



Mary Ruth Turner

July 12, 1944 - August 10, 2023

“My mission in life is not merely to survive but to thrive and to do so with some passion,
some compassion, some humor and some style” (Dr. Maya Angelou)

Having entered the world one week after Independence Day, Mary Ruth Turner was born on July 12, 1944. She was the sixth of twelve children born to the late Arthur (locally known as “Jack”) and Ruthie M. (Denson) Turner, and the third of seven girls in a close-knit, loving, caring family.

Mary attended Indianapolis Public Schools; elementary school #37 and Arsenal Technical (“Tech”) High School, where she graduated with honors and earned an Eli Lilly Scholarship to attend Indiana University in Bloomington, IN. Renowned for her love and advocacy of education, Mary’s life reflected a vast array of academic stature, honors and achievements at all levels. From an early onset in elementary and continuously throughout junior and high school, she consistently performed at the peak of her classes and earned numerous honors along the way. She grew up in a close-knit community on the Eastside of Indianapolis, better known as “The Hill” and has maintained close ties with childhood friends.

Mary moved to San Francisco and Oakland, CA in her early adult years where she worked for the Department of Social Services for a number of years before relocating to Chicago, IL. She maintained a very strong work ethic

throughout her career, spending the majority of her adult years working with attorneys before attending and graduating with honors from Loyola School of Law in Chicago. Mary devoted numerous years to private practice as a successful attorney in Chicago; Turner, Ward & Associates, specializing in Employment/Labor Law, while at the same time stepping into the political arena. As one news reporter put it, “she put candid in the word candidate” when she ran a very close race for Congress in Chicago’s 1980 election. She later worked as a legal representative for Chicago Park District before landing what she called her dream job, teaching law at a city college in Chicago. Although an English major with teaching credentials, her dream was short-lived when declining health conditions required her to move back home to Indianapolis with family support. Mary never let her disability stop her desire to remain a viable member of society and the workforce; advocating for seniors and disabled persons by serving as an IHA Commissioner, President of Senior Advisory Board for IHA, Resident Council President for Indiana Avenue Apartments, and serving on Julia Carson’s campaign, making sure handicap accessibility was available at voting sites. Mary never missed an opportunity to learn as was exemplified when she took advantage of an offering by Urban League to study Property Management. She taught computer classes for the disabled and disadvantaged for Goodwill Industries. She was a member of the League of Black Women Voters, Charter Member of National Museum of African American History & Culture, DNC, DSCC, Southern Poverty Law, ACLU and probably others we’re not aware of. Most recently, Mary was Vice-President of the Impact 4 Life organization.

Mary was baptized at an early age at Bethel Tabernacle in Indianapolis, under the leadership of the late Bishop Owen Young. She later accepted the experience of new birth according to the Apostolic doctrine at Apostolic Faith Church in Chicago, IL, serving under the awesome leadership of Bishop Horace Smith, MD. Since her return to Indianapolis, Mary has been a member of Kingdom Apostolic Ministries, serving under the dynamic leadership of

Bishop Lambert W. Gates, Sr., Presiding Bishop of PCAFI (Pentecostal Churches of the Apostolic Faith International). Serving with her niece, Pastor Patricia Germany, as an advisor on the youth board, she fondly became “Aunt Mary” to her new church family. She loved working with young people and was a firm believer of higher education. Aunt Mary also served in the Christian Education Dept. as a Sunday School Teacher. She wrote the curriculum for New Identity Academy, a community outreach project taught by Pastor Germany at Arlington High School. Her nieces and nephews, whom she loved dearly, often teased each other about being corrected when using improper English around Aunt Mary. A huge fan of Dr. Maya Angelou, Mary, like Dr. Angelou, “never failed to use the power of her skilled words to candidly reflect on the human experience”.

It’s never easy to say good-bye to someone who has touched our hearts and our lives so profoundly. Mary’s life brought joy and pride to our family and she will be sadly missed by all. She often astounded her medical teams to the point that she was nick-named Turn-Around Turner by one of her doctors. On August 10, 2023, having succumbed to the effects of her illness, she was relieved of her struggles as she fell asleep in Jesus. Today we continue to honor the close bond we shared with our sister, our aunt, our friend. “Your wings were ready, but our hearts were not”. She leaves to cherish many fond memories; four sisters, Ruby Dodd; Pastor Sadie Richardson (Alfred); Maxine Turner-Jones; Elder Brenda Johnson; one brother, Deacon Harvey Turner of Hurst, TX; many nieces, nephews and a host of other relatives, caregivers and friends. Preceding her in death are parents, Arthur & Ruthie M. Turner; sisters, Evangelist Lois Mathis, Rosalyn Kimbrough-Poindexter; brothers; Alex, Arthur Jr., Charles and Robert Turner.

Cemetery Details

New Crown Cemetery

2101 Churchman Ave
Indianapolis, IN 46203

Previous Events

Visitation

AUG 25. 9:00 AM - 12:00 PM (ET)

Kingdom Apostolic Church Ministry
4900 East 38th Street
Indianapolis, IN 46218

Service

AUG 25. 12:00 PM (ET)

Kingdom Apostolic Church Ministry
4900 East 38th Street
Indianapolis, IN 46218

Tribute Wall



“ *Lawyer Mary Turner helped many people and will be sadly missed by family and friends. Linda Murphy*

Linda Murphy - August 17, 2023 at 02:19 PM