

Memorial Service
In Loving Memory Of
Carolyn Howard French



1 P.M.
Monday, May 4, 2009

Fifteenth Street Presbyterian Church
1701 Fifteenth Street, N.W.
Washington, D.C. 20009

The Rev. Dr. Sterling Morse, Pastor
Officiating

Obituary

On Monday, April 27, 2009, Carolyn Howard French succumbed after a brave battle with cancer and departed this world surrounded by her loving family. As the much adored daughter of Dr. William J. and Dorothy Waring Howard, she began life at Carson's Hospital in Washington, DC, but lived overseas for many years and traveled around the world, making friends and extending her warmth and hospitality to everyone.

Carolyn broke molds in all walks of her life: as an educator, family historian, political activist and a member of numerous civic and social organizations. She was a natural leader who enjoyed the process of creating and implementing change, and at various times was president of most of the organizations she joined. She also was a voracious reader and lifelong learner who continued her education at every opportunity.

Throughout most of her life Carolyn was a family historian who undertook extensive research projects that focused on the Howard, Waring and French families and involved all of her children and many of her grandchildren in trips to libraries, courthouses and archives in hot pursuit of information. At various times she was a member of the Association for the Study of African American Life and History, the Afro-American Historical and Genealogical Society, the Historical Society of Washington, the Orange County Historical Society. She was a founder of the Orange County African-American Historical Society.

A fifth-generation Washingtonian, Carolyn spent her early years in the historic Strivers section of Washington, DC. When she was two years old, her mother founded the Garden of Children nursery school to provide a loving, supportive atmosphere for Carolyn's education. She would attend the Garden of Children until third grade, going on to Garrison Elementary School, Shaw Junior High School, the Paul Lawrence Dunbar High School and Mount Holyoke College. While at Mt. Holyoke, Carolyn met her future husband, Howard University medical student David M. French. They married in 1945 and in time became the proud parents of eight children, each of whom was provided an excellent formal education and countless opportunities. Carolyn instilled in her children a love for the written

As a founding member of the Friends of Barboursville, Carolyn was active in a successful effort to prevent strip mining in Barboursville. Had the mining company prevailed, it not only would have had a negative environmental impact, but also threatened to destroy an historical African American community founded after the Civil War that has thrived for six generations - including Brownland.

She is survived by her beloved husband, Dr. David M. French; cherished children, Lynn Carol, Mary Ann, David Jr., Howard Waring (Agnès), Joseph Blaine, James Albert, Bertha Mae French (Guy Harkless) and Dorothy French Boone (Elwood); as well as 14 grandchildren and two great-grandchildren.



word, precise language and intellectual curiosity.

Carolyn and David moved several times during their 63 years of marriage. In addition to multiple stints in Washington, DC, the Frenches also lived variously in Cleveland, Ohio; Boston, Massachusetts; Detroit, Michigan; Newton, Massachusetts; Abidjan, Côte d'Ivoire and Barboursville, Virginia. In each place they lived Carolyn's time and energy were focused inwardly on family and outwardly on creating social change.

Carolyn began her career as an educator teaching at the Garden of Children, and would go on to teach at Garrison Elementary School and work with Head Start in DC. She would work at the Rosa Parks Day Center in Roxbury, MA and become the founding director of the Crispus Attucks Day Care Center in Dorchester, MA. In Côte d'Ivoire she served on the board of the International School. In addition to her work in support of early childhood education, Carolyn also worked in many capacities to ensure the rights of all citizens. Carolyn won the respect of many civil rights leaders for courageously driving the family van that had been converted into an ambulance during the Selma to Montgomery March in 1965 and the Meredith March in 1966.

Carolyn's last 23 years were spent with her husband at Brownland, her ancestral home in the Virginia Piedmont. She reconnected with her clubs in nearby Washington, but also enjoyed a new era of political involvement. She became an active member of the executive committee of the Orange County Branch of the NAACP, established the Orange County Council on Race Relations and served on the Orange Downtown Alliance. She was appointed to the board of the Rappahannock-Rapidan Community Services Board and was recognized by the Orange County Board of Supervisors for her work with the agency. After many years of faithfully working the polls, she was elected an officer of the Orange County Democratic Committee and ultimately served on the Orange County Board of Elections.

Order of Service

Organ Prelude

Call to Worship

Invocation

Dr. Sterling Morse

Hymn

"Lift Evr'y Voice and Sing" #563

Old Testament

**Ecclesiastes 3: 1-8
Psalm 121**

**French Scott Marshall
Marilyn Siatta French**

Prayer of Comfort

Solo

"Precious Lord, Take my Hand" Letha Lucas

New Testament

**2 Timothy 4:-6-7
John 3:15-16**

**Elwood B. Boone, IV
Jason Townes French**

Obituary

(read silently)

Tributes/Remarks

**Barbara June Pinchback Carter
Edith Jones Booker**

Hymn

"Blessed Assurance" #341

Words of Comfort

**"Leaning On the Promises" Dr. Morse
John 14: 1-7**

Prayer of Commendation/Lord's Prayer

Closing Hymn

"We're Marching to Zion "

No Flowers Please

Oh, just a rose perhaps, a few violets
Or even a handful of wild Honeysuckle
Or Star of Bethlehem and sweet alyssum
Which says you remember kindly.

For this I shall thank you Wherever I am.
And more for the courage and strength
You gave in the Struggle we call Life.
By the touch of your shoulder to shoulder
And the Understanding glance of your eye
And the hearty Pull together of a sympathetic heart.
Priceless and undying these as God's gracious bounty.
And I shall thank you, Wherever I am.

But *please, please*, don't pass the hat for big florist's offerings
Or take up a collection to crowd the room and cover my poor bier
With mute withering symbols of God's eternal love and Christ's
Unspeakable Prayer
Agonizing that we all should be one and love one another
Even as He and the Father are One in Love.

No flowers please, just the smell of sweet understanding
The knowing look that sees Beyond and says gently and kindly
"Somebody's Teacher on Vacation now.
Resting for the Fall Opening."

Anna Julia Cooper
August 10, 1940