



## Mrs. Laura Brooks Smith

October 18, 1944 - August 4, 2022

The passing of Mrs. Laura Brooks Smith, age 77, on Thursday, August 4, 2022, at her home, is being announced by her loving and devoted husband, Mr. John N. Smith.

Laura Brooks Smith was born October 18, 1944, in Jamesville, North Carolina to Annie Lucille Brooks and Nathaniel Brooks. She attended Union Town Church of Christ and accepted Christ at an early age. Laura began school in the first grade at the age of 5 and was immediately moved into the 2nd grade. In 1961, she graduated Salutatorian from EJ Hayes high school, along with her sister Gloria who was Valedictorian. Laura began her academic pursuits later that year at North Carolina College (now called North Carolina Central University) where she graduated Summa Cum Laude with a Bachelor of Science in Mathematics (Math) in 1965. During her matriculation at North Carolina College (NCC), she was constantly on the Dean's List and a member of the Honors Program, Alpha Kappa Mu Honor Society, and Beta Kappa Chi Honor Society.

During her sophomore year Laura met the love of her life John N. Smith who was a junior and also majoring in math. During Laura's senior year at NCC she accepted a position as a programmer trainee at the IBM facility in Poughkeepsie NY and attended programming school. While attending graduate school John also accepted a position with IBM in Poughkeepsie NY.

They both relocated to NY and were married on July 3, 1965. After successfully completing the programming school they both transferred to the IBM facility at the Research Triangle Park (RTP), NC January 1, 1966. At the IBM facility at RTP Laura became the first Black female applications programmer.

Once they started a family, Laura chose to step away from IBM and work with the NCCU tutorial program and to become a full-time homemaker and mother. The teaching profession would give her more time to spend with her daughters. Once their daughters started school, she began working with the NCCU Academic Skills Center, working with students who had deficiencies in math.

Laura was very supportive of her husband while he pursued opportunities at different IBM locations. She had begun to work on her Master of Science in Mathematics when the family moved to Tampa, Florida for one of those opportunities afforded to him. While in Florida, Laura became the first person to complete a master's degree by distance education at North Carolina Central University in 1983. When they returned to North Carolina in 1984, she became an Adjunct Professor at NCCU.

In 1987, Laura stepped down from NCCU to further continue her education. While she was working on the Ph.D. at NC State University, she took a position teaching math at Saint Augustine College in Raleigh NC. Laura earned her Ph.D. in Mathematics Education from North Carolina State University in 1993 at the age of 48; teaching many that it is never too late to pursue your dreams. Once she had completed her Ph.D., she returned to teaching at NCCU, where she remained as a tenured faculty member teaching math until her retirement in 2010. Not only did Laura teach math, but she coordinated the student teaching efforts for math majors who planned to enter the teaching profession.

Laura and John had 57 years of fun, adventure, and love together. The marriage produced two daughters, Marchia, and Marjorie, who were the joy and frustration (at times) of her life. She loved her annual sister's weekends, and spending time with her daughters and granddaughters, and nieces. Her favorite places to travel were the beach to listen to the waves and driving through the mountains to see fall colors with her husband.

Laura also loved to give back to the youth in her community and taught her daughters to do the same. From being a Girl Scout leader when her girls were Brownies and Juniors, to tutoring in the community at home and then with IKEMBA Youth Ministry at St. Joseph AME Church, she always made a difference. One of her proudest moments was when she helped start the Women and Math Mentoring Program (WAM) in Durham in 1997.

Laura served in several roles at St. Joseph AME Church in her many years as a member until her health started failing. She served in the Sarah Allen Missionary Society, as a member of the Ladies Usher Board, and as an active member of the Lay Organization.

Laura leaves behind a loving husband of 57 years, John N. Smith, two daughters, Marchia Jones and Marjorie Brown, JD, a loving and devoted son-in-law Ryan Anthony Brown, MD, three granddaughters: Jasmine Brown, JD, Luran Jones, and Nia Brown; three devoted sisters, Gloria Ray (Valentine), Selma Alston (Walt), Rowena Sykes (John); five sisters-in-law, Marie Revell, Wilma Perry, Shirley Sherard, Paulette Bryant, and Edna Blue (Dan); and six brothers-in-law, Raymond Smith (Hannah), Ivy Smith, Turner Smith (Ilene), Malcolm Smith (Gwen), Byron Smith (Laurie), Bernard Smith (Yvonne), and a host of caring nieces, nephews, friends and colleagues.

We know that as she took her last breath here on earth on August 4, 2022, her next breath was in the presence of GOD, and she is now whole again without pain.

A Celebration of Life Service will be held at St. Joseph AME Church, 2521 Fayetteville Street, Durham, North Carolina 27707, on Friday, August 12th; Family Visitation at 11:00 a.m. and Life Celebration Service at 12:00 noon.

The Celebration of Life Service will be streamed live via the St. Joseph AME Church's website at <https://www.stjosephame.org/watch>.

Please keep her family in your thoughts and in your prayers.

In lieu of flowers, please donate to the NCCU Class of 1965 in memory of Laura B. Smith. Please choose Class of 1965 Endowed Scholarship Fund from the Fund list and state in the comment section in memory of Laura B. Smith”

<https://www.nccu.edu/institutional-advancement/giving-online>

# Previous Events

## Visitation

AUG 12. 11:00 AM - 11:45 AM (ET)

St. Joseph AME Church  
2521 Fayetteville St  
Durham, NC 27707  
(919) 683-1379

## Celebration of Life

AUG 12. 12:00 PM (ET)

St. Joseph AME Church  
2521 Fayetteville St  
Durham, NC 27707  
(919) 683-1379

# Tribute Wall

RW

“ My favorite class at NCCU was the History of Math taught by Dr. Smith. She was the consummate example of a caring teacher, exactly what I needed to see at that time. After graduation, I occasionally saw her at a local store. She never failed to speak, and she always knew my name. She also remembered those with whom I was friends and would ask after them. She was then and will forever be remembered as a great lady. My prayers are with her family.

Robbie Wippich - March 25, 2024 at 02:59 PM



“ Mrs. Laura Brooks Smith

October 05, 2023 at 11:31 AM

RB

“ Sending condolences and prayers to the Smith family after learning of the passing of my favorite math professor. She was passionate lady who loved what she taught and it is evident by the number of women she encouraged to enter STEM professions. Rest easy in Heaven, Dr. Laura, you will missed.

Raychelle Baptist - August 25, 2022 at 11:35 PM

JI

“ James Isaac lit a candle in memory of Mrs. Laura Brooks Smith



James Isaac - August 15, 2022 at 09:58 AM

EA

“ Remembering the good times our group used to have, and extending heartfelt sympathy.  
*Elaine*



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**Ellen B. Amey** - August 14, 2022 at 11:01 PM

JB

“ Sorry for your loss. Keeping you and your family in my prayers.

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**Judy Bland** - August 13, 2022 at 09:41 AM

EM

“ My deepest and sincere condolences to the Smith family. May God continue to comfort you. *Emily Jackson*

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**Emily** - August 12, 2022 at 02:43 PM

PS

“ To my brother John, Marchia, Marjorie and the Smith family,

*Laura was a sweet person and always so calm no matter what. She had a beautiful spirit with so much love to you. Talking to her and catching up at Thanksgiving gatherings was special to me. I will truly miss our talks.*

*I want to express my gratitude to you all for sharing and for allowing Laura to step in and be my daughter Amber's NCCU Mom. At first I heard Amber call her Dr. Laura Smith, then she began to call her Aunt Laura which they mutually agreed was her new name. Laura was there for Amber through undergrad, grad school, and encouraged her through the doctoral program in Math. I knew Amber was in good hands with Aunt Laura. God allowed Aunt Laura to be Amber's guardian angel here on Earth, so I am thankful.*

*Pattie Elliott Smith*

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**Pattie Elliott Smith** - August 12, 2022 at 09:59 AM

JC

“ John And Jean Croslan lit a candle in memory of Mrs. Laura Brooks Smith



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**John and Jean Croslan** - August 12, 2022 at 09:48 AM

GS

“ Geraldine And Deborah Staton lit a candle in memory of Mrs. Laura Brooks Smith



Geraldine and Deborah Staton - August 12, 2022 at 07:02 AM

GW

“ Garland And Hattie Wilder lit a candle in memory of Mrs. Laura Brooks Smith



Garland and Hattie Wilder - August 11, 2022 at 09:28 PM

GT

“ Geraldine H Thompson



Geraldine Thompson - August 11, 2022 at 07:17 PM

JA

“ Juanita G Alston lit a candle in memory of Mrs. Laura Brooks Smith



Juanita G Alston - August 11, 2022 at 05:50 PM



“ A sympathy card was purchased for the family of Mrs. Laura Brooks Smith.



August 11, 2022 at 01:29 PM



“ Tina Ewing lit a candle in memory of Mrs. Laura Brooks Smith



Tina Ewing - August 11, 2022 at 09:57 AM



“ Andre D. Vann, '93 & '95 lit a candle in memory of Mrs. Laura Brooks Smith



Andre D. Vann, '93 & '95 - August 11, 2022 at 07:44 AM



“ To the family, Laura's Love is now long distance. It goes all the way from here to heaven. "Gone from our sight, but never our memories - Gone from our touch, but never our hearts." From, Eagle Evelyn M. Turner, Class of 1964.

Evelyn M. Turner - August 11, 2022 at 07:18 AM

PW

“ *To the Smith Family:*

*My academic career crossed paths with Laura's when we were faculty members at North Carolina Central University. While we were in different colleges, I often sought Laura's help in assisting my undergraduate advisees, who found math challenging. She always promptly responded, providing wise and reasonable advice.*

*Laura leaves a wonderful legacy, not only in the areas of academia and service, but in other areas which reflect her genuineness, kindness and caring. She will truly be missed.*

*John, you and your family continue to be in our prayers.*

*Patricia and Switzon Wigfall*

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**Patricia Wigfall** - August 10, 2022 at 02:47 PM

TN

“ *The Nielsens lit a candle in memory of Mrs. Laura Brooks Smith*



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**The Nielsens** - August 10, 2022 at 11:18 AM

HR

“ *Henry & Yvonne Revell send our condolences to the family. May she rest in peace ♡*

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**Henry Revell** - August 10, 2022 at 11:08 AM

AM

“ John, Ruth and I extend our thoughts, prayers and condolences for you and the family. We will miss Laura's calming persona, intelligence and engaging smile.  
Times like these are always difficult, but God still has his arms of comfort for you, family and all of us who have had the opportunity to know Dr. Laura Brooks Smith.

*Arnett and Ruth Coleman*

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**Arnett Coleman MD** - August 10, 2022 at 10:12 AM

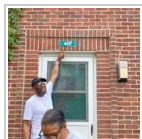
EP

“ Wishing you peace and comfort at this sad time. Laura and I grew up together and shared our undergraduate years at NCCU. May God bless the family. Andrea Blue Peele and Family



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**Ernest and Andrea Peele** - August 10, 2022 at 08:12 AM



“ Umar Roberts lit a candle in memory of Mrs. Laura Brooks Smith



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**Umar Roberts** - August 10, 2022 at 06:44 AM

DB

“ Prayers of comfort in the passing of Laura. I have such pleasant memories of her.



Dot Brower - August 09, 2022 at 04:07 PM

TD

“ Thaddeus Daniels lit a candle in memory of Mrs. Laura Brooks Smith



Thaddeus Daniels - August 09, 2022 at 03:51 PM



“ Valerie Hunter lit a candle in memory of Mrs. Laura Brooks Smith



Valerie Hunter - August 09, 2022 at 03:11 PM



“ Thinking of you with sympathy, with love and with a prayer

Valerie Broady Hunter  
San Antonio Texas

Valerie Hunter - August 09, 2022 at 03:10 PM

DB

“ With a heavy, sad heart I extend condolences to the families of Laura Brooks Smith. She was indeed a beautiful person! Her personality radiated a "Unique Goodness" that served as a beacon of inspiration to all of us. Laura will surely be missed, but fondly remembered always.

*Delois C. Broady  
Roanoke, Virginia*

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**Delois Broady** - August 09, 2022 at 02:15 PM



*Thinking of you with sympathy, with love and with a prayer*

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**Valerie Hunter** - August 09, 2022 at 03:07 PM

DF

“ Rest In Peace Mrs. Smith❤️

*John and Family,*

*We are sending our sincere condolences to you and your family. We have treasured memories of Laura that leaves us smiling in the way she enjoyed the jokes and stories.*

*We are praying for your uplift especially now❤️🙏🕊️*

*Respectfully,*

*The Fitts Family  
Maxine, David and David, Jr.*



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**David L Fitts** - August 09, 2022 at 12:19 PM

CC

*Prayers and condolences to the Smith family. I am Catherine Jordan Clarke, Lethia Johnson's sister. I can see Laura's loving smile. She is safe, resting in the arms of Jesus !*

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**Catherine Jordan Clarke** - August 09, 2022 at 01:51 PM

PH

“ *Condolences to Alumnus John N. Smith and family on behalf of NCCUAA Durham Chapter. Alumna Dr. Smith will always be remembered for her sweet spirit and genuine care for her students.*

*Pamela R. Hester, President  
NCCUAA Durham Chapter*

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**Pamela Hester** - August 09, 2022 at 08:56 AM

TH

“ *Dr. Smith was the sweetest person on earth. She was an angel on human form. She cared deeply about her students and was a genuine guiding light for me during my time at NCCU. My sincere condolences and prayers go out to the family. She will be missed tremendously. 🙏*

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**Tremain Holloway** - August 08, 2022 at 05:43 PM

MJ

“ *My condolences to the Smith family. 🙏 Dr. Brown was an awesome advisor during my time at NCCU. I appreciate the kindness and help that she provided.*

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**Michele Josey** - August 08, 2022 at 12:00 PM

JC

“ We are so very sorry for the loss of Mrs. Laura Brooks Smith! She is/was a dynamic woman and mother! May God bring you all peace and comfort!



*Jazmin Caldwell & Caldwell Family (Tim, Vanessa, and Skyla)*

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**Jazmin Caldwell** - August 07, 2022 at 04:24 PM

RM

“ Lifting up the Smith family in prayer. Earth has no sorrow that heaven cannot cure.



*Rev. Valerie McIver*

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**Rev. Valerie McIver** - August 07, 2022 at 02:18 PM

BS

“ Barbara Lewis Sellars lit a candle in memory of Mrs. Laura Brooks Smith



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**Barbara Lewis Sellars** - August 07, 2022 at 12:32 AM

BS

“ My sincere condolences to the family of Mrs. Laura Brooks Smith, my NCCU, 1965 classmate.

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**Barbara Lewis Sellars** - August 07, 2022 at 12:30 AM



“ *Shandra Tapp lit a candle in memory of Mrs. Laura Brooks Smith*



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**Shandra Tapp** - August 06, 2022 at 07:27 PM

JH

“ *To John, Marchia, Marjorie and the Smith Family:*

*We are so very saddened over the passing of Laura. She was kind and sweet, and meant a lot to so many people. We extend our sincere condolences and humbly grieve with you. May God give you peace and comfort as you mourn her loss.*

*Love and prayers,  
Joe and Cheri Harrell*

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**Joseph and Cheri Harrell** - August 06, 2022 at 07:25 PM

SH

“ *Shirley lit a candle in memory of Mrs. Laura Brooks Smith*



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**Shirley** - August 06, 2022 at 08:55 AM

SS

“ I am so sorry to here of Laura's passing. I worked closely with Laura at NCCU and in our work together with the Southern Initiative Algebra Project. She was very dear to me and we lost touch for awhile after she retired. I talked with her briefly about a year ago with plans to reconnect. However, I guess our lives took over and, regrettfully, we did not reconnect again. She was a very hard worker, giving much to her students and to the Math Education Program. She was so very kind and a dear friend and confidante. My heart goes out to John, Marchia, Marjorie, the grandchildren, and Laura's siblings and other family members. You are in my prayers.

Sharon Spencer - August 05, 2022 at 10:24 PM

OG

John, I am very sorry for your loss. You and your family have my sincere condolences.

Olivia G. Gilmore - August 06, 2022 at 04:23 PM

RB

My prayers are with John and daughters, and the Smith and Brook families..

Rosetta Richardson Burrell - August 09, 2022 at 11:52 AM



Mrs. Laura's kind face and sweet disposition will be sorely missed at St. Joseph. She was my fellow Sunday school member and missionary sister. I pray God's comfort for her family and friends.  
“...absent from the body...present with the Lord.”

Dr. Corliss Furbert

Corliss Furbert - August 09, 2022 at 02:08 PM

SM

“ I was saddened to learn of Laura's passing. My prayers and thoughts are with you.

Sylvia Mason - August 05, 2022 at 08:06 PM

MR

“ *Marilyn Rice lit a candle in memory of Mrs. Laura Brooks Smith*



Marilyn Rice - August 05, 2022 at 06:08 PM

MR

“ *I am so sorry to hear the news of your deep loss. My heart is saddened, and I am feeling for you for the departure of Laura. I pray you will find endurance and comfort, knowing our citizenship is in heaven, from where we await a Savior, the Lord Jesus. Laura was a loving individual. She will be missed.*

Marilyn Rice - August 05, 2022 at 06:07 PM

SA

*I Am so sorry to hear that Cousin Laura has passed. My prayers are with the family..Love to All*

Sarahwatkins - August 06, 2022 at 12:45 PM

EW

*My cousin, Laura, and I started the first grade together. She was very smart as a first grader. She skipped two grades in elementary school and continued to excel with her education. I'm going to miss her very much.*

Early Whitehurst - August 06, 2022 at 07:33 PM

ML

*Laura was a trailblazer, the first in many endeavors. We became very close colleagues as we developed a teleconferencing advanced math class for the first cohort of the Algebra Project students at Weldon High School. To know Dr. Smith was to love her. I cherish her memories and the time we spent together. My prayers and thoughts are with her husband, daughters, and extended family.*  
*Magnoria Lunsford*

**Magnoria Lunsford** - August 09, 2022 at 11:38 AM

HD

*Gwen and I are saddened in the loss of Laura, a fellow friend from Jamesville. Through the sadness, we will eventually smile knowing she gave so much to so many. To whom much is given, much is required. She gave more than the requirement! Herb and Gwen Davis*

**herb davis** - August 09, 2022 at 05:46 PM

CW

*My condolences to the Smith Family!*

**Carolyn Wallace** - August 10, 2022 at 03:33 PM

EB

*John Marchia and Marjorie,*

*We share in your pain and sorrow with the loss of your life partner and mother. Laura's loss leaves a gaping hole in our church family circle. We will truly miss the genuine warmth of her ever-present uplifting smile and warm greeting on Sunday mornings. When we shared with her my wife's health challenges, she provided uplifting encouragement and caring support that help us through our difficult times. Please know that her departure from her earthly status is temper by God's graceful acceptance of her into His glory. May her fond memories comfort you in these difficult times.*

*Brenda and Evester Bailey*

**Evester/Brenda Bailey** - August 11, 2022 at 11:22 PM

LM

*John, Gloria and Family, my thoughts and prayers are with you and your family. Lessie Harris- Moore*

**Lessie Harris- Moore** - August 12, 2022 at 11:11 AM