



## Pearl Burnett

September 23, 1935 - December 7, 2025

Pearl M. Burnett, born Pearlie Mae Jefferson and lovingly known to many as Miss Pearl, was born on September 23, 1935, in Mansfield, Louisiana, to Sam and Allie Bea Jefferson.

She was raised in Leesville, Louisiana, where she attended elementary and secondary schools in Vernon Parish. During her school years, she played basketball alongside her sisters, a love for the sport that remained with her throughout her life. After graduating from Vernon Parish Training High School in Leesville, Louisiana, a state approved Negro high school, she pursued higher education at Grambling State University.

While working part time at Dairy Queen on Fort Polk Army Base, she met Theodore Floyd Burnett Jr. in 1956 during his tour of duty. The two quickly married and shared two children together. In a touching coincidence, she gave birth to her daughter, Carla Jean, on her own birthday, and later welcomed her son, Michael Glenn, on his father's birthday.

She continued her professional career as a Laboratory Technician with Olin Corporation, where she worked for over 30 years, while raising her children and grandchildren. Known for her direct, no nonsense attitude and tough love, she was deeply committed to the needs of others, her family and loved ones, and was as selfless as a person could be, consistently placing the needs of others before her own. She was also deeply committed to her community and was closely connected to the NAACP Alton Branch. She was involved with The Tri Del Federated Women's Club of Illinois Association of Club Women

(N.A.C.W.C) Inc.— The National Association of Colored Women’s Club Inc. and the development of young girls involved in their debutante ball. She was the true definition of an independent woman. She often said, “If you want something done right, do it yourself,” and she embodied that saying to its fullest extent. She took great pride in keeping her home and yard clean and tidy, and even in her late 80s she was often outside doing her own yard work. She loved Judge Judy, believed in Jesus Christ, and was an active member of Open Door Fellowship Church.

She lived a full and meaningful life and made her transition on Saturday, December 7, 2025, at the age of 90, following a courageous battle with dementia.

She leaves to cherish her memory her brother, Thomas Jefferson of Poughkeepsie, New York; her sister in law, Louise Williams Jefferson of Seabrook, Texas; and her paternal siblings, Larenza Jefferson and Willie Jefferson, both of Los Angeles, California. She is also survived by her son in law, Joseph Williams of Jacksonville, Illinois; her grandchildren, Glenn Taylor Jr., Jayme Reed, Zacheus Burnett, and Keenan Burnett; and a number of great grandchildren, along with a host of extended family members, friends, and loved ones

She was preceded in death by her parents, her children, and all but a few sibling

She remained true to her convictions and the ideals she believed in. In her pursuit of doing what was right and giving of herself always for the benefit of others, nothing could hold her back. And nothing ever did. She will be deeply missed. A memorial visitation will be from 10:00 a.m. until time of memorial service at 1:00 p.m. on Saturday, December 20, 2025 at Gent Funeral Home in Alton. Additional information and online guestbook may be found at [www.gentfuneralhome.com](http://www.gentfuneralhome.com)

# Previous Events

## Memorial Visitation

DEC **20**. 10:00 AM - 1:00 PM (CT)

Gent Funeral Home  
2409 State Street  
Alton, IL 62002

## Memorial Service

DEC **20**. 1:00 PM (CT)

Gent Funeral Home  
2409 State Street  
Alton, IL