City; and four great-grandchildren: Ke'Vante, Diabra, Julia and Karolyne; nieces and nephews: Brenda Reece Watson of St. Louis, MO, Carolyn Reece Hickman (Ernest) of Middletown, OH, Alfred Parks of Hemet, CA, Eddie Parks (Linda) of Murrieta, CA, Agnes Parks Branch (Kenneth) of Colorado Springs, CO, Thelma Parks Henderson (Paul) of Hemet, CA, and Henry Parks of San Bernardino, CA. She is also survived by her godson, Stan Williams; and a host of loyal friends, including Joyce Howard, Vickie Wilson, Kitty Asberry, Gina Bonner, and countless others whom she loved dearly.

This is the day which the Lord hath made; we will rejoice and be glad in it.

— Psalms 118:24 KJV



DON'T LEAVE THAT "R" OUT OF THELMA R. PARKS' NAME

We are here to roast the sixth child of nine,
Tom and Estella Reese raised Thelma to be accomplished and fine,
She speaks her mind, gives her input, she's not the one to tame.
Just DON'T LEAVE THAT "R" OUT OF THELMA R. PARKS' NAME.

She studied at Manual Training High School and later at Langston U,
She's taught at Wheatley, Dunbar, Truman, Douglass, and Grant to name a few,
She does take charge, does the job right, her plans will not be lame,
But DON'T LEAVE THAT "R" OUT OF THELMA R. PARKS' NAME.

Thelma has been the first to accomplish many things throughout her career,
And I don't think that she will forget her friends throughout this sudden burst of fame,
But friend or no friend, DON'T LEAVE THAT "R" OUT OF THELMA R. PARKS' NAME.

She has been president of the school board three separate times,
She has been there for her district and we all recognize her designs,
Now she won't let you forget that she is a powerful dame,
Just DON'T LEAVE THAT "R" OUT OF THELMA R. PARKS' NAME.

Thelma has been the first this and the first that for all of her life,
Believe it or not, she was even once known as a wife,
She never remembers that you would like for her to treat your name the same,
But just you DON'T LEAVE THAT "R" OUT OF THEMPA R. PARKS' NAME.

Thelma is listed in many books of Who's Who and has been a newsmaker in our state,
She has worked diligently in education and her concerns cannot wait,
She delegates, she operates, she knows how to play the game,
Just make sure you DON'T LEAVE THAT "R" OUT OF THELMA R. PARKS' NAME.

She is a mother and grandmother so she often visits the west coast,
Honored by Alpha Phi Alpha, Omega Psi Phi, Phi Delta Kappa, Alpha Kappa Alpha, so I give you a toast,
She does not consider the source from which the list came,
Incorrect list or not, DON'T LEAVE THAT "R" OUT OF THELMA R. PARKS' NAME.

So today she is honored with her name attached to a school,
Not bad for an educator who has played by the rules.
She does not realize that your age could be the blame,
Old or not, DON'T LEAVE THAT "R" OUT OF THELMA R. PARKS' NAME.



Order of Service



Processional Ministers, Funeral Directors, Family

Musical Selection Faith Memorial Choir

Scripture Reading
 Old Testament Dr. John W. Peoples
 New Testament Rev. Robin L. Wade

Prayer Rev. Carolyn Reece Hickman

Resolutions/Acknowledgement Kitty Asberry

Tribute/Reflections James Johnson
Joyce Henderson
Kirk Humphries, Former Mayor
Senator George E. Young, Sr.
Diaka R. Melendez
Russell Carter, II

Musical Selection Michael Brown

Eulogy Rev. Dr. John A. Reed, Jr.

Video Tribute

Parting View..... Temple & Sons Funeral Directors

Recessional Ministers, Funeral Directors, Family



Obituary

Thelma Reece Parks was born April 4, 1923 in Muskogee, Oklahoma to Thomas and Estelle Reece. The sixth of nine children, Thelma accepted Jesus Christ as her Lord and Savior at a young age.

A natural leader, she excelled in her school work and graduated early from Manual Training High School. She enrolled at Langston University in 1942, where she was elected class secretary and graduated Cum Laude with a degree in Elementary Education in 1945. She later earned her Master's Degree in Guidance and Counseling from the University of Oklahoma.

Wanting to enhance the lives of African American children in Muskogee, Mrs. Parks moved back to her hometown but was initially denied employment due to unfair hiring practices that existed against teachers of color. According to state law, she could not teach in the community without having experience in a rural area. Unwilling to accept the policies that were in place, a review was conducted by the State Board of Education and the Muskogee School System. Not only was Mrs. Parks hired to teach at Wheatley Elementary School, but the state requirements were also changed.

Looking for a new challenge, Mrs. Parks was hired at Dunbar Elementary School in Oklahoma City before taking a position at Truman Elementary School, which was one of the first integrated schools in the district.

In 1961, Dr. F. D. Moon hired her to be the first reading specialist at Douglass High School. By the end of her tenure, she would become the Chairman of the English Department.

Accepting a role outside the classroom, Mrs. Parks became the first African American Counselor at U. S. Grant High School in 1971, three years before any African American students were admitted. She later became the Director of Guidance and Counseling there before retiring in 1987.

Later that year she was elected to the Oklahoma City Public School Board of Education by the constituents in District 5 and was elected president in 1990. Knowing the value of an education, she was able to secure one of the largest bonds in Oklahoma City Public School history that lead to the construction of two new elementary schools. As a result of her leadership and dedication to the children of Oklahoma City, Thelma Reece Parks Elementary School was built in 1997.

In 1995, Mrs. Parks was a finalist for the prestigious Council of Great City Schools' Richard R. Green Award, given to a select group of board members from around the nation. She became the first African American from Oklahoma to serve on the National School Board Association's Board of Directors. In 2002, she was elected President of the National Black Caucus of School Board Members. And in April of 2015, she was initiated into the Oklahoma Women's Hall of Fame by then governor Mary Fallin.

Mrs. Parks has been inducted in the National Black College Alumni Hall of Fame in Atlanta, GA, and the Nu African American Hall of Fame in Oklahoma City. She is a life member of the

